ABSTRACT

COX, GRACE ELIZABETH. The Trickledown Effects of Leaders' Resilience-Building Behaviors on Followers' Burnout, Engagement, and Performance. (Under the direction of Dr. S. Bartholomew Craig).

Burnout has become a plague for the modern workforce, costing organizations billions every year (Weiss, 2020), and causing physical and psychological problems for employees (e.g., Bayes et al., 2021; Holton et al., 2016). The job demands-resources model suggests that burnout can emerge from an overload of demands or a scarcity of adequate resources (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001). When facing work stress, employees must use resources to be able to cope with the stressor and the stress. Employees can build their resilience to stress by engaging in proactive coping strategies. Resilient employees are subsequently able to better use and build resources for future stressful situations (Shaw et al., 2016). Most resilience-building strategies have been targeted at the individual (e.g., recovery, Sonnentag & Fritz, 2017), however, one previously overlooked strategy is that of the employee's leader modeling resilience-building behaviors. Based in social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), this study hypothesized that when employees perceive their leaders engaging in resilience-building behaviors, they themselves will engage in similar resilience-building behaviors, leading to lower levels of burnout, higher levels of engagement, and higher levels of performance. This was thought to be especially true for those high in optimism and psychological flexibility. Results found that the original leader – follower influenced relationship of engaging in resilience-building behaviors was supported, and that followers engaging in said behaviors significantly predicted lower levels of burnout, and higher levels of engagement and performance. Optimism and psychological flexibility were not shown to moderate these relationships. Supplemental analyses showed that the influence of leaders modeling resilience-

building behaviors may be particularly powerful for newer/younger employees. Implications and future directions are discussed.

The Trickledown Effects of Leaders' Resilience-Building Behaviors on Followers' Burnout, Engagement, and Performance

by
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BIOGRAPHY

Grace Elizabeth Cox was born to parents John and Merrilee Cox in Fairborn, Ohio in 1998. She graduated from Dayton Christian High School in 2016 and began her undergraduate studies at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana the fall of that same year. In 2020, she graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Psychology and Spanish.

After moving to Raleigh, NC, she started her graduate studies at North Carolina State University in the Industrial Organizational Psychology program in the fall of 2020. During graduate school, and under the tutelage of Dr. Bart Craig, she had several opportunities to pursue her own research interests in dark leadership, destructive employee behavior, organizational justice, and the intersection of these motivating factors to drive behavior at work. She was also able to intern at Applied Research Associates for 18 months, as well as write for the popular website IO at Work, where over 50 of her articles have been published and her work has received over 5000 views.

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The Trickledown Effects of Leaders' Resilience-Building Behaviors on Followers' Burnout, Engagement, and Performance

One of the most prevalent and detrimental problems facing organizations and employees today is that of burnout. Burnout is defined as a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion brought on by exposure to chronic stressors in the workplace (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2011). In 2021, the American Psychological Association (APA) estimated that as many as 79% of workers faced regular stress in their working experiences (Abramson, 2022), and at least 22% of them report feeling burnt-out very often or always (Vankar, 2023; Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). More recent estimates have found that experiences of emotional exhaustion, a key feature of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001), are increasing in frequency, with as many as 31% of survey respondents reporting feeling emotionally exhausted (American Psychological Association, 2023). Burnout has been linked with negative work-related outcomes such as lower satisfaction with work (Adwan, 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Maslach et al., 2001; Moore, 2000; Peterson et al., 2008; Singh et al., 1994), decreased productivity and performance (Holton et al., 2016; Salvagioni et al., 2017), increased absenteeism (Peterson et al., 2008), and higher turnover intentions (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Geurts et al., 1998; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Peterson et al., 2008); as well as negative individual-level outcomes, such as increased mental health problems (Chen et al., 2020; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Holton et al., 2016; Huang & Simha, 2018; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), increased physical health problems (Bayes et al., 2021; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Shirom, 2003; Van Dierendonck et al., 2001), lower quality of personal relationships (Malach Pines, 2003), and greater conflict at home (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Ilies et al., 2007b; Lee et al., 2023; Williamson et al., 2018). Between the health complications, loss of productivity, and

turnover caused by burnout, organizations can lose between $120-190 billion each year when dealing with a burnt-out workforce (Weiss, 2020). As such, organizations have a vested interest in combating and preventing burnout among their workers.

To combat the negative effects brought on by stress and burnout, individuals may engage in a variety of coping strategies. Coping can be either adaptive, promoting resilience and healthy outcomes for the individual (i.e., exercise, good sleep, social support; Holton et al., 2016), or maladaptive, potentially furthering negative consequences the individual may face (i.e., smoking, excessive drinking, use of illicit substances; Holton et al., 2016). Individuals can be influenced to engage in different coping strategies based on a number of factors such as personality variables (Pilch et al., 2021), how they appraise the stressor (i.e., threatening, harmful, challenging, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the resources they have available (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). When individuals engage in positive and adaptive coping strategies focused on addressing the stressor itself or building resilience to better handle their stress, they tend to report better individual and organizational outcomes, and lower levels of burnout (Bono et al., 2013; Shin et al., 2014). However, when individuals engage in negative and maladaptive coping strategies, they can actually report higher levels of burnout (Dolan & Ender, 2008; Leiter, 1991; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001), decreased job satisfaction, and higher levels of voluntary turnover (Cavanaugh et al., 2000).

For the majority of previous research, coping strategies and their effects have been studied from an individual perspective (e.g., Holton et al., 2016; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Koeske et al., 1993; Nizielski et al., 2013; Roswag et al., 2023). But this line of research neglects the fact that individuals, especially in the workplace, do not exist in a vacuum. Employees are continuously engaging with and actively changing their environment (Bakker et al., 2023b;

Weick, 1977). One of the most important relationships in the workplace, and one that has only recently begun to be studied in burnout-coping research, is that between employees and their leaders (Thomas et al., 2013). The limited research in this field has demonstrated that leaders can have a powerful impact on their followers – that when leaders engage in coping strategies, recovery activities, and other positive and health promoting endeavors, they can improve the levels of burnout and other negative outcomes their followers report (Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Densten, 2005; Diebig et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2021), although this has not been universally supported (e.g., Blanco-Donoso et al., 2017; Stein et al., 2021). Primarily, researchers have studied this through the lenses of transformational leadership (Arnold, 2017; Bass, 1985; Skakon et al., 2010) and emotional contagion/crossover (Bakker et al., 2009; Bolger et al., 1989; Kim et al., 2023; Petitta et al., 2016; Tariq et al., 2020).

While there is a growing body of evidence that leader coping and recovery activities can influence their followers' level of burnout and other negative outcomes through emotional contagion (e.g., the leader feels better after the coping/recovery which increases their positive affect which then spreads to their followers, increasing their positive affect and resulting in positive individual- and organizational-level outcomes; Kim et al., 2023), one thing missing from this literature is the idea of leaders acting as role models for engaging in coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) states that the majority of human learning occurs through observation, especially observing role models. At work, the part of a role model is often filled by an employee's leader (Kreiner et al., 2009). According to social learning theory, individuals observe, learn, and adopt both attitudes and behaviors of others, especially their role models (Bandura, 1977). This phenomenon has been demonstrated in leader-follower relationships for a number of behaviors, such as job involvement and creativity (Hu et

al., 2023), organizational identification (Ishaq et al., 2023), serving behaviors (Wu et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021), organizational citizenship behaviors (Yaffe & Kark, 2011), unethical conduct and unethical pro-organizational behavior (Lian et al., 2022), and work-life boundaries (Koch & Binnewies, 2015). However, research has not examined whether this relationship holds for coping strategies or behaviors meant to build resilience in the face of stress. This present study aims to fill this gap and test whether leaders' engagement in coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors influences their followers to engage in the same or similar behaviors, and whether or not that engagement can lead to lower emotional exhaustion, higher work engagement (the theoretical opposite of burnout, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and better performance on the part of the follower.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

Burnout

Burnout has traditionally been conceptualized with three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion is characterized by feelings of stress and "being used up," feeling emotionally overextended, having a lack of energy, and feeling drained, especially by contact with other people (Bogs, 2011; Chullen, 2012; Greenglass et al., 1998; Maslach et al., 2001). Depersonalization involves the development of a callous and detached manner of interacting with others, particularly towards those who are receiving help or a service from the burnt-out individual. This can also include the tendency to treat others as objects rather than people. (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Reduced personal accomplishment refers to the tendency for burnt-out individuals to view their own competence, performance, and achievements at work in a negative light (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Maslach et al., 2001).

Recently, the three-factor model has received mixed support as more and more evidence has emerged showing that the “reduced personal accomplishment” factor develops separately from the other two components (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This has led many researchers to argue for and adopt a, perhaps better fitting, two-factor model of burnout: emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001; Frick et al., 2023; Huang & Simha, 2018; Løvseth et al., 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Some researchers have argued that the traditional three-factor and revised-two factor models of burnout are too limiting by assigning relatively uniform symptoms across all individuals (Farber, 1990; Montero-Marín & García-Campayo, 2010). They proposed an alternate model that differentiates three different subtypes of burnout based on their symptoms. An individual suffering from frenetic burnout tends to work increasingly harder to the point of exhausting themselves. They are always in search of success and are characterized by their over-involvement and ambition. Individuals with under-challenged burnout are trying to cope with their unstimulating and monotonous environments, feeling unsatisfied, indifferent, and bored with their lack of satisfaction and personal development. The worn-out burnt-out individual will give up in the face of stress and will neglect their work and responsibilities (Farber, 1990). While not overly common, this alternative model has gained some traction in explaining both burnout and different coping strategies (Montero-Marín et al., 2014).

Using either the traditional three-factor model (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), the revised two-factor model (Demerouti et al., 2001), or the alternate symptom-based model (Farber, 1990; Montero-Marín & García-Campayo, 2010) the factor of emotional exhaustion has received the most attention in the research (e.g., Frick et al., 2023; Greenglass et al., 1998; Hees-Garcia, 2021; Huang & Simha, 2018; Hughes et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Løvseth et al., 2012; Padyab

et al., 2016). Emotional exhaustion has been considered to be both the first stage (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Lee & Ashforth, 1990; Maslach, 1982; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998) and core symptom (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001; Shirom, 1989) of burnout, and has shown the most consistent relationships with the negative outcomes commonly associated with burnout (e.g., Greenglass et al., 1998; Huang & Simha, 2018; Jenaro et al., 2007; Leiter, 1991).

Originally, burnout was conceptualized as occurring in employees who engage in some kind of "people work" (Maslach, 1982). As such, burnout and its consequences have been studied and documented across a number of professions which require a large amount of interaction between people, including teachers (Antoniou et al., 2013; Meredith et al., 2020, Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Nizielski et al., 2013), university professors (Davidson et al., 2010), other education professionals (Holton et al., 2016); medical professionals (Pospos et al., 2018), including nurses (Bakker et al., 2005; Butcher et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2020; Hees-Garcia, 2021; Lapalme et al., 2023; Petitta et al., 2016) and doctors (Bakker et al., 2001; Butcher et al., 2023; Hees-Garcia, 2021; Løvseth & Aasland, 2010; Løvseth et al., 2012; Petitta et al., 2016); mental health professionals (Bogs, 2011; White, 2019); public service workers (Jenaro et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2014); social workers (Ben-Zur & Michael, 2007); and restaurant workers (Hees-Garcia, 2021). As the definition of burnout expanded, research has also expanded to other professions, including police and law enforcement (Beehr et al., 1995; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Padyab et al., 2016), military service members (Dolan & Ender, 2008; Leiter, 1991), veterinary professionals (Dunn, 2022), manufacturing (Huang & Simha, 2018; Khan et al., 2023), banking (Khan et al., 2023), and other non-service business and office jobs (Arnold, 2017). By and large, though, burnout research has focused on healthcare or educational samples (Shin et al., 2014).

Consequences

There are a number of serious consequences that have been linked with burnout, both for employees' everyday-life and their work-life and performance. Those who report higher burnout have also reported significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety symptoms than those with lower burnout scores (Chen et al., 2020; Holton et al., 2016; Huang & Simha, 2018; Papathanasiou et al., 2017; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Tzeletopoulou et al., 2018; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Burnt-out individuals also tend to report lower levels of self-esteem than non-burnt-out individuals (Maslach et al., 2001). If the burnout is not alleviated, or the stressor not addressed, individuals facing burnout are at risk of developing post- and secondary-traumatic symptoms (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Shoji et al., 2015; Yang & Hayes, 2020), insomnia and sleep deprivation (Kaeding et al., 2017; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Yang & Hayes, 2020), and psychological distress (Fong et al., 2016; Hammond et al., 2018; Yang & Hayes, 2020). This can lead to an increased use and abuse of psychotropic and antidepressant medications (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Salvagioni et al., 2017), greater levels of hospitalization for psychiatric issues (Salvagioni et al., 2017), and even increased rates of suicidal ideation (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).

As for physical complaints, stress and burnout have been shown to cause an increased and sustained activation in the autonomic nervous system, which contains the sympathetic, or "fight-or-flight," portion of the nervous system (Bayes et al., 2021). When this nervous system is activated, it causes increased levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol (Jönsson et al., 2015; von Känel et al., 2023). Prolonged levels of increased cortisol can cause high blood pressure, (Bono et al., 2013; Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999; Van Dierendonck et al., 2001), weight gain, higher blood sugar and type 2 diabetes (Bayes et al., 2021; Salvagioni et al., 2017), high cholesterol

(Salvagioni et al., 2017), reduced functioning in the endocrine and immune systems (Bayes et al., 2021), coronary heart disease (Salvagioni et al., 2017), cardiovascular disease (Bayes et al., 2021; von Känel et al., 2023), systemic inflammation and excitotoxicity (i.e., nerve damage and death as a result of increased levels of neurotransmitters, Bayes et al., 2021), and premature death (Bayes et al., 2021; Salvagioni et al., 2017). Beyond the influence of cortisol, burnout has also been linked to changes in brain structure and functioning (Bayes et al., 2021), including impairments in memory, attention, and executive functioning (Renaud & Lacroix, 2023). Individuals with burnout also report higher musculoskeletal pain and injuries (Acker, 2010; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Yang & Hayes, 2020), more flu-like and gastrointestinal issues (Acker, 2010; Hammond et al., 2018; Kaeding et al., 2017; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Yang & Hayes, 2020), and a greater frequency and intensity of headaches (Salvagioni et al., 2017) than those without burnout. Finally, burnout has been linked with a number of sleep issues, including prolonged fatigue (Salvagioni et al., 2017), sleep deprivation (Acker, 2010; Hammond et al., 2018), and insomnia (Yang & Hayes, 2020), all of which can exacerbate the aforementioned physical problems.

Burnout also has a number of consequences for employees and their organizations. Overall, burnt-out employees tend to show lower job satisfaction (Adwan, 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2011; Maslach et al., 2001; Moore, 2000; Peterson et al., 2008; Rössler, 2012; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Scanlan & Still, 2013; Singh et al., 1994; Yang & Hayes, 2020), and both higher turnover intentions and higher turnover rates (Armstrong-Stassen et al., 1994; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Geurts et al., 1998; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Lee et al., 2011; Peterson et al., 2008; Scanlan & Still, 2013; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Even if employees are not actively leaving the organization, those with higher levels of burnout tend to still engage in a number of

withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism, and using an increased number of sick days (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Peterson et al., 2008; Salvagioni et al., 2017). When burnt-out employees are at work, they have been shown to have higher levels of presenteeism (i.e., coming to work while sick; Holton et al., 2016; Salvagioni et al., 2017), decreased productivity (Holton et al., 2016), and decreased performance (Huang & Simha, 2018) than non-burnt-out employees. In medical and mental health professionals, burnout has also been linked to higher rates of compassion fatigue, where practitioners report lowering levels of care for their patients/clients and decreased effectiveness in doing their jobs (Butcher et al., 2023; Delgadillo et al., 2018; Salyers et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2014; Wampold, 2015; White, 2019; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Between lost productivity, increased disability services (Salvagioni et al., 2017), and turnover of employees, burnout can cost organizations billions each year (Weiss, 2020).

Antecedents

If organizations want to address and prevent burnout, they need to understand not only the consequences, but the antecedents of burnout. Just as with the consequences, there are antecedents at both the individual level and the organizational level. At the individual level, the personality dimension of neuroticism has been linked with higher levels of burnout (i.e., more neurotic people tend to also report higher levels of burnout, Maslach et al., 2001). Employees with low self-esteem and who engage in coping strategies designed to avoid, rather than deal with, the problem also tend to report high levels of burnout (Beehr et al., 1995; Shin et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence, at high levels, can protect against burnout (Gawali, 2012; Joseph & Newman, 2010), but can lead to burnout at low levels as it can hinder individuals in appraising their own and others' emotions and circumstances (Nizielski et al., 2013). Employees who have

an external locus of control, or tend to view most events as beyond their control, also tend to report higher levels of burnout (Gan et al., 2007; Nieto et al., 2022; Presson & Benassi, 1996).

In organizations, there are a number of stressors that can quickly lead to burnout for employees if not handled properly. Løvseth and colleagues (2012) found that, in jobs with some level of confidentiality requirement (i.e., medical work, certain government positions, social work, law, etc.), the confidentiality requirement can be a barrier inhibiting employees from seeking social support and can lead to an increase in burnout. Other work-related stressors can include low salaries and demanding work schedules (Rupert & Morgan, 2005; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003) and challenging clients (Jenaro et al., 2007). Employees who do not feel satisfied or cognitively challenged/stimulated with their work, and employees who feel frustrated with various aspects of their job, including a clash of values or difference in expectations between the employee and their organization, report high levels of burnout (Antoniou et al., 2013; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). Employees also tend to want some level of control over their jobs and working environments. When this is lacking, they can burn out quicker (Antoniou et al., 2013; Kantas, 1995; Olivier & Williams, 2005; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Finally, employees who do not feel as though they have the necessary support from their peers and leadership report higher levels of burnout (Antoniou et al., 2013; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Riolli & Savicki, 2002; Yang & Hayes, 2020).

Two commonly reported stressors that have been linked with employee burnout in organizations are role conflict and role ambiguity (House, 1996; Kahn et al., 1964; Kantas, 1995). Role conflict occurs when there are mismatched expectations, either in terms of what the employee expects from the job, in terms of conflict between two or more different employees or groups within a workplace, or some combination of the above (Kahn et al., 1964; King & King,

1990). Role overload can represent a combination of role conflicts – when employees view their work demands as too great for their time or capabilities (Rizzo et al., 1970; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). The employee in this scenario may have expectations incongruent with the job (their expectations of what the job demands are not congruent with what the job actually demands) and different expectations for their leaders (they expected a certain level of tasks to be handed down, and those expectations were not fulfilled). Role ambiguity occurs when an employee has insufficient information about the job, their goals, and how they are to go about completing their tasks (Kahn et al., 1964, King & King, 1990). Role ambiguity may also occur when an employee is unsure of what behaviors are expected of them (Rizzo et al., 1970; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). Conflict, including overload and ambiguity, have consistently been shown to precede burnout in organizations (Antoniou et al., 2013; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Gibbs, 2001; Landsman, 2001; Shin et al., 2014).

Role conflict and role ambiguity highlight a very important mechanism in the workplace – the interaction between job demands and job resources. When demands are too high or are misunderstood, as with role conflict, burnout can result (Kahn et al., 1964; Yang & Hayes, 2020). When employees understand the demands, but do not have the information, support, or other vital resources needed to complete the demands, they can also experience burnout (Kahn et al., 1964; King & King, 1990; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Many organizational level explanations of burnout can be boiled down to the interplay between job demands and resources – so much so that this one relationship has been the basis for a substantial body of theory development and research (Bakker et al., 2023a).

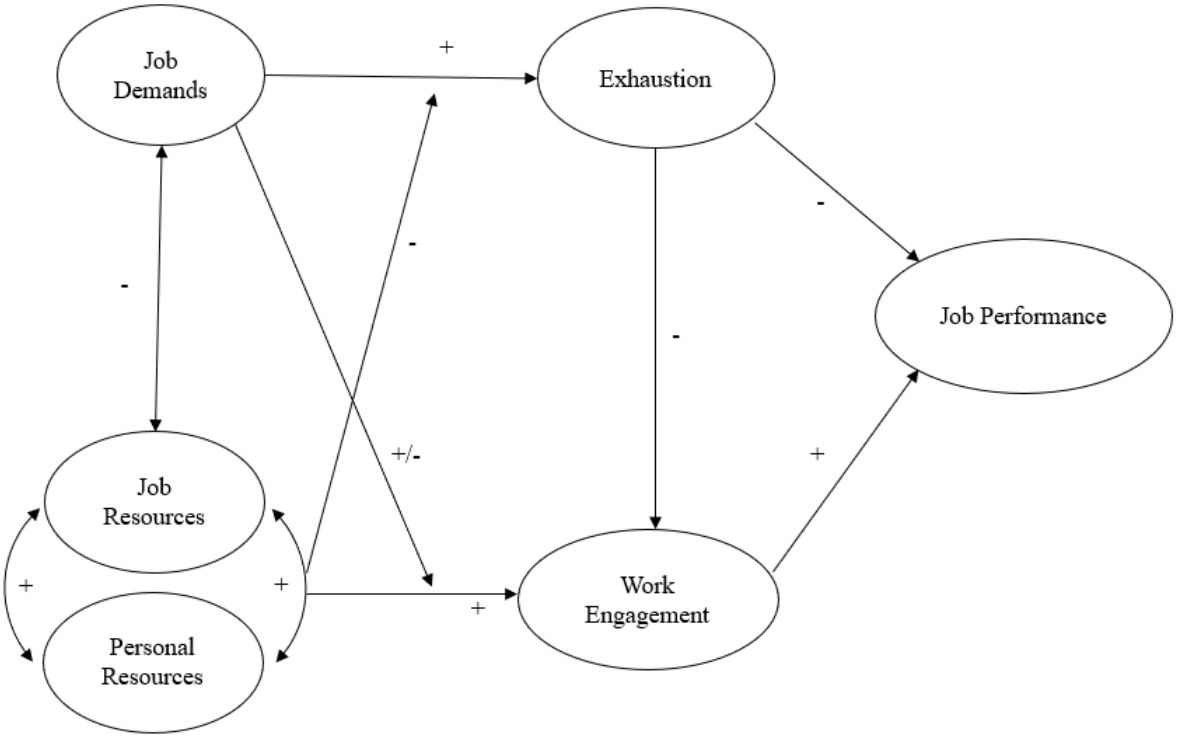
Job Demands-Resources Model

While many models attempt to explain the nature and origins of burnout, the job demands-resources (JD-R) theory is perhaps the most effective at doing so (Demerouti et al., 2001; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021). The JD-R theory aims to explain job performance through the impact of job demands and resources on employee well-being, engagement, and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2014, 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001). Extending a number of earlier models such as the job-characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), the job demands-control model (Karasek, 1979), and the conservation of resources theory (COR, Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018), JD-R posits that all job characteristics can be sorted into two categories: demands and resources (Bakker et al., 2023a, Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Job demands are physical, social, psychological, and organizational aspects of an employee's job that require physical or psychological effort (Demerouti et al., 2001). Demands are associated with certain costs for the employee, and can, therefore, become stressful, even if they are not inherently stressful at the beginning. This is especially true when employees lack the resources necessary to effectively deal with the demands (Demerouti et al., 2001, 2008; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Job resources are physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects of the job that allow the employee to achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and/or stimulate personal learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). These can include both resources provided by the organization and personal resources that an employee possesses which allow them to better address demands and the stress the demands may create (e.g., self-efficacy, internal locus of control, cognitive or psychological flexibility, optimism, etc.; Alarcon et al., 2009; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Gan et al., 2007; Hobfoll et al., 2003; Lloyd, et al., 2013; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009, 2013).

JD-R theory establishes a number of key propositions in explaining the relationships between demands and resources and their effects on employees. The first says that job demands can lead to impaired health for the employee, depending on the frequency and severity of the demands (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2007). When employees face job demands, especially without proper resources, they may experience job stress and strain, ultimately ending in a number of negative outcomes for the employee and organization, such as burnout, exhaustion, and lower performance (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001). Stress occurs when individuals deem demands or characteristics of their environment to be overwhelming, challenging, threatening, or beyond their ability to cope (Biggs et al., 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Strain refers to the physical and psychological consequences of stress (Hoes, 1986; Selye, 1975; Zhang et al., 2015). On the other hand, job and personal resources can lead to higher levels of work engagement for the employee, fostering motivation, creativity, and increased performance (Bakker et al., 2023a). The next important proposition of JD-R is that both demands and resources can have boosting and buffering effects respectively. Job resources can weaken the positive relationship between job demands and employee strain, while job demands can boost or weaken the positive relationship between job resources and motivation and work engagement, depending on the severity and frequency of the demand(s) (see Figure 1**;** Bakker et al., 2023a; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Halbesleben et al., 2009).

Figure 1

Job Demands-Resources Model (adapted from Bakker et al., 2023a)



Conservation of Resources Theory

One of the foundational theories of JD-R, the conservation of resources theory (COR), has also been used to explain the nature and origin of burnout in employees (Demerouti et al., 2001; Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Hobfoll, 1989). The central tenet of COR theory says that people are motivated to obtain, keep, and protect things which they value (i.e., resources; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Resources are anything which an individual values and can be used to help them attain their goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014). There are four central principles in COR theory. The first says that resource loss is far more powerful and salient to an individual than resource gain. The second says that in order to gain and protect their resources, or recover from a loss of resources, people must invest the resources they have. Thirdly, resource

gain becomes more salient in the face of resource loss. When an individual is in the midst of losing resources, whatever resources they are able to gain will be more powerful and precious than those they gain when they are in the midst of gaining resources. Finally, the last principle says that when people are threatened with or are in the midst of resource loss, they become defensive and aggressive in an effort to protect what resources they have left (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

There are also a number of corollaries associated with COR theory, two of which are particularly important to our understanding of burnout. First, those who have resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of gain. This is true both at the individual and organizational level. The second says that when resource loss does occur, individuals and organizations tend to spiral downward with each subsequent loss. Resource loss is stressful. With each loss, individuals and organizations have fewer and fewer resources to be able to effectively manage the stress and recover from the loss, leading to a downward spiral of resource loss that tends to grow both in momentum (each spiral occurs faster) and magnitude (since loss is more powerful than gain, each loss will be greater and mean more than the last; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Both JD-R and COR theory have received ample support in the literature and have been used in a number of studies to explain how burnout develops in employees (e.g., Bakker et al., 2023b; Bunjak et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2020; Demerouti et al., 2008; Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Huang & Simha, 2018). When individuals experience job demands that they perceive as stressful, they may view those demands as a threat to their resources (Bakker et al., 2023b; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). While employees invest resources to protect themselves, their job demands are not being addressed or lowered. This means that the employee will have less resources to invest in work, making work even more difficult. Employees can

become caught in a loss cycle when encountering job demands, leading to increased stress and strain, and ultimately leading to employee burnout (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker et al., 2023b; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Burnt-out employees then start from a place of resource loss when encountering the next job demand, especially due to the physical and mental consequences of burnout (Bakker et al., 2023b).

Central to JD-R theory is the idea that job demands, while not inherently stressful themselves, can lead to stress and strain for the employee, especially if the employee does not have the resources to deal with the demand (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Stress, especially in the workplace, has been found to be one of the biggest and most powerful antecedents of burnout (Antoniou et al., 2013; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2004; Bunjak et al., 2023; Demerouti et al., 2001; Jenaro et al., 2007; Løvseth et al., 2012; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2011; Sutherland & Cooper, 1990). Similar to burnout, high levels of stress can lead to increased mental health problems (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999; Holton et al., 2016; Montero-Marin et al., 2014), decreased productivity at work (Holton et al., 2016), increased presenteeism (Demerouti et al., 2008; Holton et al., 2016), and increased turnover intention (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Giebels & Janssen, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Sutherland & Cooper, 1990), as well as a number of physical health issues, such as cardiovascular disease (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014; Schnall et al., 2017; Toker et al., 2012), disordered or disrupted sleep patterns (Toker & Melamed, 2017), abnormal eating patterns (Bennett, 2017), increased use of sick days (Peterson et al., 2018); increased risk for musculoskeletal injury (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014; Hartzell et al., 2017), and an increased risk for cancer (Johansen et al., 2017). When the stress is prolonged, it can lead employees to become burnt out and disengaged from their work, resulting in lower performance and higher turnover (Holton et al., 2016; Sutherland & Cooper,

1990) for the organization and an increased risk of psychological and physical health problems for the individual (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014; Holton et al., 2016; Montero-Marin et al., 2014). The effects of stress, while detrimental in and of themselves, can be amplified when employees do not have the resources to properly address the demands/stressors, or effectively manage the stress in themselves (Bakker et al., 2023a). According to COR, resources can be gained or built (Hobfoll, 1989). While not every resource is under the employees' control, employees do have the ability to grow and build their own coping skills and stress-resilience.

Coping

Although often overlooked in the burnout literature, employees are not simply passive victims of their environments and circumstances. Even in the case of limited resources, employees play an active role in both the creation and modification of their working environments (Bakker et al., 2023b). JD-R theory posits that job resources can act as a buffer between job demands and strain and can increase motivation and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). One type of resource over which employees have control is their coping strategies (Holton et al., 2016).

When facing stress and demands, individuals will engage in a variety of coping strategies. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person" (p. 141). A number of these coping strategies are beneficial (i.e., adaptive, Holton et al., 2016; control, Koeske et al., 1993; problem-focused, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to the individual, often focused on recovering from and replenishing lost resources (Adam, 2023; Demerouti, 2015; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), such as exercise, meditation, social support, seeking assistance, planning, and recovery activities after

work (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Holton et al., 2016; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Jenaro et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2023; Koeske et al., 1993; Shin et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2015; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Not only do adaptive coping strategies help employees recover from and rebuild lost resources, but they can have proactive effects, preparing employees to better face the challenges they will encounter in the future (i.e., build resilience; Davidson et al., 2010; Holton et al., 2016; Nizielski et al., 2013; Roswag et al., 2023). Problem-focused and adaptive coping strategies have been found to be negatively related to burnout levels across a variety of occupations (e.g., De Rijk et al., 1998; Lapalme et al., 2023; Leiter, 1991; Nizielski et al., 2013; Shin et al., 2014).

One specific group of adaptive coping strategies, labeled recovery, involves reducing or completely removing demands and stressors to reduce strain and rebuild personal resources (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Meijman & Mulder, 1998; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2017). Four unique activities have been identified as recovery activities: psychological detachment, relaxation, control, and mastery (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). Psychological detachment implies refraining from engaging in any work-related activities while not at work and mentally disengaging from work demands (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Relaxation can involve a number of individual behaviors, all of which aim to reduce psychological activation and arousal and increase positive emotions (Stone et al., 1995; Van Hoof & de Pater, 2017). Control refers to individuals' perceived freedom to choose what activities they want to engage in, to what degree to engage in those activities, and how to go about that engagement (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Finally, mastery is engagement in challenging, possibly novel, activities and experiences that provide a chance to learn and succeed (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Recovery activities are some of the most studied coping strategies, and have been shown to have positive effects, in terms of reducing burnout, increasing work engagement, building resilience, and improving employee health and

well-being, even at the day-to-day level (Arnold et al., 2023; Bono et al., 2013; Demerouti et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2021; Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016; Singh et al., 2015; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; Sonnentag et al., 2008; Sonnentag & Schiffner, 2019; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012; ten Brummelhuis & Trougakos, 2014; McMurtie & Crane, 2020; Van Hooff & de Pater, 2017).

As with many things in life, where there is positive, there is also negative. Just as there are positive and adaptive coping strategies that can serve to replenish and reenergize workers, there are negative, maladaptive coping strategies which serve to worsen well-being, and can accelerate burnout (Biggs et al., 2017; Dolan & Ender, 2008; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Holton et al., 2016; Montero-Marin et al., 2014). These maladaptive activities can include drinking in excess, eating in excess, smoking, gambling, using illicit substances, ruminating on the negative aspects of the job, or avoiding and neglecting the situation which is causing the stress to occur (Hirschman, 1970; Holton et al., 2016; Jenaro et al., 2007; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Not all maladaptive coping strategies start out as a "bad" thing. Many coping strategies can be helpful in small amounts or in the right context, and turn harmful if done in excess (e.g., drinking socially vs. drinking in excess; venting about work with friends vs. excessively ruminating on negative aspects of work; Dolan & Ender, 2008). Two main characteristics prominently affect whether a coping mechanism will be harmful or productive: how individuals appraise their situations, and the resources available to facilitate engagement in different coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) developed a transactional theory of stress and coping which is built on the premise that individuals are constantly monitoring and appraising their environments. When people encounter stimuli they perceive as threatening, challenging, or harmful, they will engage in coping strategies to manage their own emotions and/or deal with the

stressor at hand. Engagement in coping strategies produces either favorable or unfavorable results, leading to either positive emotions or further distress and further engagement in coping strategies (Biggs et al., 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Overall, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) categorized coping strategies into two categories: problem-focused strategies which deal directly with managing the stressor, or emotion-focused strategies that deal with managing the emotions which arise as a result of the stressor. If an individual is engaging in coping strategies, then at some level, they perceive at least some of the stimuli in their environment to be stressful. How they appraise the stressor, including how much control or influence they feel they have over the situation, or how harmful or challenging the stressor is, directly effects whether or not they engage in problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies (Adam, 2023; de Rijk et al., 1998; Dolan & Ender, 2008; Finkelstein-Fox et al., 2019; Folkman et al., 1986; Karasek, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Antoniou and colleagues (2013) perhaps put it best:

> "People will adopt the emotion-oriented coping [style] when they think they cannot do anything to change the environmental conditions. In contrast, they adopt a problem-oriented coping [style] when they consider environmental conditions as malleable" (p. 350).

The second important factor affecting how individuals choose coping strategies is the amount and type of resources they have available to them (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). Engaging in coping strategies, while designed to recover lost resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018), is in and of itself a source of resource depletion (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Davidson et al., 2010; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Lapalme et al., 2023). For example, if an employee wants to engage in the problem-focused coping strategy of seeking advice and assistance with their stressor at work (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), they need to have the resources of time to seek

assistance, a good support system from whom to ask advice, and leaders who are willing to go out of their way to help employees. This one strategy requires a number of resources to be successful (de Rijk et al., 1998; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). Similarly, to engage in recovery activities, which are perhaps the most common activities utilized by employees to replenish resources lost at work (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), employees need the time, space (both mental and physical), and ability to fully detach from work and engage in whatever replenishing activity they choose (Adam, 2023; Roswag et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2023). Research has found that when individuals do have the necessary resources, they are more likely to engage in active and problem-focused coping strategies (Bakker et al., 2004; Dolan & Ender, 2008; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), which in turn have more positive outcomes for the individual than escape and emotion-focused coping strategies (Biggs et al., 2017; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Holton et al., 2016; Leiter, 1991; Shin et al., 2014).

Beyond appraisal and resources, engagement in coping strategies has been shown to be predicted by organization-level predictors such as the level of job demands and strain (Bakker et al., 2023a; Bennett et al., 2016), as well as individual-level predictors such as personality (Pilch et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2015; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001) and mindfulness (Finklestein-Fox et al., 2019; Yang & Jo, 2022). One of the propositions of JD-R states that job demands and strain may lead to maladaptive and dysfunctional self-regulation behaviors, which can include negative, emotion-focused, and maladaptive coping strategies, leading to an increase in burnout (Adam, 2023; Bakker et al., 2023a; Bennett et al., 2016; Kinnunen et al., 2011; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). However, personality variables such as conscientiousness/proactivity (Pilch et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2015), optimism (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Riolli & Savicki, 2002), agreeableness, and extraversion have been linked with increased use of adaptive, problem-focused coping

strategies, lower levels of burnout, and higher levels of work engagement (Pilch et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Hobfoll (1989) argues that these personal characteristics are in and of themselves resources that can impact an individual's ability to influence their environment and manage their stress. Similarly, more mindful employees have been shown to have more positive appraisal frameworks, more positive affect, and better work-life balance than those with lower levels of trait mindfulness (Finklestein-Fox et al., 2019; Yang & Jo, 2022). Overall, engagement in positive, problem-focused coping strategies has been linked to lower burnout and better health outcomes for employees (Bono et al., 2013; Davidson et al., 2010; Lapalme et al., 2023; Roswag et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2023) especially when employees have access to the resources needed for the coping strategy to have its maximum effect (Dolan & Ender, 2008; Holton et al., 2016; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003).

According to the JD-R theory, job demands lead to strain, which then leads to negative outcomes, such as burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). However, there exists a number of buffers, such as job resources, which can mitigate the negative effects that job demands have on strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Similarly, when employees encounter stressors and strain in the workplace, they can engage in a set of coping strategies to mitigate the negative effects that stressors may have, either by dealing with the stressor directly or managing the emotions and individual-level consequences that stressor may produce (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These coping strategies can be either positive (adaptive) or negative (maladaptive) and can produce their own consequences (Holton et al., 2016), including influencing the amount of burnout the employee may experience as a result of the stress/strain they encounter (e.g., Holton et al., 2016; Shin et al., 2014). Job and personal resources (such as coping strategies) can also lead to higher motivation and work engagement (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Both JD-R and COR assert that those with resources can gain or build more resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hobfoll, 1989). In other words, coping strategies may be proactive, allowing employees to build resources to better deal with stress in the future (Holton et al., 2016). One such resource is resilience (Bakker et al., 2003).

Resilience

Resilience was originally conceptualized as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Masten et al., 1990, p. 425)." More recent definitions have added ideas of perseverance through the times of change and adversity, and rebounding/returning to a state of equilibrium (Luthans, 2002; Ong et al., 2006; Rice & Liu, 2016). Some researchers go so far as to add that resilience indicates the ability to make progress or grow despite stress or adversity (Luthans, 2002). Many researchers also agree that resilience is closely linked with coping, and that resilient individuals are those who are grounded in hardiness and are able to utilize positive coping strategies in the face of adversity (Bonanno, 2004; Hu et al., 2015; Seery et al., 2013; Waugh et al., 2008).

In light of JD-R and COR, Kuntz et al., (2016, 2017) argue that resilience involves a number of adaptive, learning, and support behaviors that both utilize resources and serve to indicate resource availability to others. Shaw et al., (2016) add that resilient individuals are not only able to utilize available resources but proactively develop new personal and workplace resources. More resilient individuals are able to better proactively prepare for stress, and then more effectively utilize their resources in the face of stress, thereby minimizing the negative effects stress can cause (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Some researchers argue that not only is resilience beneficial when dealing with stress, but an essential piece of being able to engage in coping strategies (Wang et al., 2022).

Resilience has been linked with a number of positive organizational outcomes, such as high performance, greater engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors, greater organizational commitment (Foerster & Dunchek, 2017; Meng et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2015; Song et al., 2009; Vanhove et al., 2016), and higher compassion satisfaction for caring professions (Giddens et al., 2022). Within JD-R, resilience has consistently been linked with greater levels of work engagement (Nieto et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2017). Wagnild and Collins (2009) found that individuals with high levels of resilience were more persevering, more self-reliant, and had clearer goals and paths to achieve those goals than those low in resilience.

Resilience not only provides a number of beneficial outcomes, but also serves to protect against a number of negative and detrimental outcomes. Vanhove et al., (2016) found that resilience served to prevent absenteeism and reduce counterproductive work behaviors in organizations. Resilience can protect employees against the negative effects of job demands, stressors, and unfavorable or oppressive work environments (Jackson et al., 2007). Resilience can also serve to reduce the amount of stress an employee feels when facing job demands and stressors (Al-Hawari et al., 2020; Giddens et al., 2022; Kuntz et al., 2016; Plimmer et al., 2022). One of the most consistently documented outcomes of resilience, though, is that resilience protects against, and can even reduce, burnout and its associated negative outcomes (Cheung, 2024; Cooke et al., 2013; Fernandez-Castillo & Fernandez-Prados, 2021; Foerster & Dunchek, 2017; Foster et al., 2018; Hao et al., 2015; Hetzel-Riggin et al., 2020; Jeong & Shin, 2023; Kimura et al., 2018; Meynaar et al., 2021; Mealer et al., 2012; Meng et al., 2019; Serrao et al., 2021; Shakir et al., 2020; Smout et al., 2022; Steensma et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2018).

Research has consistently shown that resilience must develop in the face of stress (Kuntz et al., 2016; Pietrzak & Southwick, 2011; van der Vegt et al., 2015; Vanhove et al., 2016). In the

workplace, job demands and stressors are responsible for the majority, if not all, of the stress an employee may experience (Bakker et al., 2023a; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Employees must engage in coping when encountering stressors and demands in the workplace (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the midst of this, employees are able to build resilience. These resilience building efforts can also proactively build resources for future coping and resilience building (Kuntz et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2016). Thus, resilience and proactive coping have an inextricable reciprocal relationship (Vivolo et al., 2024). Building resilience is both a form and an outcome of successful proactive coping.

Unlike some other personal characteristics, resilience is malleable and dynamic (Bonanno, 2004; Luthans, 2002; Masten, 2001; Montpetit et al., 2010; Vanhove et al., 2016, Waugh & Koster, 2015). This means resilience can be developed and built. A number of research efforts and interventions have been studied to determine the most effective resilience-building techniques. These have included goal setting and problem solving techniques (Delaney et al., 2023; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Seidel et al., 2023); physical health interventions, such as maintaining physical fitness, eating well, and getting enough sleep (Bagheri et al., 2023; Delaney et al., 2023; DePierro et al., 2023; LeBlanc & Schaufeli, 2008; McEwen, 2022; Seidel et al., 2023); anxiety reducing techniques, such as grounding, deep breathing, mindfulness; and visualization exercises (LeBlanc & Schaufeli, 2008; Seidel et al., 2023; West et al., 2016); social support (Ahmed et al., 2022; DePierro et al., 2023; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Kuntz et al., 2017; McEwen, 2022; Seidel et al., 2023); reflection on the past (Kuntz et al., 2017; Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2018; Seidel et al., 2023); growing in cognitive and emotional flexibility (DePierro et al., 2023; Kuntz et al., 2017; Shepherd et al., 2009); and recovery from work, including disconnection and engagement in hobbies (Bagheri et al., 2023; Engel et al., 2020; Goldsby et

al., 2005; Seidel et al., 2023). Throughout all of the different resilience-building behaviors and interventions that have been studied, one consistent finding is that resilience-building is dependent on interpersonal and social factors, especially reciprocally beneficial relationships (Bonanno, 2004; Cohen, 2004; Masten, 2001; Meredith et al., 2011; Newson et al., 2008; O'Doughtery Wright et al., 2013; Waugh & Koster, 2015). Merely providing or signaling resources for an employee may not be enough to develop resilience (Kuntz et al., 2017). Resilience is strongly built through interpersonal interactions (Shaw et al., 2016).

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) highlighted the vital nature of interpersonal relationships in part of their social exchange theory. They argue that relationships are built through mutual investment and a mutual exchange of beneficial behaviors. Some of the most important behaviors related to deepening interpersonal relationships are perceived support, the quality of the exchanges and interactions between the two parties, how committed each party member is to the other and to deepening the relationship, how much trust the two share, and how much each member is contributing to the relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The importance of social interactions is highlighted throughout many aspects of organizations, but is especially prevalent in burnout, coping, and resilience. Burnout has been shown to be contagious among employees (Bakker et al., 2005, 2007). Similarly, just as burnout can be shared between employees, resources and social support can be shared (Hablesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989, Hobfoll et al., 2018; Kuntz et al., 2017). Resilience is dependent on social interactions to thrive and grow (Shaw et al., 2016). While research on resilience growth is still in its infancy (Tonkin et al., 2018), much of it has focused on the employee as an individual, or the employee and their peers or families as sources of social support (e.g., Seidel et al., 2023). However, one important workplace relationship that has yet to

be fully addressed in the burnout, coping, and resilience literature is that of the relationship between an employee and their leader (see Fan et al., 2020 for an exception).

Leadership

While a full review of leadership research is beyond the scope of this study, it is necessary to discuss what has been studied in relation to leaders' effects on burnout and leaders acting as role models for employees. The relationship between leaders and their followers is one of the most powerful in the workplace (Thomas et al., 2013), producing lasting impacts on both the followers and the organizations in which they are situated. Previous research has shown that leaders can have influences, both positive and negative, on their followers' emotional states, well-being, and actions (Diebig et al., 2017; Dubinsky et al., 1995; Ellis et al., 2019; Ilies et al., 2007a; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Kim et al., 2023; Lowe et al., 1996; Martin et al., 2023; Skakon et al., 2010; Stein et al., 2021; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Tariq et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2021). For the purposes of this study, I am going to focus my review of relevant leadership research on the "bright" side of leadership and its associated behaviors (excluding destructive, abusive, toxic, laissez-faire leadership, etc.).

Yukl and colleagues (2002) argue that leader behavior can be categorized as task-behavior, relational behavior, or change behavior (building on earlier behavioral taxonomies established by Fleishman, 1953). Task behaviors can include clarifying the roles and responsibilities for followers, assigning tasks, checking on the quality and progress of the work, evaluating the performance of employees, and planning how to best allocate resources to accomplish goals. Relational behaviors revolve around developing higher quality relationships with followers by including them in decision making processes, offering them necessary encouragement and support, recognizing and praising performance, and providing coaching and

development opportunities. Change behaviors include casting visions for the future, taking risks to achieve goals, assessing outside information for challenges and growth opportunities, and encouraging innovation among followers (Yukl et al., 2002). A number of popular leadership frameworks have been built around these core behaviors (i.e., transformational and transactional leadership, Bass, 1985; charismatic leadership, Conger et al., 2000; path-goal leadership theory, House, 1996), which recognize the importance of leader behaviors for bringing about change in followers and organizations.

To be a leader is to, at least at some level, take care of followers and enact change. And while there is a growing body of evidence indicating that leaders' behavior and followers witnessing/perceiving their leaders' behaviors can have direct influence over their own (the followers) behaviors (e.g., Tariq et al., 2020; Wu at al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021), what has been largely missing from this conversation is how leaders affect follower behaviors with regards to burnout. Leadership research has typically approached the topic of burnout from one of two lenses. The first is looking at when leaders themselves are experiencing burnout, and the destructive effects this can have on leaders, followers, and organizations (e.g., burnout and emotional contagion; Bolger et al., 1989; Chullen, 2012; Dunn, 2022; Petitta & Jiang, 2020; Petitta et al., 2016; Tariq et al., 2020). The second is focused on different leader behaviors and how they affect the levels of burnout their followers experience (e.g., Montano et al., 2017). For the purposes of this review, I am going to focus primarily on the latter.

Several leader behaviors have been identified to have impacts on follower burnout. Lådegard (2011) and Grant (2006) both found evidence that leaders who help their followers to set goals, develop and enact plans to achieve those goals, and provide encouragement and feedback to the follower as they accomplish their goals are able to reduce the levels of

psychological stress and burnout their followers experience. This supports propositions of both the path-goal theory of leadership (House, 1996) and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) – that one central function of leaders is to clarify how followers can achieve their goals, reducing the stress that comes from role ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964) and subsequently increasing the performance of followers (Bass, 1985; House, 1996; Montano et al., 2017; Schriesheim et al., 2006). Following the trickledown model (Ambrose et al., 2013), which argues that organizational processes and behaviors can trickle down from those in higher positions to those in lower positions, Sonnentag and Schiffner (2019) began to establish evidence that if leaders spend time detaching from work, their followers may also detach from work and experience lower levels of exhaustion and lower need for recovery in the future. Although this behavior does not directly occur between leader and follower, seeing their leader detach from work may empower some employees to also detach. Maslach and Leiter (2016) emphasize that leaders can help to reduce stress and burnout in their followers by actively providing social support, changing the work environment to better meet the needs of followers, and promoting relaxation, fitness, health, and self-understanding. Finally, Harms and colleagues (2017) and Sonnentag and Pundt (2016) both found that leaders can reduce or prevent burnout in their followers by working to have individualized and high-quality relationships with each of their followers (i.e., high quality leader-member exchange relationships; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Interestingly, very little research has examined leader behaviors prompting follower behaviors in direct relation to reducing or preventing burnout (e.g., engagement in coping strategies or other resilience-building behaviors; see Koch & Binnewies, 2015; and Sonnentag & Schiffner, 2019 for exceptions). Part of a leader's responsibility is to be a role model to followers – to show them not only how to best operate within the organization, but also how to care for

their own needs. According to the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), the social information that individuals receive directly impacts the behaviors they choose to enact. The more influence the information source has over the individual, the more salient the information they receive from that source will be (Jabeen et al., 2022; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Leaders in organizations are in prime positions to have powerful and direct influence over their followers' behaviors (Jabeen et al., 2022).

There is some evidence that leaders can successfully model desired behaviors and have their followers follow their lead and enact those or similar behaviors themselves. Social learning theory says that the majority of human learning occurs through observation, especially of role models (Bandura, 1977). People want to emulate others they respect and hold in higher regard than themselves. In organizations, this is most clearly seen in the leader-follower relationship. Wu and colleagues (2021) found evidence that when a leader demonstrates serving behaviors, their followers will also begin to display serving behaviors. Hu et al. (2023) demonstrated that when leaders show high levels of job involvement, their followers will also show high levels of job involvement, leading to better creativity and performance. Even outside of the workplace, leaders can have influence on their followers' behaviors. Koch and Binnewies (2015) found that when leaders have clear segmentation between their work and home lives (e.g., clear boundaries, detachment after work, etc.), their followers feel empowered to also establish clear segmentation between their work and home lives. This powerful influence is not limited to only positive behaviors. Lian et al. (2022) showed that when leaders engage in unethical pro-organizational behaviors (i.e., behaviors that are morally wrong but benefit the organization; Umphress et al., 2010), their followers can begin to show moral disengagement and subsequently engage in unethical behaviors themselves.

Focusing on resilience-building and coping behaviors, DePierro et al. (2023) advocate that social support is a key strategy to building resilience. Because of the nature and power of the leader-follower relationship (Thomas, 2013), leaders are in a key position to be able to provide social support to their followers. Beyond this, leaders can also directly influence the culture and environment their followers work in (Harland et al., 2005). When engaging in positive and helpful actions, leaders directly support and create environments which encourage building resilience in their followers (Tsai, 2011). Several studies support this powerful impact of leaders, citing leader behaviors and the environment leaders create as situational enablers that influence the growth of employee resilience (Kuntz et al., 2016, Näswall et al., 2015; Zhu et al., 2019).

Resilience, similar to burnout, can also be contagious, especially between a leader and their follower (Fan et al., 2020). As leaders demonstrate, build, and model resilience, their followers are able to observe, learn, and develop their own resilience (Bartone, 2006; Story et al., 2013). This supports the social learning model (Bandura, 1977). Employees watch their role models (i.e., leaders), observe their behavior, and enact it themselves. In line with previous leader-follower research (e.g., Koch & Binnewies, 2015; Wu et al., 2021), it is logical to assume that when leaders are modeling resilience-building behaviors, their followers can learn from them and enact those same, or similar behaviors, themselves.

Sometimes, behaviors are not explicitly clear, especially if the witness does not experience the behavior firsthand. In the case of coping, followers may not always directly witness their leaders engaging in coping strategies or resilience-building behaviors. This does not mean that the behavior is without consequence. If the leader is engaging in resilience-building behaviors, then they should be growing in their resilience. The follower may be able to perceive the leader engaging in the resilience-building behavior simply by witnessing how the leader is

talking and acting once engaging in the behavior, even if they don't witness the behavior itself. Following social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), the follower may then adopt the behaviors and attitudes of the leader, thus engaging in resilience-building behaviors themselves. This pattern has been demonstrated with other perceived leader behaviors, including perceived leader safety behavior leading to followers engaging in more safety behaviors (Fruhen et al., 2022), perceived leader humility leading to followers engaging in prosocial behaviors (Jia et al., 2024), perceived leader busyness leading to followers engaging in interaction avoidance behaviors (Huang & Zhang, 2021), and even perceived leader narcissistic behaviors leading to followers being hesitant to engage in voice behaviors (Zhang et al., 2022). Although the followers may not have been witnessing the behaviors outright, the perception of their leaders engaging in the various behaviors was enough to drive change in the followers themselves.

In summary, burnout has major implications for both the individual and the organization (Holton et al., 2016; Maslach et al., 2001; Weiss, 2020). Both the JD-R and COR assert that while job demands and a lack of resources can exacerbate and lead to burnout, adequate access to and utilization of resources can be a major protective factor (Bakker et al., 2023a; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Coping strategies, especially those targeted at building resilience, are beneficial resources over which the employee has a high degree of control (Holton et al., 2016; Kuntz et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2016). Successful coping and resilience can not only lower and prevent burnout but also increase engagement and performance in employees (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001; Kuntz et al., 2017). Much of the previous coping research has focused on coping and resilience from an individual level, neglecting the powerful relationship between a leader and their follower, and the influence the leader can have as a role-model to their follower.

The majority of research on leader role-modeling for follower behavior has focused on generally positive and organizationally-beneficial behaviors. Leaders have powerful effects on the outcomes for followers and organizations (Banks et al., 2014) and are regarded as powerful role models (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Judge & Bono, 2001; Koch & Binnewies, 2015). Despite some research on leaders' influence on follower burnout through other mechanisms (e.g., Densten, 2005; Diebig et al., 2017; Stein et al., 2021), there seems to be a gap in the literature regarding leaders' influence over followers' engagement in coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors to protect against burnout (Skakon et al., 2010). Knowing the impact leaders can have on their followers by modeling behaviors, it is reasonable to suspect that this influence may extend to other burnout-related behaviors, such as engagement in coping strategies and building resilience. Sonnentag and Schiffner (2019) and Koch and Binnewies (2015) provided some evidence for this relationship, but their studies were limited to detachment. Leaders can not only facilitate but model other coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors for their followers by engaging in the behaviors themselves. When followers perceive their leaders engaging in resilience-building behaviors, they may be more likely to engage in those or similar behaviors themselves, thereby strengthening their own resilience. Thus, I hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived leader resilience-building behaviors will be positively related to follower resilience-building behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Follower resilience-building behavior will be (a) negatively related to burnout and (b) positively related to work engagement and (c) in-role performance.

Personal Resources

Employees within the same leader may still respond to stress and behavioral modeling in varying ways, due to their own personal characteristics and resources. Personal characteristics that can affect individuals' ability to control and influence their environment are considered as resources under the JD-R model (Hobfoll, 1989). Bakker et al. (2023a) highlight the importance of personal resources in the job demands-resources process, saying that both job and personal resources can have strong positive effects on work engagement, and buffering effects on the relationship between job demands and exhaustion. Personal resources have also been linked to higher levels of work engagement (Bakker et al., 2007; Mauno et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) and resilience (Hobfoll et al., 2003). In terms of predicting burnout, some of the most studied personal resources include external-internal locus of control, (Benveniste et al., 2024; Gan et al., 2007), cognitive or psychological flexibility (Cheng, 2001; Gan et al., 2007), and optimism (Alarcon et al., 2009; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021; Riolli & Savicki, 2002).

Optimism

Optimism is defined as the tendency to believe that one will generally experience good outcomes in life (Scheier et al., 1994, 2001). Some researchers have conceptualized optimism as a dispositional stable variable (Given et al., 1993; Wrosch & Scheier, 2003), while some argue that it is a malleable personal resource (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007, 2009). No matter the conceptualization, optimism has been linked to lower levels of burnout (Alarcon et al., 2009; Fry, 1995; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021; Riolli & Savicki, 2002), higher levels of work engagement (Rasmussen et al., 2006; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), higher levels of well-being (Scheier et al., 2001), and higher levels of resilience (Nieto et al., 2022). Optimism has also been

shown to have protective factors, enabling people to better deal with life-changes and stress (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Given et al., 1993; Rasmussen et al., 2006).

Beyond the direct benefits optimism can have, research has shown that optimism can have moderating effects on a variety of important relationships. Riolli and Savicki (2002) showed that optimism protected workers from the negative effects of low job resources on burnout. The workers with high optimism demonstrated significantly higher personal accomplishment levels than those with low optimism. Fry (1995) showed that optimism protected against the decline in self-esteem and increase in burnout that was associated with higher levels of daily hassles and greater time pressures at work. Similarly, Mäkikangas and Kinnunen (2003) showed that the relationship between time pressure and mental distress was worse for employees with low optimism levels. Finally, Riolli and Savicki (2003) demonstrated that optimism not only reduced burnout, but also reduced the impact that stress had on burnout symptoms.

In general, those with a high level of optimism tend to display more positive feelings and proactive personality traits, even in the midst of stress and demands, which contributes to higher levels of resilience (Rasmussen et al., 2006; Zhu & Li, 2021). When facing difficult situations, more optimistic individuals tend to adopt more adaptive coping strategies (Iwanaga et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Scheier & Carver, 1985). Those with higher levels of optimism tend to not be weighed down by previous failures, viewing them as growth and learning opportunities rather than sources of shame (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Their positivity and perseverance allow optimists to more actively perceive, seek, and develop personal and job resources, allowing them to more effectively cope with the threatening situations they encounter and proactively develop future resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Rasmussen et al., 2006). As such, and due

to its relationships with engagement and burnout, and the moderating effect optimism has on the relationships between stressors and burnout, optimism may be an important factor in the relationship between resilience building behaviors, burnout, engagement, and performance:

> **Hypothesis 3:** Follower optimism will moderate the relationships between follower resilience-building behaviors and work engagement, burnout, and in-role performance, such that (a) the relationship between follower resilience-building behaviors and burnout will become more strongly negative for those lower in optimism, (b) the relationship between follower resilience-building behaviors and work engagement will become more strongly positive for those higher in optimism, and (c) the relationship between follower resilience-building behaviors and in-role performance will become more strongly positive for those higher in optimism as compared to those lower in optimism.

Psychological Flexibility

Psychological flexibility refers to people's ability to focus on their present circumstances and situations, and take action toward their desired goals, even in the face of challenges or stressors (Bond et al., 2008; Lloyd et al., 2013). Psychological flexibility is centered around six core psychological processes: (1) remaining flexible and present in the moment, (2) maintaining an open and accepting view towards thoughts and feelings, (3), clarifying values, hopes, and goals, (4) acting toward goals in line with values, (5) accepting unwanted feelings that may occur during value-based actions, and (6) increasing defusion skills, such as recognizing unwanted thoughts and seeing them as just thoughts rather than accepting them as truths (Flaxman et al., 2013; Hayes et al., 2012; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). In addition to this, individuals high in psychological, or cognitive, flexibility will be able to focus on currently relevant information and shift between cognitive strategies in response to changes in their environment (Gabrys et al.,

2018; Moore & Malinowski, 2009; Morton et al., 2011) This important personal resource has been linked with better mental health, higher job performance (Bond & Bunce, 2003; Bond & Flaxman, 2006), lower job-related stress (Bond et al., 2008; Puolakanaho et al., 2018), and lower levels of compassion fatigue (Holding et al., 2024; Sarabia-Cobo et al., 2021). Previous research has also shown that psychological flexibility can be developed and grown over time (Kashden et al., 2006) through a number of strategies such as techniques common in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT, e.g., cognitive reappraisal, goal setting, etc.; Flaxman & Bond, 2010) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT, e.g., mindfulness, cognitive defusion, acceptance, etc., Lloyd et al., 2013; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). In the context of JD-R and COR, this positions psychological flexibility as a personal resource that can be developed, spent, and gained back, leading to better outcomes for the employee (Bakker et al., 2023a; Hobfoll, 1989).

In relation to burnout, psychological flexibility has been linked with decreased emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Lloyd et al., 2013; Puolakanaho et al., 2020), and lower levels of burnout overall (Holding et al., 2024; Kurz et al., 2014; Noone & Hastings, 2011; Sarabia-Cobo et al., 2021; Slowiak & Jay, 2023). In a study of medical residents, Terry et al. (2022) found that increased psychological flexibility was associated with higher degrees of residential program satisfaction, and those with higher levels of psychological flexibility reported feeling better prepared to deal with possible future difficulties in their program. Psychological flexibility has been shown to have a direct negative effect on burnout (Fiery, 2017; Holding et al., 2024; Onwezen et al., 2014; Ruiz & Odriozola-González, 2017; Ye et al., 2022) and a direct positive effect on performance (Onwezen et al., 2014) and engagement (Fiery, 2017). Additionally, psychological flexibility has been shown to moderate the relationship between stress factors and burnout symptoms, both in the workplace (Onwezen et al., 2014; Ruiz & Odriozola-González,

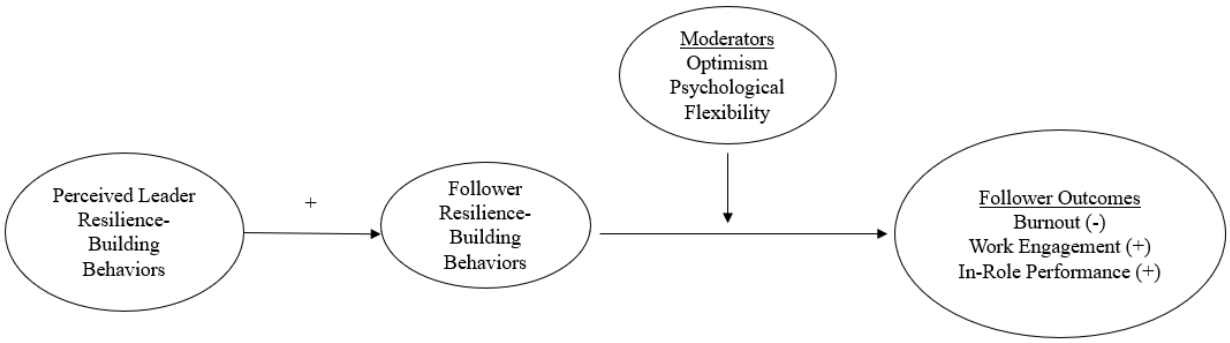
2017) and outside of it (Cao et al., 2024). Chong et al. (2023) found evidence that psychological flexibility boosted the positive effects of job satisfaction on mental well-being and lessened the effects of burnout on mental health problems.

While there is a growing body of evidence that psychological flexibility can result in lower burnout, and even moderate the relationship between job stress and burnout (Holding et al., 2024; Onwezen et al., 2014), there seems to be a gap regarding the other relationships proposed in the JD-R model (i.e., engagement and performance, Bakker et al., 2023a; see Bond & Flaxman, 2006 for an exception). Following similar relationships outlined above, psychological flexibility may be an important moderating factor in the relationships between follower resilience-building behavior, burnout, engagement, and performance. Thus, I proposed the following:

> **Hypothesis 4:** Follower psychological flexibility will moderate the relationships between follower resilience-building behaviors and work engagement, burnout, and in-role performance, such that (a) the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and burnout will be more strongly negative for those lower in psychological flexibility, (b) the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and work engagement will be more strongly positive for those higher in psychological flexibility, and (c) the relationship between follower resilience building-behavior and in-role performance will be more strongly positive for those higher in psychological flexibility as compared to those lower in psychological flexibility.

Figure 2

Fully Hypothesized Model



Method

Participants and Procedure

Because this study examined the effects of leader behavior as perceived by followers, and in line with similar previous research focusing on the perception of leader behavior (Fruen et al., 2022; Huang & Zhang, 2021; Jia et al., 2024), data were gathered from individual followers only (as opposed to dyadic pairs of leaders and followers). Following a power analysis conducted using G*Power (recommended between 200-300 participants; Erdfelder et al., 1996), data were gathered from 319 participants who were recruited through the online platform Prolific, where participants were able to self-select into the survey. Data collected from online sources such as Prolific have demonstrated similar and satisfactory psychometric properties as data collected from other sources (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Prolific also allows for recruiting from a wider, more diverse population than could be done with convenience sampling (Aguinis et al., 2021; Henrich et al., 2010; Landers & Behrend, 2015). Although online samples do come with an increased risk of careless responding (Aguinis et al., 2021; Meade & Craig, 2012; Ward & Meade, 2023), the benefits of ease, access, lower cost, and a large participant pool outweigh the potential negatives.

Participants completed the online survey on their own time after self-selecting into the study via Prolific. Data from eighteen participants were removed for failing qualifying conditions (e.g., at least 18 years old, residing in the United States, not being employed by North Carolina State University) or missing data on any item. Two attention check items were included in the survey, and participants who failed both items were removed. This resulted in the removal of eleven participants. To further minimize potential effects of careless responding, I tested for invariability in responses by calculating a longstring index (Meade & Craig, 2012). Participants who fell outside of two standard deviations above the mean of number of consecutive identical responses were removed. This resulted in the removal of twenty-two careless responders. Bowling et al., (2023) recommend removing participants who do not spend sufficient time on each question (two-seconds per question per page). No participants violated this recommendation. Finally, one participant reported their age as "452," and this outlier was subsequently removed. This left a final sample size of n=267, which was still well within the G*Power recommendation. The final sample was 58.8% female (n=157) and 70.4% white (n=188). The majority of the sample ranged between twenty-six to thirty-five years old (n=92, 34.5%), was married (n=119, 44.6%), worked in healthcare or social assistance (n=54, 20.2%), had been at their current job between one to five years (n=113, 42.3%), and had completed a bachelor's degree (n=120, 44.9%). See Appendix A for full demographic breakdown.

Measures

Participants were provided the following measures. Items, instructions, and rating scales for all measures can be found in Appendix B.

Resilience-Building Behaviors

Resilience-building behaviors were measured using the nine-item Employee Resilience Scale developed by Näswall et al. (2019). Each item was measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=almost never to 7=almost always. An example item is "I seek assistance at work when I need specific resources." While several scales exist focusing on resilience-building behaviors (e.g., DePierro et al., 2023), this scale was chosen for its focus on resilience-building behaviors enacted in the workplace. Participants were asked to respond to each item twice: once to report their perceptions of what behaviors their leaders engage in (α=0.94), and again to report what behaviors they themselves engage in (α=0.88).

Burnout

Burnout was measured using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory developed by Demerouti (1999). This measure contains sixteen items, and each item is measured on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. This measure contains two subscales reflecting two facets of burnout: disengagement and emotional exhaustion. Example items include "It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way" (disengagement) and "There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work" (exhaustion; Demerouti et al., 2010). Several items are reverse scored, which were appropriately coded before final analysis. Both subscales demonstrated good levels of internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha estimates of α=0.85 for the exhaustion subscale, and α=0.81 for the disengagement subscale. This scale can also be used to measure the higher order factor of "burnout" (Demerouti et al., 2010; Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). Utilizing the scale in this manner also demonstrated good levels of reliability (α=0.89).

Work Engagement

Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). The scale has nine-items, and each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type frequency scale ranging from 0=never to 6=always/every day. There are three subscales within this measure reflecting three facets of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Example items include "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" (vigor), "I am enthusiastic about my job" (dedication), and "I am immersed in my work" (absorption). Each subscale demonstrated strong levels of internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha estimates of α=0.86 for the vigor subscale, α=0.90 for the dedication subscale, and α=0.83 for the absorption subscale. This scale can also be evaluated at a higher order single factor of "work engagement." Utilizing the scale to measure this higher-order factor also demonstrated strong levels of reliability (α=0.94).

In-Role Performance

In-role performance was measured using a version of the Job Performance Measure developed by Onwezen et al. (2014) that has been adapted for the current study. This measure contains nine items, each rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=totally not applicable to 5=totally applicable. The original items contain the stem "Today…" To better capture the followers' perceptions of their overall performance, this stem was removed, and the items were changed from past tense (i.e., "Today, I achieved the objectives of my job.") to present tense (i.e., "I achieve the objectives of my job."). This scale demonstrated good levels of internal consistency reliability with Cronbach's alpha estimates of α=0.88.

Optimism

Optimism was measured using the three-item Optimism Scale developed by Kuppens et al. (2007). Each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. An example item is "I often expect the best." Because this variable was conceptualized as a global, stable personality construct, participants were instructed to think about their life/attitude in general, rather than just at work, when responding to these items. This scale demonstrated good internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach alpha estimates of α=0.86.

Psychological Flexibility

Psychological flexibility was measured using the eighteen-item Cognitive Control and Flexibility Questionnaire developed by Gabrys et al. (2018). Each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The scale is split into two subscales with nine items each: (1) cognitive control over emotion and (2) appraisal and coping flexibility. Example items include "It is easy for me to ignore distracting thoughts" (cognitive control) and "I approach the situation from multiple angles" (coping flexibility). This scale demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach alpha estimates of α=0.92 for the cognitive control over emotion subscale and α=0.90 for the appraisal and coping flexibility subscale. Similarly to optimism, participants were instructed to consider their agreement with these items for their general life/attitudes, rather than solely their life/attitudes when at work. For final analysis, appropriate items were reverse scored prior to analysis, and scores on the two subscales were averaged into one overall psychological flexibility score for each participant (α=0.92).

Results

Prior to final analysis, all appropriate items were reverse-scored, and scale scores were calculated by averaging the items of each scale together. Means, standard deviations, alphas, and correlations for all scales can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, Alphas

Scale	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. LRBB	5.03	1.25	*(0.94)*													
2. FRBB	5.49	0.88	0.48***	*(0.88)*												
3. Disengage	2.39	0.53	-0.44***	-0.30***	*(0.81)*											
4. EE	2.46	0.54	-0.39***	-0.28***	0.71***	*(0.85)*										
5. Burnout	2.43	0.50	-0.45***	-0.31***	0.92***	0.93***	*(0.89)*									
6. Vigor	4.14	1.41	0.39***	0.32***	-0.73***	-0.64***	-0.74***	*(0.86)*								
7. Dedicate	4.68	1.50	0.40***	0.34***	-0.75***	-0.57***	-0.71***	0.84***	*(0.90)*							
8. Absorb	4.64	1.34	0.31***	0.35***	-0.63***	-0.50***	-0.61***	0.74***	0.76***	*(0.83)*						
9. Engage	4.49	1.31	0.40***	0.36***	-0.76***	-0.62***	-0.75***	0.93***	0.94***	0.90***	*(0.94)*					
10. Perform	4.36	0.55	0.15**	0.50***	-0.14*	-0.21***	-0.19***	0.24***	0.24***	0.28***	0.27***	*(0.88)*				
11. Optimism	4.84	1.32	0.24***	0.32***	-0.38***	-0.41***	-0.43***	0.44***	0.43***	0.44***	0.47***	0.23***	*(0.86)*			
12. Cog. Con.	4.30	1.28	0.15**	0.33***	-0.33***	-0.47***	-0.43***	0.30***	0.28***	0.25***	0.30***	0.28***	0.44***	*(0.92)*		
13. Appraisal	5.28	0.85	0.27***	0.43***	-0.23***	-0.26***	-0.26***	0.26***	0.26***	0.26***	0.28***	0.33***	0.31***	0.46***	*(0.90)*	
14. Flex	4.79	0.92	0.23***	0.43***	-0.33***	-0.45***	-0.42***	0.33***	0.31***	0.29***	0.34***	0.35***	0.45***	0.91***	0.79***	*(0.92)*

Note: LRBB=Leader Resilience-Building Behavior; FRBB=Follower Resilience-Building Behavior; Disengage=Disengagement; EE=Emotional Exhaustion; Dedicate=Dedication; Absorb=Absorption; Engage=Engagement; Perform=Performance; Cog. Con.=Cognitive Control; Flex=Psychological Flexibility

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; Alphas listed on the diagonal

To test the proposed hypotheses, I used the base stats package in R (R Core Team, 2023). Before testing the hypotheses, I used the lavaan package in R (Rosseel, 2012) to conduct a series of confirmatory factor analyses to ensure items loaded on the appropriate factors, and that the proposed measurement model was the best fitting model to the data. I chose to use parcels when evaluating model fit, due to the large number of items associated with various factors, and the statistical advantages parcels provide (Hatcher, 1994; Little et al., 2013). Items were randomly placed into parcels within each factor. Results from all confirmatory factor analyses can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Model Fit

Model	Variables	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1	LRBB, FRBB, Burn, Eng, Perf, Opt, Flex	657.463	209	0.909	0.890	0.090	0.066
2	LRBB, FRBB, Burn, Eng, Perf, Opt+Flex	978.300	215	0.846	0.819	0.115	0.072
3	LRBB, FRBB, Burn, Perf, Eng+Opt, Flex	994.739	215	0.842	0.815	0.117	0.092
4	LRBB, FRBB+Burn+Perf+Eng+Opt+Flex	2463.012	229	0.549	0.501	0.191	0.148
5	LRBB+FRBB+Burn+Perf+Eng, Opt+Flex	2773.343	229	0.486	0.432	0.204	0.152
6	LRBB+FRBB+Burn+Perf+Eng+Opt+Flex	3103.208	230	0.420	0.362	0.216	0.157

Note: LRBB=Leader Resilience-Building Behavior; FRBB=Follower Resilience-Building Behavior; Burn=Burnout; Eng=Engagement; Perf=Performance; Opt=Optimism; Flex=Psychological Flexibility

Hypothesis 1 predicted that perceived leader resilience-building behavior would be positively related to follower resilience-building behavior. To test this hypothesis, I ran a linear regression regressing follower resilience-building behavior onto perceived leader resilience-building behavior. This R^2 was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.24$, std. err. = 0.76, $F(1,265) = 84.73$, $p<0.001$). Leader resilience-building behavior significantly predicted follower resilience-building behavior ($\beta=0.35$, $p<0.001$, see Table 3). To calculate 95% confidence intervals, I ran Monte Carlo simulation using 5000 simulation (Jones & Waller, 2013). This resulted in a 95%

confidence interval of (0.27, 0.42). Leader resilience-building behavior remained a significant predictor of follower resilience-building behavior even after accounting for the follower's age, sex, race, marital status, industry, work tenure, and

education level (see Appendix C). Altogether, these results provide support for hypothesis 1.

Hypotheses 2a-c predicted that follower resilience-building behavior would be (a) negatively related to burnout and (b) positively related to work engagement and (c) positively related to in-role performance. Similar to hypothesis 1, I tested these hypotheses with a series of regression analyses using follower resilience-building behavior to predict each outcome respectively. Full regression results can be found in Table 3. Each R^2 was statistically significant ((a) R^2=0.10, std. err.=0.48, F(1, 265)=29.89, p<0.001; (b) R^2=0.13, std. err.=1.24, F(1, 265)=40.58, p<0.001; (c)R^2=0.24, std. err.=0.46, F(1,265)=82.02, p<0.001). Follower resilience-building behavior significantly predicted (a) burnout (β=-0.18, p<0.001, CI= [-0.25, -0.12]), (b) work engagement (β=0.55, p<0.001, CI=[0.38, 0.72]), and (c) in-role performance (β=0.29, p<0.001, CI=[0.23, 0.36]). Once again, Monte Carlo simulations with 5000 simulations were used to calculate the 95% confidence intervals. Follower resilience-building behavior remained as a significant predictor for all three outcomes even after accounting for the follower's age, sex, race, marital status, industry, tenure, and educational level (see Appendix C). Thus, Hypotheses 2a-c were fully supported.

Table 3

Linear Regression Analysis Results

Variables	Estimate	SE	t	95% CI
LRBB -> FRBB				
Intercept	3.75	0.19	19.21***	
LRBB	0.35	0.04	9.21***	(0.27, 0.42)
FRBB -> Burnout				
Intercept	3.44	0.19	18.37***	
FRBB	-0.18	0.03	-5.47***	(-0.25, -0.12)
FRBB -> Engagement				
Intercept	1.45	0.48	2.99**	
FRBB	0.55	0.09	6.37***	(0.38, 0.72)
FRBB -> Performance				
Intercept	2.79	0.18	15.64***	
FRBB	0.29	0.03	9.06***	(0.23, 0.36)

Note: LRBB=Leader Resilience-Building Behavior; FRBB = Follower Resilience-Building Behavior
*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Hypotheses 3 and 4 related to the moderating effects of optimism and psychological flexibility (respectively) on the various outcomes. In order for optimism [psychological flexibility] to have had the proposed moderating effect on each variable, the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and burnout needed to be significantly lower at high levels of optimism [psychological flexibility] as compared to low levels of optimism [psychological flexibility]. Similarly, the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and work engagement and the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and in-role performance needed to be significantly higher at high levels of optimism [psychological flexibility] than at low levels of optimism [psychological flexibility] (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon et al., 2002; Stone & Hollenbeck, 1984).

To test hypothesis 3, I conducted a series of regression equations where each proposed outcome (i.e., (a) burnout, (b) work engagement, and (c) in-role performance) was predicted by follower resilience-building behavior, optimism, and the interaction term calculated by multiplying follower resilience-building behavior and optimism together. Regression results can be found in Table 4. The R^2 for the interaction between follower resilience-building behavior and optimism predicting burnout was significant (R^2=0.22, std. err.=0.45, F(3, 263)=25.27, p<0.001). However, the interaction term itself did not have a significant effect on burnout (β=-0.02, p=0.46, CI=[-0.06, 0.03]). In the relationship between optimism and follower resilience-building behavior on engagement, the R^2 was significant (R^2=0.28, std. err.=1.14, F(3, 263)=33.44, p<0.001), but the moderation term did not have a significant effect (β=0.04, p=0.52, CI=[-0.08, 0.16]). Finally, with performance as the outcome, the R^2 was statistically significant (R^2=0.26, std. err.=0.45, F(3, 263)=30.27, p<0.001), but the interaction term was not significant (β=-0.05, p=0.05, CI=[-0.09, 0.00]). Thus, hypotheses 3a-3c were not supported.

Table 4

Optimism as Moderator Regression Results

Variables	Estimate	SE	t	95% CI
Burnout				
Intercept	3.30	0.63	5.20***	
FRBB	-0.03	0.12	-0.28	
Optimism	-0.04	0.13	-0.33	
FRBB*Optimism	-0.02	0.02	-0.73	(-0.06, 0.03)
Engagement				
Intercept	1.58	1.61	0.98	
FRBB	0.17	0.30	0.58	
Optimism	0.18	0.34	0.55	
FRBB*Optimism	0.04	0.06	0.65	(-0.08, 0.16)
Performance				
Intercept	1.51	0.64	2.34*	
FRBB	0.49	0.12	4.12***	
Optimism	0.30	0.13	2.22*	
FRBB*Optimism	-0.05	0.02	-1.94	(-0.09, 0.00)

Note: FRBB=Follower Resilience-Building Behavior
*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Similarly, to test the moderating effect of psychological flexibility (hypotheses 4a-c), I conducted a series of regression analyses where each outcome (i.e., (a) burnout, (b) work engagement, and (c) in-role performance) was predicted by follower resilience-building behavior, psychological flexibility, and the interaction of the two. Regression results can be found in Table 5. The R^2 for the interaction between psychological flexibility and follower resilience-building behavior predicting burnout was statistically significant (R^2=0.21, std. err.=0.45, F(3, 263)=22.69, p<0.001). However, the interaction term did not have a significant effect on burnout (β=0.01, p=0.78, CI=[-0.06, 0.08]). Similarly, the R^2 for the interaction between psychological flexibility and follower resilience-building behavior predicting engagement was statistically significant (R^2=0.17, std. err. =1.22, F(3, 263)=18.40, p<0.001).

The interaction term, though, was not statistically significant (β=-0.02, p=0.87, CI=[-0.20, 0.17]). Finally, the R^2 predicting performance using this same interaction was statistically significant (R^2=0.26, std. err.=0.45, F(3, 263)=30.98, p<0.001). Once again, though, the interaction term was not significant (β=-0.04, p=0.23, CI=[-0.11, 0.03]), showing that psychological flexibility was not a significant moderator of the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and any of the studied outcomes. Thus, hypotheses 4a-4c were not supported.

Table 5

Psychological Flexibility as Moderator Regression Results

Variables	Estimate	SE	t	95% CI
Burnout				
Intercept	4.18	0.94	4.42***	
FRBB	-0.14	0.17	-0.85	
Flex	-0.25	0.20	-1.23	
FRBB*Flex	0.01	0.04	0.27	(-0.06, 0.08)
Engagement				
Intercept	0.28	2.52	0.11	
FRBB	0.49	0.45	1.05	
Flex	0.41	0.54	0.75	
FRBB*Flex	-0.02	0.10	-0.17	(-0.20, 0.17)
Performance				
Intercept	1.49	0.94	1.57	
FRBB	0.45	0.17	2.66**	
Flex	0.33	0.20	1.62	
FRBB*Flex	-0.04	0.04	-1.19	(-0.11, 0.03)

Note: FRBB=Follower Resilience-Building Behavior; Flex=Psychological Flexibility

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Supplemental Analyses

Although optimism and psychological flexibility did not emerge as moderators between follower resilience-building behavior and any of the outcomes, two demographic variables did emerge as potential moderators. Age and tenure both had a significant effect on the relationship

between follower resilience-building behavior and performance. Simple slopes analysis revealed that the slopes for all age groups were statistically significant (youngest: estimate=0.39, std. err.=0.04, t=9.22, p<0.001; average: estimate=0.28, std. err.=0.03, t=9.19, p<0.001; oldest: estimate=0.18, std. err.=0.04, t=4.23, p<0.001). The slopes for all three tenure groups were also statistically significant (lowest: estimate=0.37, std. err.=0.05, t=7.65, p<0.001; average: estimate=0.29, std. err.=0.03, t=9.25, p<0.001; highest: estimate=0.22, std. err.=0.05, t=4.81, p<0.001). The graphs of these slopes suggest that while there is an effect of all age and tenure groups, the effect of the resilience-building behaviors may have been more potent for younger employees and those lower in tenure (see Table 6, and Figures 3 & 4). Finally, although there was not evidence for the moderating effects of optimism and psychological flexibility, I examined whether or not they had a direct effect on follower resilience-building behavior. Optimism had a significant direct effect on follower resilience-building behavior (β=0.21, std. err.=0.34, t=5.45, p<0.001), as did psychological flexibility (β=0.39, std. err.=0.05, t=7.47, p<0.001). Though not originally hypothesized, this suggests that both optimism and psychological flexibility can influence how much an employee engages in resilience-building behavior (see Figure 5 for full summary of hypothesis test results).

Table 6

Age and Tenure as Moderators of FRBB->Performance Relationship

Variables	Estimate	SE	t	95% CI
Age				
Intercept	0.33	0.60	0.55	(-0.85, 1.51)
FRBB	0.67	0.11	6.18***	(0.45, 0.88)
Age	0.06	0.02	4.37***	(0.04, 0.09)
FRBB*Age	-0.01	0.00	-3.75***	(-0.01, 0.00)
Tenure				
Intercept	1.29	0.66	1.95	(-0.01, 2.58)
FRBB	0.53	0.12	4.50***	(0.30, 0.76)
Tenure	0.41	0.17	2.38*	(0.07, 0.75)
FRBB*Tenure	-0.06	0.03	0.04*	(-0.12, 0.00)

Note: FRBB=Follower Resilience-Building Behavior
*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Figure 3

Interaction Between Age and Follower Resilience-Building Behavior on Performance

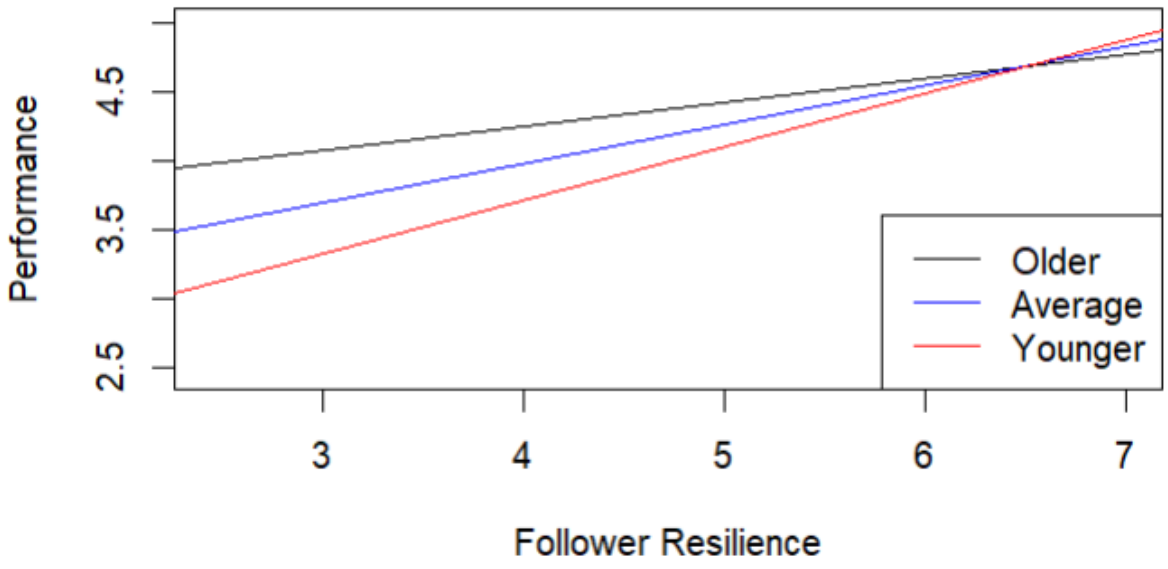


Figure 4

Interaction Between Tenure and Follower Resilience-Building Behavior on Performance

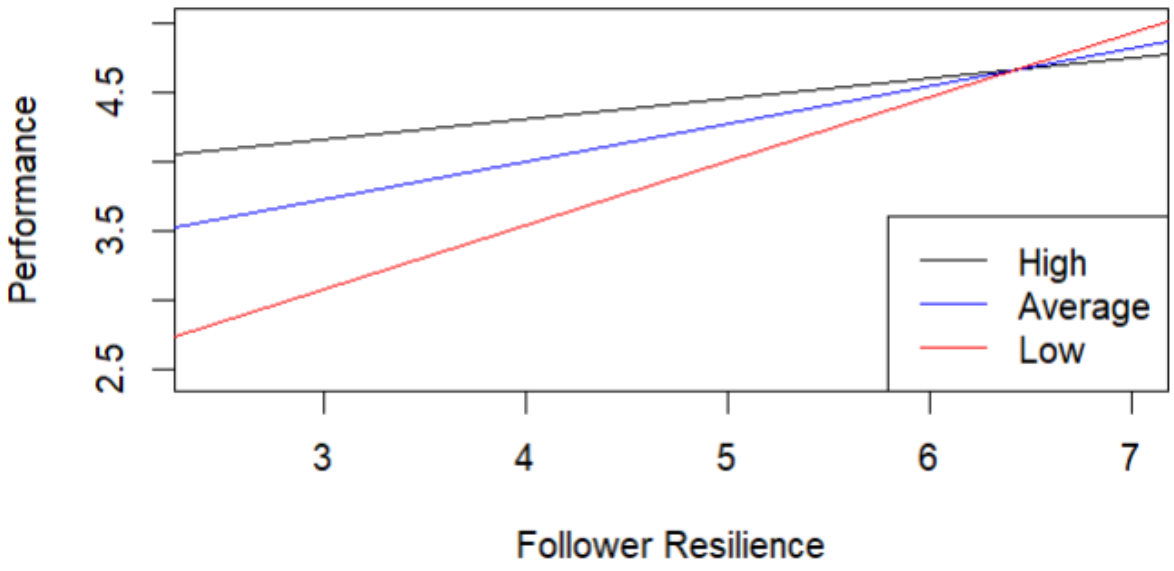
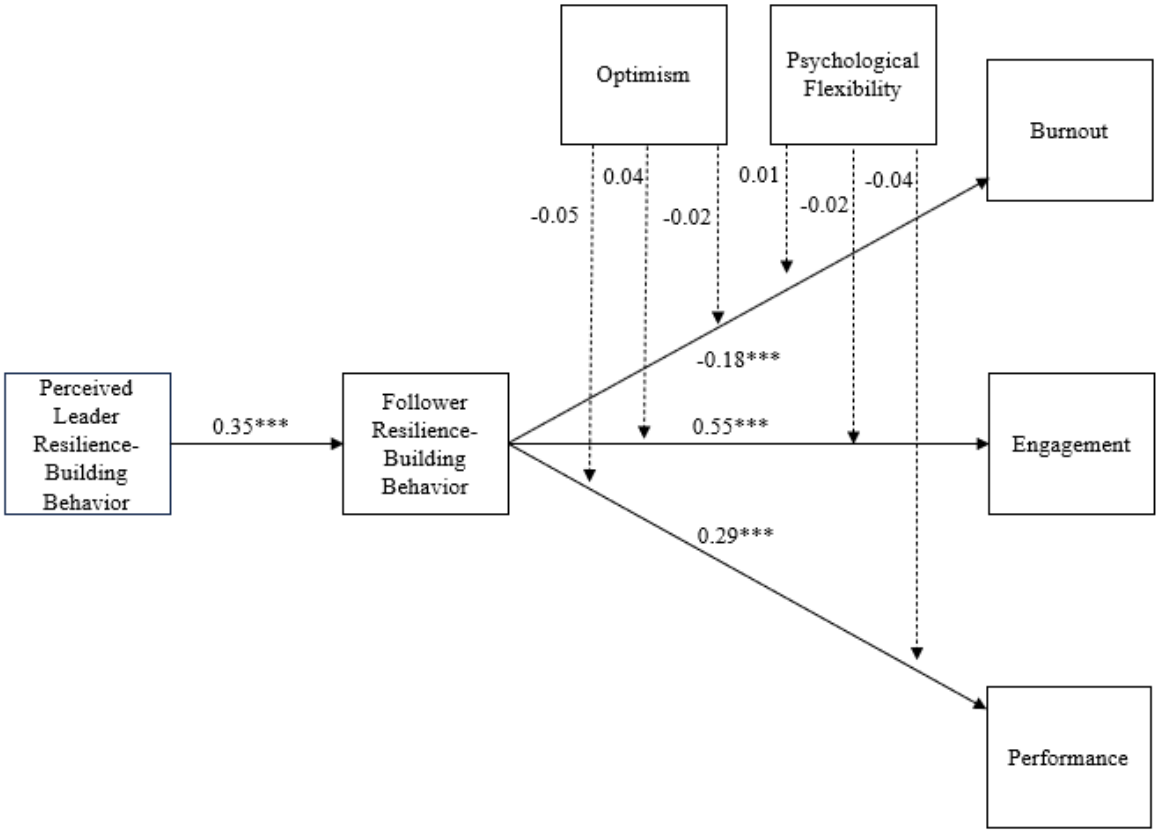


Figure 5

Summary of Hypothesis Test Results



Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; dotted lines indicate statistically insignificant relationships

Discussion

Burnout remains a pervasive and costly problem plaguing many of today's organizations (Vankar, 2023; Weiss, 2020; Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). Some authors have even likened burnout to a "rite of passage" for modern workers (Comer et al., 2022). And due to the rising costs associated with burnout, organizations are continually searching for practical and cost-effective solutions to help their employees. In line with this effort, the goal of this study was to examine

whether or not leaders could influence their followers' burnout, engagement, and performance simply by modeling resilience-building behaviors.

Hypothesis 1 theorized that leaders engaging in resilience-building behavior can be a significant predictor of their followers' engagement in similar behaviors, especially when the follower is able to perceive their leaders' engagement in said behaviors. Results support this hypothesis as results from regression analyses showed that perceived leader behaviors can predict followers' engagement in said behaviors. These results support the idea that leaders can influence their followers' behaviors simply by modeling and demonstrating desired behaviors.

Hypotheses 2a-c suggested that when followers engage in resilience-building behavior, they can reduce their levels of burnout, increase their levels of engagement, and increase their self-reported performance. Regression results support each of these claims. Follower engagement in resilience-building behaviors was a significant negative predictor of burnout, and a significant positive predictor of both engagement and self-reported performance, which was in line with previous research on the benefits of resilience (reducing burnout – e.g., Cheung et al., 2024; Hao et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2018; improving engagement – Nieto et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2017; improving performance – e.g., Meng et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2015; Vanhove et al., 2016). These results support the idea that building resilience not only can act as a coping strategy against burnout, but can actually support work-related beneficial outcomes, such as performance and engagement.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 related to the proposed moderating nature of optimism and psychological flexibility on the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and each of the outcomes. Specifically, optimism (psychological flexibility) was thought to strengthen the negative relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and burnout,

such that those high in optimism (psychological flexibility) would have a stronger effect of follower resilience-building behavior on reducing burnout than those low in optimism (psychological flexibility). Similarly, optimism (psychological flexibility) was thought to promote the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and engagement and performance, such that those high in optimism (psychological flexibility) would have a stronger positive relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and each outcome than those low in optimism (psychological flexibility). However, results did not support these hypotheses. For each outcome, both optimism and psychological flexibility demonstrated no significant moderating effects. This suggests that the effect follower resilience-building behavior can have on each outcome is relatively stable across the board, regardless of an individual's level of optimism and psychological flexibility.

Supplemental analyses revealed that most proposed relationships were stable across a variety of demographic variables, showing these results may be beneficial to a wide variety of organizations and employees. However, the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and self-reported performance was significantly stronger for those who were younger and lower in their tenure. This suggests that, while encouraging and demonstrating resilience-building behaviors to all employees is beneficial, newer/younger employees may particularly benefit from their leaders modeling these behaviors. It could be that more experienced/older employees have dealt with stressors at work and have a better idea of how to start dealing with them, while newer/younger employees could benefit from a guide. Another explanation could also be that newer/younger employees may hold their leaders in higher regard, or as more of a role model, than more experienced/older employees, thus emphasizing the power of the leader modeling these behaviors.

Theoretical Implications

This study has several implications for theory. First, this study builds on several attempts to understand not only the nature of burnout, but also the most effective strategies to deal with stress and burnout at work. Leaders hold a powerful and influential position within workplaces and employees' lives (Thomas, 2013). Yet this relationship has largely been ignored in extant burnout and resilience literature. This study highlights the impact leaders' behaviors can have on the behaviors and outcomes of their followers, particularly how leaders' building resilience can impact their followers' resilience and burnout.

Building on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), this study shows that simply the perception of leaders engaging in behaviors designed to build resilience may be enough to encourage employees to engage in similar behaviors, which could have beneficial consequences on their levels of burnout, engagement, and performance. These results also help show that social learning is not limited to explicit behaviors. Followers tend to admire their leaders and hold them in high regard. This makes any social information coming from those leaders more powerful and salient to the follower. Social information processing theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) argues that social information, especially social information from highly esteemed sources, directly influences the recipient's behavior. In line with this theory, these results showed that when leaders (influential role models) are perceived to be engaging in positive, resilience-building behaviors, their followers are more likely to also engage in similar resilience-building behaviors and thus reap any associated benefits.

Beyond just social learning, this study highlights that the leader-follower relationship, or the position of the leader as a role model to the follower, may be an undervalued but important resource in the workplace. Both JD-R and COR emphasize the importance of resources for

successful adaptation and navigation through job demands and work-related stress (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hobfoll, 1989). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that resources are needed to be able to cope with the stress, especially if one hopes to cope well. Historically, resources literature has focused on individual resources, such as personality variables (e.g., Pilch et al., 2015), or organizational resources, such as mindfulness training or cultures that promote psychological safety (e.g., Bronkhorst, 2015; Hsieh et al., 2021; Mellner, et al., 2022; Nielsen et al., 2011). When discussing resources that involve social interactions, typically this is limited to employees seeking help or social support (e.g., Holton et al., 2016). But little has been discussed on the potential resource nature of impactful relationships. This goes beyond social support. Results from this study showed that leaders modeling behaviors can be an important and effective resource for employees looking to engage in resilience-building behaviors and impact their burnout, engagement, and performance.

Not only did this study reveal a potentially previously unknown job resource (the role model position/relationship of the leader), but it also highlights a social aspect to recovering from stress and building resources. Ambrose et al. (2013) state that, according to the trickledown model, organizational norms and behaviors trickle down from the highest in the organization to the lowest. This study provides a clear example of this phenomenon, with leaders' resilience-building behaviors trickling down to their followers and impacting their followers' burnout, engagement, and performance. COR states that people must invest resources to be able to recover from resource loss or gain more resources (Hobfoll 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). The results of this study show that, at some level, investment resources that start higher up in the organization can still benefit those lower down in the organization. Leaders can invest their resources to be able to engage in resilience-building behaviors and create environments where

necessary resources are available and encouraged to be utilized (McEwen, 2022). This investment may enable followers to be able to engage in resilience-building and recovery activities to be able to rebuild their own resources. This may be particularly important for burnt-out employees, who already start from a place of resource loss (Bakker et al., 2023b). Not only will they have access to the resource of a strong leader role model, but they will have access to the resources unlocked by their leader's investment.

By leaders engaging in resilience-building behaviors, they may be signaling to their followers that resources are available to engage in similar behaviors (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). When these behaviors extend outside of working hours, such as recovery activities (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2015), the leader may be signaling not only the availability of resources, but the cultural expectations that resources be provided and utilized. For example, if leaders are engaging in the resilience-building activity of detachment from work, they may signal to their followers that it is not only allowed, but a cultural norm, for them to also disengage when not at work. Beyond this, when leaders engage in resilience-building behaviors at work, they can signal to their followers that their environment is malleable and able to be changed to deal with stressors. Believing the circumstances to be malleable is more likely to lead followers to engage in positive, proactive coping strategies (Antoniou et al., 2013) and build their own resilience. According to the transactional theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), employees are constantly monitoring their environments to assess stressors, and cope with them as they arise. If successful coping and resilience-building activities are part of that environment, employees are more likely to pick up on the changes in their leader, again leading them to believe their environment and situations are malleable and encouraging them to participate in their own resilience-building behaviors, and other proactive coping mechanisms. This, in turn, will set

them up for more successful and proactive coping when dealing with stressful future circumstances.

Resilience, itself, is a malleable resource that is largely dependent on social interactions to build (Bonanno, 2004; DePierro et al., 2023; Montpetit et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2016; Vanhove et al., 2016). Resilient individuals are more capable of effectively using and building their resources (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Shaw et al., 2016) and tend to use more positive coping strategies when encountering stressors (Hu et al., 2015). Engaging in positive coping can, in turn, lead to building resilience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Vivolo et al., 2024). But this research demonstrates a potential key starting point for this reciprocal relationship, especially for those who are newer to the resilience-coping-resilience cycle. Having a role model demonstrate to them, even implicitly, effective ways to deal with stressors and build resilience, can be an effective method for someone to begin to develop resilience and face their own stressors. There is continual concern about the contagious nature of burnout (Bakker et al., 2005, 2007), but this research emphasizes the socially contagious nature of resilience (Fan et al., 2020; Shaw et al., 2016), which may be an effective combatant against the rising burnout crisis.

Practical Implications

Perhaps even more important than the theoretical implications of this research are the practical implications. As previously mentioned, modern workers are facing a burnout epidemic (e.g., APA, 2023). And, unfortunately, the onus for dealing with burnout often falls on the already burnt-out employee. This not only can lead to ineffective coping strategies due to the lack of resources to effectively cope (Bakker et al., 2023b; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) but can lead to employees spiraling into the physical and psychological consequences of burnout at faster and faster rates (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Thus, it is imperative for

organizations to create and implement effective and accessible resources to help their employees recover from and prevent burnout.

This research highlights the resource of leaders modeling resilience-building behaviors, which can in turn increase their followers engaging in resilience-building behaviors, leading to lower burnout, higher performance, higher engagement, and higher optimism and psychological flexibility on the part of the follower. This is promising to organizations because this potential burnout-fighting and resource-building strategy is relatively cost-effective. Burnout already costs organizations billions in lost revenue every year (Weiss, 2020). By utilizing the power of those already in the organization, organizations can make impactful changes without overhauling entire systems.

Organizations who want to utilize the results of this research should consider encouraging their leaders to more openly display and discuss their resilience-building behaviors. This may begin with providing leaders training in what resilience-building behaviors are, and how to effectively implement them. But when leaders are open about the stressors they are facing and how they are managing both the problem and their stress, it may empower their employees to do likewise. Beyond this, openness to this level may help to create cultures of psychological safety, where employees feel like they are safe and supported to seek help when needed, or discuss problems as they arise (Edmondson, 1999). Psychologically safe cultures can help to combat pervasive ingrained “hustle” cultures and cultures that promote burnout and production above the health and lives of their employees.

These changes will not happen over-night. Burnout is a chronic problem (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) with long-entrenched roots in many organizations. But chronic problems need long-term, cost-effective solutions. Encouraging leaders to be open about their own stressors and

resilience-building strategies can be an efficient, cost-effective, and beneficial step in helping employees develop resilience, psychological flexibility, optimism; reduce their burnout; and increase their engagement and performance. Dealing with stressors is both a function of the stressor itself, and the resources available (Holton et al., 2016). Engaging leaders in this manner may also help to signal available resources to employees and let them know that it is both acceptable and encouraged to use available resources to deal with their stressors and burnout and develop their own resilience. This change needs to come from the top of the organization (Ambrose et al., 2013). As more and more influential leaders in the organization demonstrate their own resilience-building behaviors, those under them should also begin to enact resilience-building behaviors.

Finally, at least for performance, the effect of follower resilience-building behavior was significantly stronger for newer/younger employees. Organizations may want to take a proactive approach to preventing burnout by especially targeting their interventions and resource availability toward incoming employees. By helping new employees develop resilience before major stressors occur, not only will the employee be in a better position to deal with the stressor, but they may also be able to stave off any negative effects of the stress or potential burnout. While employees across the organization can benefit from the results of this study, and the resources organizations can provide, targeting newer/younger employees may, in a sense, inoculate them against potential burnout.

Limitations and Future Directions

Of course, no study is perfect. Below are some limitations this study faced, as well as ideas for future research directions.

First, this study was cross-sectional in nature. This means that I was unable to truly establish a causal relationship between variables. Future research may want to utilize more longitudinal designs to determine the causal effects of perceived leader resilience-building behavior, as well as the long-term outcomes of engaging in resilience-building behavior. While this study provides a good basis, more long-term research is needed to solidify our understanding of these relationships.

Next, this study did not account for the unique nature of each dyadic relationship between leaders and their followers. Each employee has a different, individualized relationship with their leader. These differences impact the outcomes leaders can have on their employees (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). As such, it is logical that the nature of the relationship an employee has with their leader would affect the impact the leader's engagement in resilience-building behaviors has on the employee and their decision to engage in similar behaviors. Future research should examine leader-member exchange quality to see how this affects the results. Similarly, this research was conducted with a US sample. In general, US workers tend to have smaller power distances than other cultures (Hofstede, 2011). These results may have limited generalizability in cultures with greater power distances, because the impact a leader can have on their follower may not be a strong. Future research should examine how these results change across cultures.

Optimism and psychological flexibility did not emerge as moderators, as hypothesized. However, personal resources such as optimism and psychological flexibility have been shown to moderate the relationship between stress and coping (Rasmussen et al., 2006) and stress and burnout (Holding et al., 2024) respectively. One explanation for this difference may be that participants were instructed to consider their optimism and psychological flexibility in a general, rather than work-specific, context. This may have contributed to the stable "trait" versus

malleable "state" debate that surrounds these variables. While the present study considered optimism and psychological flexibility as stable "trait" variables, future research may want to take a more contextualized approach to better capture a "state" view. This study was also cross-sectional, so future designs may consider a more longitudinal approach to see the long-term effects of optimism and psychological flexibility, both as "state" and "trait" variables. Future research may also want to examine the effects of other personal resources, such as locus of control, self-efficacy, or mindfulness; or even examine other outcomes, such as organizational commitment.

Finally, resilience-building behavior was examined as a composite variable, rather than examining the effect of each behavior individually. As Holton et al. (2016) point out, future coping research should consider coping within its context to understand why individuals use certain strategies, and how these behaviors are perceived. Future research should consider examining discrete behaviors individually to determine the efficacy of each strategy. This could also be used to help link certain leader behaviors with specific responses (i.e., whether followers engage in the same, similar, or different resilience-building behaviors). Future research may also consider looking at team or organizational resilience and resilience-building behaviors, rather than just individual.

Conclusion

This study aimed to highlight a previously overlooked resource for dealing with stress and burnout at work – the role model nature/relationship a leader has with their follower. Results from this study showed that leaders can influence their followers' burnout, performance, and engagement by modeling resilience-building behaviors for their followers to imitate. These results should provide hope for organizations facing burnout crises as they provide a relatively

simple and cost-effective method of providing resources for their employees facing burnout and work-related stress.

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Appendix A

Demographics

Demographic	N	%
Sex		
Male	107	40.07
Female	157	58.80
Non-binary/third gender	2	0.75
Prefer not to say	1	0.37
Age		
18-25	21	7.87
26-35	92	34.46
36-45	74	27.72
46-55	58	21.72
56-65	21	7.87
65+	1	0.37
Race/Ethnicity		
White	188	70.41
Black	38	14.23
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	0.75
Asian	21	7.87
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.00
Hispanic	13	4.87
Other	5	1.87
Marital Status		
Never Married	116	43.45
Separated	4	1.50
Divorced	25	9.36
Widowed	3	1.12
Married	119	44.57
Education		
No schooling completed	0	0.00
Some high school, no diploma	1	0.37
High school graduate, diploma, or equivalent	7	2.62
Some college credit, no degree	44	16.48
Trade, technical, vocational training	12	4.49
Associate's degree	26	9.74
Bachelor's degree	120	44.94
Master's degree	45	16.85
Professional degree	5	1.87
Doctoral degree	7	2.62
Industry		

Construction	8	3.00
Forestry, fishing, hunting, or agricultural support	5	1.87
Real estate or rental or leasing	4	1.50
Mining	0	0.00
Professional, scientific, or technical services	24	8.99
Utilities	0	0.00
Management of companies or enterprises	6	2.25
Admin, support, waste management or remediation services	7	2.62
Manufacturing	16	5.99
Education services	31	11.61
Wholesale trade	3	1.12
Healthcare or social assistance	54	20.22
Retail trade	22	8.24
Arts, entertainment, or recreation	15	5.62
Transportation or warehousing	5	1.87
Accommodation or food services	10	3.75
Information	19	7.12
Other services (except public administration)	16	5.99
Finance or insurance	20	7.49
Unclassified establishments	2	0.75
Tenure		
Less than 6 months	12	4.49
Between 6 months to 1 year	10	3.75
1 to 5 years	113	42.32
5 to 10 years	70	26.22
10 to 20 years	45	16.85
More than 20 years	17	6.37

Appendix B

Measures

Employee Resilience Scale (Näswall et al., 2019)

All items are rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=almost never to 7=almost always.

Instructions: Please rate how frequently you believe you (your leader) engage(s) in the following behaviors when dealing with stress and change at work.

1. I (My leader) effectively collaborate(s) with others to handle unexpected challenges at work.
2. I (My leader) successfully manage(s) a high workload for long periods of time.
3. I (My leader) resolve(s) crises competently at work.
4. I (My leader) learn(s) from mistakes at work and improve(s) the way I (they) do my (their) job.
5. I (My leader) re-evaluate(s) my (their) performance and continually improve(s) the way I (they) do my (their) work.
6. I (My leader) effectively respond(s) to feedback at work, even criticism.
7. I (My leader) seek(s) assistance at work when I (they) need specific resources.
8. I (My leader) approach(es) managers when I (they) need support.
9. I (My leader) use(s) change at work as an opportunity for growth.

Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti, 1999)

All items are rated on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree.

Instructions: Below you will find a series of statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale, please indicate the degree of your agreement by selecting the number that corresponds with each statement.

1. I always find new and interesting aspects in my work.
2. There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.
3. It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way.
4. After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.
5. I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well.
6. Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job more mechanically.
7. I find my work to be a positive challenge.
8. During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.
9. Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work.
10. After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.
11. Sometimes, I feel sickened by my work tasks.
12. After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.

13. This is the only type of work I can imagine myself doing.
14. Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well.
15. I feel more and more engaged in my work.
16. When I work, I usually feel energized.

Disengagement: Items 1, 3(R), 6(R), 7, 9(R), 11(R), 13, 15; Emotional Exhaustion: Items 2(R), 4(R), 5, 8(R), 10, 12(R), 14, 16.

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006)

All items rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0=never to 6=always/every day.

Instructions: The following statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, please select "Never." If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by selecting the appropriate response that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
3. I am enthusiastic about my job.
4. My job inspires me.
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
7. I am proud of the work that I do.
8. I am immersed in my work.
9. I get carried away when I am working.

Vigor: Items 1, 2, 5; Dedication: Items 3, 4, 7; Absorption: Items 6, 8, 9

Job Performance Measure (Onwezen et al., 2014)

All items measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=totally not applicable to 5=totally applicable

Instructions: Please rate how much each of the following statements applies to you and your job.

1. I achieve the objectives of my job.
2. I meet my criteria for job performance.
3. I demonstrate expertise in all job-related tasks.
4. I fulfill all the requirements of my job.
5. I could manage more responsibility than typically assigned to me.
6. I appear to be suitable for a higher-level role.
7. I am competent in all areas of the job, and handle tasks with proficiency.
8. I perform well in the overall job by carrying out tasks as expected.

9. I plan and organize to achieve objectives of the job and meet deadlines.

Optimism Scale (Kuppens et al., 2007)

All items measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

Instructions: Please rate your agreement with the following statements. Please consider these generally (in all areas of life), not just at work.

1. Usually, all things end well.
2. I often expect the best.
3. Most situations yield positive consequences.

Psychological Flexibility (Gabrys et al., 2018)

All items measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

Instructions: The purpose of this section is to determine what you generally think/feel/do when stressful situations provoke negative thoughts and emotions. Of course, you may act differently depending on the situation, but try to think of what you usually think/feel/do when you are stressed or upset. Using the scale below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please consider these generally (in all areas of life), not just at work.

Generally, in stressful situations…

1. I get easily distracted by upsetting thoughts or feelings (11).
2. My thoughts and emotions interfere with my ability to concentrate (16).
3. I have a hard time managing my emotions (15).
4. It's hard for me to shift my attention away from negative thoughts or feelings (18).
5. I feel like I lose control over my thoughts and emotions (2).
6. It is easy for me to ignore distracting thoughts (8).
7. It's difficult to let go of intrusive thoughts or emotions (4).
8. I find it easy to set-aside unpleasant thoughts or emotions (7).
9. I can remain in control of my thoughts and emotions (14).
10. I take the time to think of more than one way to resolve the problem (12).
11. I approach the situation from multiple angles (3).
12. I consider the situation from multiple viewpoints before responding (5).
13. I take the time to see things from different perspectives before reacting (10).
14. I take the time to think of several ways to best cope with the situation before acting (6).
15. I weigh out my options before choosing how to take action (1).
16. I manage my thoughts or feelings by reframing the situation (17).
17. I control my thoughts and feelings by putting the situation into context (13).
18. I can easily think of multiple coping options before deciding how to respond (9).

Cognitive control over emotion: 1(R), 2(R), 3(R), 4(R), 5(R), 6, 7(R), 8, 9
Appraisal and coping flexibility: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate the order in which the items should be administered.

Demographics

1. What is your age?
2. What is your sex?
3. What is your race?
4. What is your ethnicity?
5. What is your marital status?
6. In what industry do you work?
7. How long have you been at your current job?
8. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Appendix C

Regression Results with All Controls

Variables	Estimate	SE	t	p
LRBB->FRBB				
Intercept	3.29398	0.385695	8.540	p<0.001
LRBB	0.350619	0.037448	9.363	p<0.001
Age	0.008955	0.004998	1.792	0.0744
Sex	0.166691	0.087623	1.902	0.0582
Race/Ethnicity	0.005045	0.029245	0.172	0.8632
Marital Status	0.053528	0.025996	2.059	0.0405
Industry	0.009044	0.009856	0.918	0.3597
Tenure	-0.025772	0.046358	-0.556	0.5787
Education	-0.056562	0.029670	-1.906	0.0577
FRBB->Burnout				
Intercept	3.318026	0.2778871	11.940	p<0.001
FRBB	-0.1963099	0.0344152	-5.704	p<0.001
Age	-0.0019364	0.0031997	-0.605	0.5456
Sex	0.1076934	0.0564557	1.908	0.0576
Race/Ethnicity	-0.0003056	0.0187059	-0.016	0.9870
Marital Status	0.0090245	0.0167691	0.538	0.5909
Industry	0.0105494	0.0631520	1.670	0.0960
Tenure	0.0082613	0.0296666	0.278	0.7809
Education	-0.0140026	0.0189129	-0.740	0.4597
FRBB->Engagement				
Intercept	0.982645	0.719513	1.366	0.1732
FRBB	0.553607	0.089109	6.213	p<0.001
Age	0.014462	0.008285	1.746	0.0821
Sex	-0.162459	0.146177	-1.111	0.2674
Race/Ethnicity	-0.030648	0.048434	-0.633	0.5274
Marital Status	0.013273	0.043419	0.306	0.7601
Industry	-0.004572	0.016351	-0.280	0.7800
Tenure	-0.064576	0.076813	-0.841	0.4013
Education	0.071024	0.048970	1.450	0.1482
FRBB->Performance				
Intercept	2.645658	0.259746	10.186	p<0.001
FRBB	0.287144	0.032169	8.926	p<0.001
Age	0.009672	0.002991	3.234	p<0.01
Sex	-0.047319	0.052770	-0.897	0.37071
Race/Ethnicity	-0.028390	0.017485	-1.624	0.10566
Marital Status	-0.008864	0.015674	-0.565	0.57224
Industry	-0.002331	0.005903	-0.395	0.69326
Tenure	0.008219	0.027730	0.296	0.76716
Education	-0.010174	0.017678	-0.576	0.56544

Note: LRBB=Leader Resilience-Building Behavior, FRBB=Follower Resilience-Building Behavior

Appendix D

Dissertation Proposal

One of the most prevalent and detrimental problems facing organizations and employees today is that of burnout. Burnout is defined as a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion brought on by exposure to chronic stressors in the workplace (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2011). In 2021, the American Psychological Association (APA) estimated that as many as 79% of workers faced regular stress in their working experiences (Abramson, 2022), and at least 22% of them report feeling burnt-out very often or always (Vankar, 2023; Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). Burnout has been linked with negative work-related outcomes such as lower satisfaction with work (Adwan, 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Maslach et al., 2001; Moore, 2000; Peterson et al., 2008; Singh et al., 1994), decreased productivity and performance (Holton et al., 2016; Salvagioni et al., 2017), increased absenteeism (Peterson et al., 2008), and higher turnover intentions (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Geurts et al., 1998; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Peterson et al., 2008); as well as negative individual-level outcomes, such as increased mental health problems (Chen et al., 2020; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Holton et al., 2016; Huang & Simha, 2018; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), increased physical health problems (Bayes et al., 2021; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Shirom, 2003; Van Dierendonck et al., 2001), lower quality of personal relationships (Malach Pines, 2003), and greater conflict at home (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Ilies et al., 2007b; Lee et al., 2023; Williamson et al., 2018). Between the health complications, loss of productivity, and turnover caused by burnout, organizations can lose between $120-190 billion each year when dealing with a burnt-out workforce (Weiss, 2020). As such, organizations have a vested interest in combating and preventing burnout among their workers.

To combat the negative effects brought on by stress and burnout, individuals may engage in a variety of coping strategies. Coping can be either adaptive, promoting resilience and healthy outcomes for the individual (i.e., exercise, good sleep, social support; Holton et al., 2016), or maladaptive, potentially furthering negative consequences the individual may face (i.e., smoking, excessive drinking, use of illicit substances; Holton et al., 2016). Individuals can be influenced to engage in different coping strategies based on a number of factors such as personality variables (Pilch et al., 2021), how they appraise the stressor (i.e., threatening, harmful, challenging, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and the resources they have available (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). When individuals engage in positive and adaptive coping strategies focused on addressing the stressor itself or building resilience to better handle their stress, they tend to report better individual and organizational outcomes, and lower levels of burnout (Bono et al., 2013; Shin et al., 2014). However, when individuals engage in negative and maladaptive coping strategies, they can actually report higher levels of burnout (Dolan & Ender, 2008; Leiter, 1991; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001), decreased job satisfaction, and higher levels of voluntary turnover (Cavanaugh et al., 2000).

For the majority of previous research, coping strategies and their effects have been studied from an individual perspective (e.g., Holton et al., 2016; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Koeske et al., 1993; Nizielski et al., 2013; Roswag et al., 2023). But this line of research neglects the fact that individuals, especially in the workplace, do not exist in a vacuum. Employees are continuously engaging with and actively changing their environment (Bakker et al., 2023b; Weick, 1977). One of the most important relationships in the workplace, and one that has only recently begun to be studied in burnout-coping research, is that between employees and their leaders (Thomas et al., 2013). The limited research in this field has demonstrated that leaders can

have a powerful impact on their followers – that when leaders engage in coping strategies, recovery activities, and other positive and health promoting endeavors, they can improve the levels of burnout and other negative outcomes their followers report (Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Densten, 2005; Diebig et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2021), although this has not been universally supported (e.g., Blanco-Donoso et al., 2017; Stein et al., 2021). Primarily, researchers have studied this through the lenses of transformational leadership (Arnold, 2017; Bass, 1985; Skakon et al., 2010) and emotional contagion/crossover (Bakker et al., 2009; Bolger et al., 1989; Kim et al., 2023; Petitta et al., 2016; Tariq et al., 2020).

While there is a growing body of evidence that leader coping and recovery activities can impact their followers' level of burnout and other negative outcomes through emotional contagion (e.g., the leader feels better after the coping/recovery which increases their positive affect which then spreads to their followers, increasing their positive affect and resulting in positive individual- and organizational-level outcomes; Kim et al., 2023), one thing missing from this literature is the idea of leaders acting as role models for engaging in coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) states that the majority of human learning occurs through observation, especially observing role models. At work, the part of a role model is often filled by an employee's leader (Kreiner et al., 2009). According to social learning theory, individuals observe, learn, and adopt both attitudes and behaviors of others, especially their role models (Bandura, 1977). This phenomenon has been demonstrated in leader-follower relationships for a number of behaviors, such as job involvement and creativity (Hu et al., 2023), organizational identification (Ishaq et al., 2023), serving behaviors (Wu et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021), organizational citizenship behaviors (Yaffe & Kark, 2011), unethical conduct and unethical pro-organizational behavior (Lian et al., 2022), and work-life boundaries (Koch &

Binnewies, 2015). However, research has not examined whether this relationship holds for coping strategies or behaviors meant to build resilience in the face of stress. This present study aims to fill this gap and test whether leaders' engagement in coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors influences their followers to engage in the same or similar behaviors, and whether or not that engagement can lead to lower emotional exhaustion, higher work engagement (the theoretical opposite of burnout, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and better performance on the part of the follower.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

Burnout

Burnout has traditionally been conceptualized with three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion is characterized by feelings of stress and "being used up," feeling emotionally overextended, having a lack of energy, and feeling drained, especially by contact with other people (Bogs, 2011; Chullen, 2012; Greenglass et al., 1998; Maslach et al., 2001). Depersonalization involves the development of a callous and detached manner of interacting with others, particularly towards those who are receiving help or a service from the burnt-out individual. This can also include the tendency to treat others as objects rather than people. (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Reduced personal accomplishment refers to the tendency for burnt-out individuals to view their own competence, performance, and achievements at work in a negative light (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Maslach et al., 2001). Recently, the three-factor model has received mixed support as more and more evidence has emerged showing that the "reduced personal accomplishment" factor develops separately from the other two components (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This has led many researchers to argue

for and adopt a, perhaps better fitting, two-factor model of burnout: emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001; Frick et al., 2023; Huang & Simha, 2018; Løvseth et al., 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Some researchers have argued that the traditional three-factor and revised-two factor models of burnout are too limiting by assigning relatively uniform symptoms across all individuals (Farber, 1990; Montero-Marín & García-Campayo, 2010). They proposed an alternate model that differentiates three different subtypes of burnout based on their symptoms. An individual suffering from frenetic burnout tends to work increasingly harder to the point of exhausting themselves. They are always in search of success and are characterized by their over-involvement and ambition. Individuals with under-challenged burnout are trying to cope with their unstimulating and monotonous environments, feeling unsatisfied, indifferent, and bored with their lack of satisfaction and personal development. The worn-out burnt-out individual will give up in the face of stress and will neglect their work and responsibilities (Farber, 1990). While not super common, this alternative model has gained some traction in explaining both burnout and different coping strategies (Montero-Marín et al., 2014).

Using either the traditional three-factor model (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), the revised two-factor model (Demerouti et al., 2001), or the alternate symptom-based model (Farber, 1990; Montero-Marín & García-Campayo, 2010) the factor of emotional exhaustion has received the most attention in the research (e.g., Frick et al., 2023; Greenglass et al., 1998; Hees-Garcia, 2021; Huang & Simha, 2018; Hughes et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Løvseth et al., 2012; Padyab et al., 2016). Emotional exhaustion has been considered to be both the first stage (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Lee & Ashforth, 1990; Maslach, 1982; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998) and core symptom (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001; Shirom, 1989) of burnout, and has shown the most

consistent relationships with the negative outcomes commonly associated with burnout (e.g., Greenglass et al., 1998; Huang & Simha, 2018; Jenaro et al., 2007; Leiter, 1991).

Originally, burnout was conceptualized as occurring in employees who engage in some kind of "people work" (Maslach, 1982). As such, burnout and its consequences have been studied and documented across a number of professions which require a large amount of interaction between people, including teachers (Antoniou et al., 2013; Meredith et al., 2020; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Nizielski et al., 2013), university professors (Davidson et al., 2010), other education professionals (Holton et al., 2016); medical professionals (Pospos et al., 2018), including nurses (Bakker et al., 2005; Butcher et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2020; Hees-Garcia, 2021; Lapame et al., 2023; Petitta et al., 2016) and doctors (Bakker et al., 2001; Butcher et al., 2023; Hees-Garcia, 2021; Løvseth & Aasland, 2010; Løvseth et al., 2012; Petitta et al., 2016); mental health professionals (Bogs, 2011; White, 2019), public service workers (Jenaro et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2014), social workers (Ben-Zur & Michael, 2007), and restaurant workers (Hees-Garcia, 2021). As the definition of burnout expanded, research has also expanded to other professions, including police and law enforcement (Beehr et al., 1995; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Padyab et al., 2016), military service members (Dolan & Ender, 2008; Leiter, 1991), veterinary professionals (Dunn, 2022), manufacturing (Huang & Simha, 2018; Khan et al., 2023), banking (Khan et al., 2023), and other non-service business and office jobs (Arnold, 2017). By and large, though, burnout research has focused on healthcare or educational samples (Shin et al., 2014).

Consequences

There are a number of serious consequences that have been linked with burnout, both for employees' everyday life and their work life and performance. Those who report higher burnout

have also reported significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety symptoms than those with lower burnout scores (Chen et al., 2020; Holton et al., 2016; Huang & Simha, 2018; Papathanasiou et al., 2017; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Tzeletopoulou et al., 2018; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Burnt-out individuals also tend to report lower levels of self-esteem than non-burnt-out individuals (Maslach et al., 2001). If the burnout is not alleviated, or the stressor not addressed, individuals facing burnout are at risk of developing post- and secondary-traumatic symptoms (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Shoji et al., 2015; Yang & Hayes, 2020), insomnia and sleep deprivation (Kaeding et al., 2017; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Yang & Hayes, 2020), and psychological distress (Fong et al., 2016; Hammond et al., 2018; Yang & Hayes, 2020). This can lead to an increased use and abuse of psychotropic and antidepressant medications (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Salvagioni et al., 2017), greater levels of hospitalization for psychiatric issues (Salvagioni et al., 2017), and even increased rates of suicidal ideation (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).

As for physical complaints, stress and burnout have been shown to cause an increased and sustained activation in the autonomic nervous system, which contains the sympathetic, or "fight-or-flight," portion of the nervous system (Bayes et al., 2021). When this nervous system is activated, it causes increased levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol (Jönsson et al., 2015; von Känel et al., 2023). Prolonged levels of increased cortisol can cause high blood pressure, (Bono et al., 2013; Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999; Van Dierendonck et al., 2001), weight gain, higher blood sugar and type 2 diabetes (Bayes et al., 2021; Salvagioni et al., 2017), high cholesterol (Salvagioni et al., 2017), reduced functioning in the endocrine and immune systems (Bayes et al., 2021), coronary heart disease (Salvagioni et al., 2017), cardiovascular disease (Bayes et al., 2021; von Känel et al., 2023), systemic inflammation and excitotoxicity (i.e., nerve damage and

death as a result of increased levels of neurotransmitters, Bayes et al., 2021), and premature death (Bayes et al., 2021; Salvagioni et al., 2017). Beyond the influence of cortisol, burnout has also been linked to changes in brain structure and functioning (Bayes et al., 2021), including impairments in memory, attention, and executive functioning (Renaud & Lacroix, 2023). Individuals with burnout also report higher musculoskeletal pain and injuries (Acker, 2010; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Yang & Hayes, 2020), more flu-like and gastrointestinal issues (Acker, 2010; Hammond et al., 2018; Kaeding et al., 2017; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Yang & Hayes, 2020), and a greater frequency and intensity of headaches (Salvagioni et al., 2017) than those without burnout. Finally, burnout has been linked with a number of sleep issues, including prolonged fatigue (Salvagioni et al., 2017), sleep deprivation (Acker, 2010; Hammond et al., 2018), and insomnia (Yang & Hayes, 2020), all of which can exacerbate the aforementioned physical problems.

Burnout also has a number of consequences for employees and their organizations. Overall, burnt-out employees tend to show lower job satisfaction (Adwan, 2014; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2011; Maslach et al., 2001; Moore, 2000; Peterson et al., 2008; Rössler, 2012; Salvagioni et al., 2017; Scanlan & Still, 2013; Singh et al., 1994; Yang & Hayes, 2020), and both higher turnover intentions and higher turnover rates (Armstrong-Stassen et al., 1994; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Geurts et al., 1998; Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Lee et al., 2011; Peterson et al., 2008; Scanlan & Still, 2013; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Even if employees are not actively leaving the organization, those with higher levels of burnout tend to still engage in a number of withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism, and using an increased number of sick days (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Peterson et al., 2008; Salvagioni et al., 2017). When burnt-out employees are at work, they have been shown to have higher levels of presenteeism (i.e., coming to work

while sick; Holton et al., 2016; Salvagioni et al., 2017), decreased productivity (Holton et al., 2016), and decreased performance (Huang & Simha, 2018) than non-burnt-out employees. In medical and mental health professionals, burnout has also been linked to higher rates of compassion fatigue, where practitioners report lowering levels of care for their patients/clients and decreased effectiveness in doing their jobs (Butcher et al., 2023; Delgadillo et al., 2018; Salyers et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2014; Wampold, 2015; White, 2019; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Between lost productivity, increased disability services (Salvagioni et al., 2017), and turnover of employees, burnout can cost organizations billions each year (Weiss, 2020).

Antecedents

If organizations want to address and prevent burnout, they need to understand not only the consequences, but the antecedents of burnout. Just as with the consequences, there are antecedents at both the individual level and the organizational level. At the individual level, the personality dimension of neuroticism has been linked with higher levels of burnout (i.e., more neurotic people tend to also report higher levels of burnout, Maslach et al., 2001). Employees with low self-esteem and who engage in coping strategies designed to avoid, rather than deal with, the problem also tend to report high levels of burnout (Beehr et al., 1995; Shin et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence, at high levels, can protect against burnout (Gawali, 2012; Joseph & Newman, 2010), but can lead to burnout at low levels as it can hinder individuals in appraising their own and others' emotions and circumstances (Nizielski et al., 2013). Employees who have an external locus of control, or tend to view most events as beyond their control, also tend to report higher levels of burnout (Gan et al., 2007; Nieto et al., 2022; Presson & Benassi, 1996).

In organizations, there are a number of stressors that can quickly lead to burnout for employees if not handled properly. Løvseth and colleagues (2012) found that, in jobs with some

level of confidentiality requirement (i.e., medical work, certain government positions, social work, law, etc.), the confidentiality requirement can be a barrier inhibiting employees from seeking social support and can lead to an increase in burnout. Other work-related stressors can include low salaries and demanding work schedules (Rupert & Morgan, 2005; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003) and challenging clients (Jenaro et al., 2007). Employees who do not feel satisfied or cognitively challenged/stimulated with their work, and employees who feel frustrated with various aspects of their job, including a clash of values or difference in expectations between the employee and their organization, report high levels of burnout (Antoniou et al., 2013; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). Employees also tend to want some level of control over their jobs and working environments. When this is lacking, they can burn out quicker (Antoniou et al., 2013; Kantas, 1995; Olivier & Williams, 2005; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Finally, employees who do not feel as though they have the necessary support from their peers and leadership report higher levels of burnout (Antoniou et al., 2013; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Riolli & Savicki, 2002; Yang & Hayes, 2020).

Two commonly reported stressors that have been linked with employee burnout in organizations are role conflict and role ambiguity (House, 1996; Kahn et al., 1964; Kantas, 1995). Role conflict occurs when there are mismatched expectations, either in terms of what the employee expects from the job, in terms of conflict between two or more different employees or groups within a workplace, or some combination of the above (Kahn et al., 1964; King & King, 1990). Role overload can represent a combination of role conflicts – when employees view their work demands as too great for their time or capabilities (Rizzo et al., 1970; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). The employee in this scenario may have expectations incongruent with the job (their expectations of what the job demands are not congruent with what the job actually

demands) and different expectations for their leaders (they expected a certain level of tasks to be handed down, and those expectations were not fulfilled). Role ambiguity occurs when an employee has insufficient information about the job, their goals, and how they are to go about completing their tasks (Kahn et al., 1964, King & King, 1990). Role ambiguity may also occur when an employee is unsure of what behaviors are expected of them (Rizzo et al., 1970; Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). Conflict, including overload and ambiguity, have consistently been shown to precede burnout in organizations (Antoniou et al., 2013; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006; Gibbs, 2001; Landsman, 2001; Shin et al., 2014).

Role conflict and role ambiguity highlight a very important mechanism in the workplace – the interaction between job demands and job resources. When demands are too high or are misunderstood, as with role conflict, burnout can result (Kahn et al., 1964; Yang & Hayes, 2020). When employees understand the demands, but do not have the information, support, or other vital resources needed to complete the demands, they can also experience burnout (Kahn et al., 1964; King & King, 1990; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014; Yang & Hayes, 2020). Many organizational level explanations of burnout can be boiled down to the interplay between job demands and resources – so much so that this one relationship has been the basis for a substantial body of theory development and research (Bakker et al., 2023a).

Job Demands-Resources Model

While many models attempt to explain the nature and origins of burnout, the job demands-resources (JD-R) theory is perhaps the most effective at doing so (Demerouti et al., 2001; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021). The JD-R theory aims to explain job performance through the impact of job demands and resources on employee well-being, engagement, and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2014, 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001). Extending a

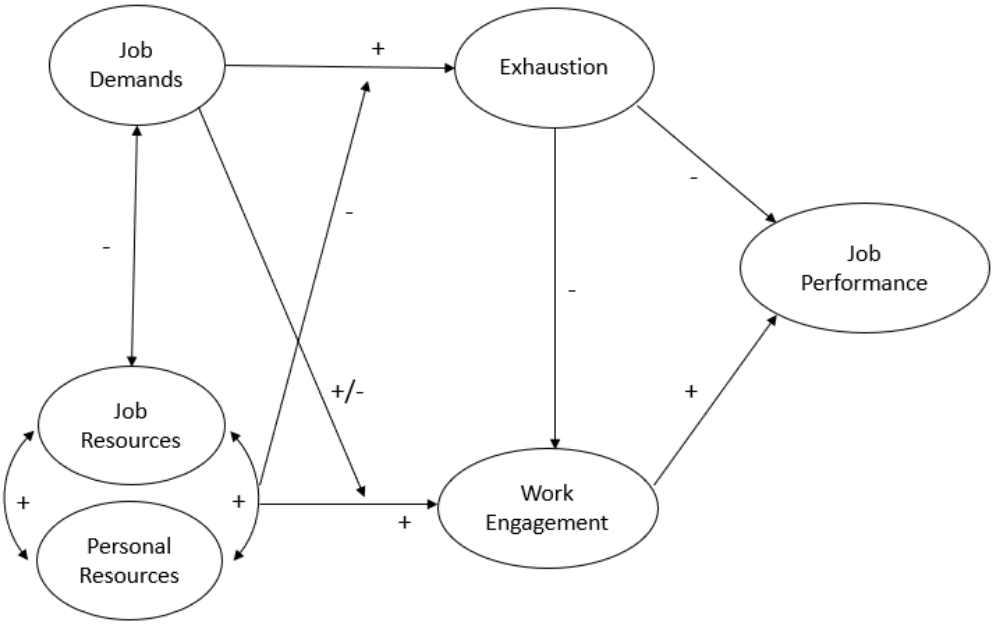
number of earlier models such as the job-characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), the job demands-control model (Karasek, 1979), and the conservation of resources theory (COR, Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018), JD-R posits that all job characteristics can be sorted into two categories: demands and resources (Bakker et al., 2023a, Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Job demands are physical, social, psychological, and organizational aspects of an employee's job that require physical or psychological effort (Demerouti et al., 2001). Demands are associated with certain costs for the employee, and can, therefore, become stressful, even if they are not inherently stressful at the beginning. This is especially true when employees lack the resources necessary to effectively deal with the demands (Demerouti et al., 2001, 2008; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Job resources are physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects of the job that allow the employee to achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and/or stimulate personal learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). These can include both resources provided by the organization and personal resources that an employee possesses which allow them to better address demands and the stress the demands may create (e.g., self-efficacy, internal locus of control, cognitive or psychological flexibility, optimism, etc.; Alarcon et al., 2009; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Gan et al., 2007; Hobfoll et al., 2003; Lloyd, et al., 2013; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009, 2013).

JD-R theory establishes a number of key propositions in explaining the relationships between demands and resources and their effects on employees. The first says that job demands can lead to impaired health for the employee, depending on the frequency and severity of the demands (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2007). When employees face job demands, especially without proper resources, they may experience job stress and strain, ultimately ending in a number of negative outcomes for the employee and organization, such as

burnout, exhaustion, and lower performance (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001). Stress occurs when individuals deem demands or characteristics of their environment to be overwhelming, challenging, threatening, or beyond their ability to cope (Biggs et al., 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Strain refers to the physical and psychological consequences of stress (Hoes, 1986; Selye, 1975; Zhang et al., 2015). On the other hand, job and personal resources can lead to higher levels of work engagement for the employee, fostering motivation, creativity, and increased performance (Bakker et al., 2023a). The next important proposition of JD-R is that both demands and resources can have boosting and buffering effects respectively. Job resources can weaken the positive relationship between job demands and employee strain, while job demands can boost the positive relationship between job resources and motivation and work engagement (see Figure 1**;** Bakker et al., 2023a; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Halbesleben et al., 2009).

Figure 1

Job Demands-Resources Model (adapted from Bakker et al., 2023a)



Conservation of Resources Theory

One of the foundational theories of JD-R, the conservation of resources theory (COR), has also been used to explain the nature and origin of burnout in employees (Demerouti et al., 2001; Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Hobfoll, 1989). The central tenet of COR theory says that people are motivated to obtain, keep, and protect things which they value (i.e., resources; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Resources are anything which an individual values and can be used to help them attain their goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014). There are four central principles in COR theory. The first says that resource loss is far more powerful and salient to an individual than resource gain. The second says that in order to gain and protect their resources, or recover from a loss of resources, people must invest the resources they have. Thirdly, resource gain becomes more salient in the face of resource loss. When an individual is in the midst of losing resources, whatever resources they are able to gain will be more powerful and precious

than those they gain when they are in the midst of gaining resources. Finally, the last principle says that when people are threatened with or are in the midst of resource loss, they become defensive and aggressive in an effort to protect what resources they have left (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

There are also a number of corollaries associated with COR theory, two of which are particularly important to our understanding of burnout. First, those who have resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of gain. This is true both at the individual and organizational level. The second says that when resource loss does occur, individuals and organizations tend to spiral downward with each subsequent loss. Resource loss is stressful. With each loss, individuals and organizations have fewer and fewer resources to be able to effectively manage the stress and recover from the loss, leading to a downward spiral of resource loss that tends to grow both in momentum (each spiral occurs faster) and magnitude (since loss is more powerful than gain, each loss will be greater and mean more than the last; Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Both JD-R and COR theory have received ample support in the literature and have been used in a number of studies to explain how burnout develops in employees (e.g., Bakker et al., 2023b; Bunjak et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2020; Demerouti et al., 2008; Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Huang & Simha, 2018). When individuals experience job demands that they perceive as stressful, they may view those demands as a threat to their resources (Bakker et al., 2023b; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). While employees invest resources to protect themselves, their job demands are not being addressed or lowered. This means that the employee will have less resources to invest in work, making work even more difficult. Employees can become caught in a loss cycle when encountering job demands, leading to increased stress and strain, and ultimately leading to employee burnout (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Bakker et al., 2023b;

Hobfoll et al., 2018). Burnt-out employees then start from a place of resource loss when encountering the next job demand, especially due to the physical and mental consequences of burnout (Bakker et al., 2023b).

Central to JD-R theory is the idea that job demands, while not inherently stressful themselves, can lead to stress and strain for the employee, especially if the employee does not have the resources to deal with the demand (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Stress, especially in the workplace, has been found to be one of the biggest and most powerful antecedents of burnout (Antoniou et al., 2013; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2004; Bunjak et al., 2023; Demerouti et al., 2001; Jenaro et al., 2007; Løvseth et al., 2012; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2011; Sutherland & Cooper, 1990). Similar to burnout, high levels of stress can lead to increased mental health problems (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1999; Holton et al., 2016; Montero-Marin et al., 2014), decreased productivity at work (Holton et al., 2016), increased presenteeism (Demerouti et al., 2008; Holton et al., 2016), and increased turnover intention (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Giebels & Janssen, 2005; Lim et al., 2008; Sutherland & Cooper, 1990), as well as a number of physical health issues, such as cardiovascular disease (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014; Schnall et al., 2017; Toker et al., 2012), disordered or disrupted sleep patterns (Toker & Melamed, 2017), abnormal eating patterns (Bennett, 2017), increased use of sick days (Peterson et al., 2018); increased risk for musculoskeletal injury (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014; Hartzell et al., 2017), and an increased risk for cancer (Johansen et al., 2017). When the stress is prolonged, it can lead employees to become burnt out and disengaged from their work, resulting in lower performance and higher turnover (Holton et al., 2016; Sutherland & Cooper, 1990) for the organization and an increased risk of psychological and physical health problems for the individual (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014; Holton et al., 2016; Montero-Marin et al., 2014).

The effects of stress, while detrimental in and of themselves, can be amplified when employees do not have the resources to properly address the demands/stressors, or effectively manage the stress in themselves (Bakker et al., 2023a). According to COR, resources can be gained or built (Hobfoll, 1989). While not every resource is under the employees' control, employees do have the ability to grow and build their own coping skills and stress-resilience.

Coping

Although often overlooked in the burnout literature, employees are not simply passive victims of their environments and circumstances. Even in the case of limited resources, employees play an active role in both the creation and modification of their working environments (Bakker et al., 2023b). JD-R theory posits that job resources can act as a buffer between job demands and strain and can increase motivation and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). One type of resource over which employees have control is their coping strategies (Holton et al., 2016).

When facing stress and demands, individuals will engage in a variety of coping strategies. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person" (p. 141). A number of these coping strategies are beneficial (i.e., adaptive, Holton et al., 2016; control, Koeske et al., 1993; problem-focused, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to the individual, often focused on recovering from and replenishing lost resources (Adam, 2023; Demerouti, 2015; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), such as exercise, meditation, social support, seeking assistance, planning, and recovery activities after work (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Holton et al., 2016; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Jenaro et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2023; Koeske et al., 1993; Shin et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2015; Sonnentag & Fritz,

2015). Not only do adaptive coping strategies help employees recover from and rebuild lost resources, but they can have proactive effects, preparing employees to better face the challenges they will encounter in the future (i.e., build resilience; Davidson et al., 2010; Holton et al., 2016; Nizielski et al., 2013; Roswag et al., 2023). Problem-focused and adaptive coping strategies have been found to be negatively related to burnout levels across a variety of occupations (e.g., De Rijk et al., 1998; Lapalme et al., 2023; Leiter, 1991; Nizielski et al., 2013; Shin et al., 2014).

One specific group of adaptive coping strategies, labeled recovery, involves reducing or completely removing demands and stressors to reduce strain and rebuild personal resources (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Meijman & Mulder, 1998; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2017). Four unique activities have been identified as recovery activities: psychological detachment, relaxation, control, and mastery (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). Psychological detachment implies refraining from engaging in any work-related activities while not at work and mentally disengaging from work demands (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Relaxation can involve a number of individual behaviors, all of which aim to reduce psychological activation and arousal and increase positive emotions (Stone et al., 1995; Van Hoof & de Pater, 2017). Control refers to individuals' perceived freedom to choose what activities they want to engage in, to what degree to engage in those activities, and how to go about that engagement (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Finally, mastery is engagement in challenging, possibly novel, activities and experiences that provide a chance to learn and succeed (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Recovery activities are some of the most studied coping strategies, and have been shown to have positive effects, in terms of reducing burnout, increasing work engagement, building resilience, and improving employee health and well-being, even at the day-to-day level (Arnold et al., 2023; Bono et al., 2013; Demerouti et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2021; Ragsdale & Beehr, 2016; Singh et al., 2015; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007;

Sonnentag et al., 2008; Sonnentag & Schiffner, 2019; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012; ten Brummelhuis & Trougakos, 2014; McMurtie & Crane, 2020; Van Hooff & de Pater, 2017).

As with many things in life, where there is positive, there is also negative. Just as there are positive and adaptive coping strategies that can serve to replenish and reenergize workers, there are negative, maladaptive coping strategies which serve to worsen well-being, and can accelerate burnout (Biggs et al., 2017; Dolan & Ender, 2008; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Holton et al., 2016; Montero-Marin et al., 2014). These maladaptive activities can include drinking in excess, eating in excess, smoking, gambling, using illicit substances, ruminating on the negative aspects of the job, or avoiding and neglecting the situation which is causing the stress to occur (Hirschman, 1970; Holton et al., 2016; Jenaro et al., 2007; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Not all maladaptive coping strategies start out as a "bad" thing. Many coping strategies can be helpful in small amounts or in the right context, and turn harmful if done in excess (e.g., drinking socially vs. drinking in excess; venting about work with friends vs. excessively ruminating on negative aspects of work; Dolan & Ender, 2008). Two main characteristics prominently affect whether a coping mechanism will be harmful or productive: how individuals appraise their situations, and the resources available to facilitate engagement in different coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) developed a transactional theory of stress and coping which is built on the premise that individuals are constantly monitoring and appraising their environments. When people encounter stimuli they perceive as threatening, challenging, or harmful, they will engage in coping strategies to manage their own emotions and/or deal with the stressor at hand. Engagement in coping strategies produces either favorable or unfavorable results, leading to either positive emotions or further distress and further engagement in coping

strategies (Biggs et al., 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Overall, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) categorized coping strategies into two categories: problem-focused strategies which deal directly with managing the stressor, or emotion-focused strategies that deal with managing the emotions which arise as a result of the stressor. If an individual is engaging in coping strategies, then at some level, they perceive at least some of the stimuli in their environment to be stressful. How they appraise the stressor, including how much control or influence they feel they have over the situation, or how harmful or challenging the stressor is, directly effects whether or not they engage in problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies (Adam, 2023; de Rijk et al., 1998; Dolan & Ender, 2008; Finkelstein-Fox et al., 2019; Folkman et al., 1986; Karasek, 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Antoniou and colleagues (2013) perhaps put it best:

> "People will adopt the emotion-oriented coping [style] when they think they cannot do anything to change the environmental conditions. In contrast, they adopt a problem-oriented coping [style] when they consider environmental conditions as malleable" (p. 350).

The second important factor affecting how individuals choose coping strategies is the amount and type of resources they have available to them (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). Engaging in coping strategies, while designed to recover lost resources (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll et al., 2018), is in and of itself a source of resource depletion (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Davidson et al., 2010; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Lapalme et al., 2023). For example, if an employee wants to engage in the problem-focused coping strategy of seeking advice and assistance with their stressor at work (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), they need to have the resources of time to seek assistance, a good support system from whom to ask advice, and leaders who are willing to go out of their way to help employees. This one strategy requires a number of resources to be

successful (de Rijk et al., 1998; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). Similarly, to engage in recovery activities, which are perhaps the most common activities utilized by employees to replenish resources lost at work (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), employees need the time, space (both mental and physical), and ability to fully detach from work and engage in whatever replenishing activity they choose (Adam, 2023; Roswag et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2023). Research has found that when individuals do have the necessary resources, they are more likely to engage in active and problem-focused coping strategies (Bakker et al., 2004; Dolan & Ender, 2008; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), which in turn have more positive outcomes for the individual than escape and emotion-focused coping strategies (Biggs et al., 2017; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Holton et al., 2016; Leiter, 1991; Shin et al., 2014).

Beyond appraisal and resources, engagement in coping strategies has been shown to be predicted by organization-level predictors such as the level of job demands and strain (Bakker et al., 2023a; Bennett et al., 2016), as well as individual-level predictors such as personality (Pilch et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2015; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001) and mindfulness (Finklestein-Fox et al., 2019; Yang & Jo, 2022). One of the propositions of JD-R states that job demands and strain may lead to maladaptive and dysfunctional self-regulation behaviors, which can include negative, emotion-focused, and maladaptive coping strategies, leading to an increase in burnout (Adam, 2023; Bakker et al., 2023a; Bennett et al., 2016; Kinnunen et al., 2011; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). However, personality variables such as conscientiousness/proactivity (Pilch et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2015), optimism (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Riolli & Savicki, 2002), agreeableness, and extraversion have been linked with increased use of adaptive, problem-focused coping strategies, lower levels of burnout, and higher levels of work engagement (Pilch et al., 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Hobfoll (1989) argues that these personal

characteristics are in and of themselves resources that can impact an individual's ability to influence their environment and manage their stress. Similarly, more mindful employees have been shown to have more positive appraisal frameworks, more positive affect, and better work-life balance than those with lower levels of trait mindfulness (Finklestein-Fox et al., 2019; Yang & Jo, 2022). Overall, engagement in positive, problem-focused coping strategies has been linked to lower burnout and better health outcomes for employees (Bono et al., 2013; Davidson et al., 2010; Lapalme et al., 2023; Roswag et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2023) especially when employees have access to the resources needed for the coping strategy to have its maximum effect (Dolan & Ender, 2008; Holton et al., 2016; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003).

According to the JD-R theory, job demands lead to strain, which then leads to negative outcomes, such as burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). However, there exists a number of buffers, such as job resources, which can mitigate the negative effects that job demands have on strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Similarly, when employees encounter stressors and strain in the workplace, they can engage in a set of coping strategies to mitigate the negative effects that stressor may have, either by dealing with the stressor directly or managing the emotions and individual-level consequences that stressor may produce (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These coping strategies can be either positive (adaptive) or negative (maladaptive) and can produce their own consequences (Holton et al., 2016), including influencing the amount of burnout the employee may experience as a result of the stress/strain they encounter (e.g., Holton et al., 2016; Shin et al., 2014). Job and personal resources (such as coping strategies) can also lead to higher motivation and work engagement (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001). Both JD-R and COR assert that those with resources can gain or build more resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hobfoll, 1989). In other words, coping strategies may

be proactive, allowing employees to build resources to better deal with stress in the future (Holton et al., 2016). One such resource is resilience (Bakker et al., 2003).

Resilience

Resilience was originally conceptualized as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances (Masten et al., 1990, p. 425)." More recent definitions have added ideas of perseverance through the times of change and adversity, and rebounding/returning to a state of equilibrium (Luthans, 2002; Ong et al., 2006; Rice & Liu, 2016). Some researchers go so far as to add that resilience indicates the ability to make progress or grow despite the stress or adversity (Luthans, 2002). Many researchers also agree that resilience is closely linked with coping, and that resilient individuals are those who are grounded in hardiness and are able to utilize positive coping strategies in the face of adversity (Bonanno, 2004; Hu et al., 2015; Seery et al., 2013; Waugh et al., 2008).

In light of JD-R and COR, Kuntz et al., (2016, 2017) argue that resilience involves a number of adaptive, learning, and support behaviors that both utilize resources and serve to indicate resource availability to others. Shaw et al., (2016) add that resilient individuals are not only able to utilize available resources but proactively develop new personal and workplace resources. More resilient individuals are able to better proactively prepare for stress, and then more effectively utilize their resources in the face of stress, thereby minimizing the negative effects stress can cause (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Some researchers argue that not only is resilience beneficial when dealing with stress, but an essential piece of being able to engage in coping strategies (Wang et al., 2022).

Resilience has been linked with a number of positive organizational outcomes, such as high performance, greater engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors, greater

organizational commitment (Foerster & Dunchek, 2017; Meng et al., 2019; Robertson et al., 2015; Song et al., 2009; Vanhove et al., 2016), and higher compassion satisfaction for caring professions (Giddens et al., 2022). Within JD-R, resilience has consistently been linked with greater levels of work engagement (Nieto et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2017). Wagnild and Collins (2009) found that individuals with high levels of resilience were more persevering, more self-reliant, and had clearer goals and paths to achieve those goals than those low in resilience.

Resilience not only provides a number of beneficial outcomes, but also serves to protect against a number of negative and detrimental outcomes. Vanhove et al., (2016) found that resilience served to prevent absenteeism and reduce counterproductive work behaviors in organizations. Resilience can protect employees against the negative effects of job demands, stressors, and unfavorable or oppressive work environments (Jackson et al., 2007). Resilience can also serve to reduce the amount of stress an employee feels when facing job demands and stressors (Al-Hawari et al., 2020; Giddens et al., 2022; Kuntz et al., 2016; Plimmer et al., 2022). One of the most consistently documented outcomes of resilience, though, is that resilience protects against, and can even reduce, burnout and its associated negative outcomes (Cheung, 2024; Cooke et al., 2013; Fernandez-Castillo & Fernandez-Prados, 2021; Foerster & Dunchek, 2017; Foster et al., 2018; Hao et al., 2015; Hetzel-Riggin et al., 2020; Jeong & Shin, 2023; Kimura et al., 2018; Meynaar et al., 2021; Mealer et al., 2012; Meng et al., 2019; Serrao et al., 2021; Shakir et al., 2020; Smout et al., 2022; Steensma et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2018).

Research has consistently shown that resilience must develop in the face of stress (Kuntz et al., 2016; Pietrzak & Southwick, 2011; van der Vegt et al., 2015; Vanhove et al., 2016). In the workplace, job demands and stressors are responsible for the majority, if not all, of the stress an employee may experience (Bakker et al., 2023a; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Employees must

engage in coping when encountering stressors and demands in the workplace (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the midst of this, employees are able to build resilience. These resilience building efforts can also proactively build resources for future coping and resilience building (Kuntz et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2016). Thus, resilience and proactive coping have an inextricable reciprocal relationship (Vivolo et al., 2024). Building resilience is both a form and an outcome of successful proactive coping.

Unlike some other personal characteristics, resilience is malleable and dynamic (Bonanno, 2004; Luthans, 2002; Masten, 2001; Montpetit et al., 2010; Vanhove et al., 2016, Waugh & Koster, 2015). This means resilience can be developed and built. A number of research efforts and interventions have been studied to determine the most effective resilience-building techniques. These have included goal setting and problem solving techniques (Delaney et al., 2023; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Seidel et al., 2023); physical health interventions, such as maintaining physical fitness, eating well, and getting enough sleep (Bagheri et al., 2023; Delaney et al., 2023; DePierro et al., 2023; LeBlanc & Schaufeli, 2008; McEwen, 2022; Seidel et al., 2023); anxiety reducing techniques, such as grounding, deep breathing, mindfulness; and visualization exercises (LeBlanc & Schaufeli, 2008; Seidel et al., 2023; West et al., 2016); social support (Ahmed et al., 2022; DePierro et al., 2023; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Kuntz et al., 2017; McEwen, 2022; Seidel et al., 2023); reflection on the past (Kuntz et al., 2017; Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2018; Seidel et al., 2023); growing in cognitive and emotional flexibility (DePierro et al., 2023; Kuntz et al., 2017; Shepherd et al., 2009); and recovery from work, including disconnection and engagement in hobbies (Bagheri et al., 2023; Engel et al., 2020; Goldsby et al., 2005; Seidel et al., 2023). Throughout all of the different resilience-building behaviors and interventions that have been studied, one consistent finding is that resilience-building is

dependent on interpersonal and social factors, especially reciprocally beneficial relationships (Bonanno, 2004; Cohen, 2004; Masten, 2001; Meredith et al., 2011; Newson et al., 2008; O'Doughtery Wright et al., 2013; Waugh & Koster, 2015). Merely providing or signaling resources for an employee may not be enough to develop resilience (Kuntz et al., 2017). Resilience is strongly built through interpersonal interactions (Shaw et al., 2016).

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) highlighted the vital nature of interpersonal relationships in part of their social exchange theory. They argue that relationships are built through mutual investment and a mutual exchange of beneficial behaviors. Some of the most important behaviors related to deepening interpersonal relationships are perceived support, the quality of the exchanges and interactions between the two parties, how committed each party member is to the other and to deepening the relationship, how much trust the two share, and how much each member is contributing to the relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The importance of social interactions is highlighted throughout many aspects of organizations, but is especially prevalent in burnout, coping, and resilience. Burnout has been shown to be contagious among employees (Bakker et al., 2005, 2007). Similarly, though, just as burnout can be shared between employees, resources and social support can be shared (Hablesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989, Hobfoll et al., 2018; Kuntz et al., 2017). Resilience is dependent on social interactions to thrive and grow (Shaw et al., 2016). While research on resilience growth is still in its infancy (Tonkin et al., 2018), much of it has focused on the employee as an individual, or the employee and their peers or families as sources of social support (e.g., Seidel et al., 2023). However, one important workplace relationship that has yet to be fully addressed in the burnout, coping, and resilience literature is that of the relationship between an employee and their leader (see Fan et al., 2020 for an exception).

Leadership

While a full review of leadership research is beyond the scope of this study, it is necessary to discuss what has been studied in relation to leaders' effects on burnout and leaders acting as role models for employees. The relationship between leaders and their followers is one of the most powerful in the workplace (Thomas et al., 2013), producing lasting impacts on both the followers and the organizations in which they are situated. Previous research has shown that leaders can have influences, both positive and negative, on their followers' emotional states, well-being, and actions (Diebig et al., 2017; Dubinsky et al., 1995; Ellis et al., 2019; Ilies et al., 2007a; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Kim et al., 2023; Lowe et al., 1996; Martin et al., 2023; Skakon et al., 2010; Stein et al., 2021; Tafvelin et al., 2019; Tariq et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2021). For the purposes of this study, I am going to focus my review of relevant leadership research on the "bright" side of leadership and its associated behaviors (excluding destructive, abusive, toxic, laissez-faire leadership, etc.).

Yukl and colleagues (2002) argue that leader behavior can be categorized as task-behavior, relational behavior, or change behavior (building on earlier behavioral taxonomies established by Fleishman, 1953). Task behaviors can include clarifying the roles and responsibilities for followers, assigning tasks, checking on the quality and progress of the work, evaluating the performance of employees, and planning how to best allocate resources to accomplish goals. Relational behaviors revolve around developing higher quality relationships with followers by including them in decision making processes, offering them necessary encouragement and support, recognizing and praising performance, and providing coaching and development opportunities. Change behaviors include casting visions for the future, taking risks to achieve goals, assessing outside information for challenges and growth opportunities, and

encouraging innovation among followers (Yukl et al., 2002). A number of popular leadership frameworks have been built around these core behaviors (i.e., transformational and transactional leadership, Bass, 1985; charismatic leadership, Conger et al., 2000; path-goal leadership theory, House, 1996), which recognize the importance of leader behaviors for bringing about change in followers and organizations.

To be a leader is to, at least at some level, take care of followers and enact change. And while there is a growing body of evidence indicating that leaders' behavior and followers witnessing/perceiving their leaders' behaviors can have direct influence over their own (the followers) behaviors (e.g., Tariq et al., 2020; Wu at al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021), what has been largely missing from this conversation is how leaders affect follower behaviors with regards to burnout. Leadership research has typically approached the topic of burnout from one of two lenses. The first is looking at when leaders themselves are experiencing burnout, and the destructive effects this can have on leaders, followers, and organizations (e.g., burnout and emotional contagion; Bolger et al., 1989; Chullen, 2012; Dunn, 2022; Petitta & Jiang, 2020; Petitta et al., 2016; Tariq et al., 2020). The second is focused on different leader behaviors and how they affect the levels of burnout their followers experience (e.g., Montano et al., 2017). For the purposes of this review, I am going to focus primarily on the latter.

Several leader behaviors have been identified to have impacts on follower burnout. Lådegard (2011) and Grant (2006) both found evidence that leaders who help their followers to set goals, develop and enact plans to achieve those goals, and provide encouragement and feedback to the follower as they accomplish their goals are able to reduce the levels of psychological stress and burnout their followers experience. This supports propositions of both the path-goal theory of leadership (House, 1996) and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) –

that one central function of leaders is to clarify how followers can achieve their goals, reducing the stress that comes from role ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964) and subsequently increasing the performance of followers (Bass, 1985; House, 1996; Montano et al., 2017; Schriesheim et al., 2006). Following the trickledown model (Ambrose et al., 2013), which argues that organizational processes and behaviors can trickle down from those in higher positions to those in lower positions, Sonnentag and Schiffner (2019) began to establish evidence that if leaders spend time detaching from work, their followers may also detach from work and experience lower levels of exhaustion and lower need for recovery in the future. Although this behavior does not directly occur between leader and follower, seeing their leader detach from work may empower some employees to also detach. Maslach and Leiter (2016) emphasize that leaders can help to reduce stress and burnout in their followers by actively providing social support, changing the work environment to better meet the needs of followers, and promoting relaxation, fitness, health, and self-understanding. Finally, Harms and colleagues (2017) and Sonnentag and Pundt (2016) both found that leaders can reduce or prevent burnout in their followers by working to have individualized and high-quality relationships with each of their followers (i.e., high quality leader-member exchange relationships; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Interestingly, very little research has examined leader behaviors prompting follower behaviors in direct relation to reducing or preventing burnout (e.g., engagement in coping strategies or other resilience-building behaviors; see Koch & Binnewies, 2015; and Sonnentag & Schiffner, 2019 for exceptions). Part of a leader's responsibility is to be a role model to followers – to show them not only how to best operate within the organization, but also how to care for their own needs. According to the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), the social information that individuals receive directly impacts the behaviors they choose

to enact. The more influence the information source has over the individual, the more salient the information they receive from that source will be (Jabeen et al., 2022; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Leaders in organizations are in prime positions to have powerful and direct influence over their followers' behaviors (Jabeen et al., 2022).

There is some evidence that leaders can successfully model desired behaviors and have their followers follow their lead and enact those or similar behaviors themselves. Social learning theory says that the majority of human learning occurs through observation, especially of role models (Bandura, 1977). People want to emulate others they respect and hold in higher regard than themselves. In organizations, this is most clearly seen in the leader-follower relationship. Wu and colleagues (2021) found evidence that when a leader demonstrates serving behaviors, their followers will also begin to display serving behaviors. Hu et al. (2023) demonstrated that when leaders show high levels of job involvement, their followers will also show high levels of job involvement, leading to better creativity and performance. Even outside of the workplace, leaders can have an impact on their followers' behaviors. Koch and Binnewies (2015) found that when leaders have clear segmentation between their work and home lives (e.g., clear boundaries, detachment after work, etc.), their followers feel empowered to also establish clear segmentation between their work and home lives. This powerful influence is not limited to only positive behaviors. Lian et al. (2022) showed that when leaders engage in unethical pro-organizational behaviors (i.e., behaviors that are morally wrong but benefit the organization; Umphress et al., 2010), their followers can begin to show moral disengagement and subsequently engage in unethical behaviors themselves.

Focusing on resilience-building and coping behaviors, DePierro et al (2023) advocate that social support is a key strategy to building resilience. Because of the nature and power of the

leader-follower relationship (Thomas, 2013), leaders are in a key position to be able to provide social support to their followers. Beyond this, leaders can also directly influence the culture and environment their followers work in (Harland et al., 2005). When engaging in positive and helpful actions, leaders directly support, and create environments which encourage building resilience in their followers (Tsai, 2011). Several studies support this powerful impact of leaders, citing leader behaviors and the environment leaders create as situational enablers that influence the growth of employee resilience (Kuntz et al., 2016, Näswall et al., 2015; Zhu et al., 2019).

Resilience, similar to burnout, can also be contagious, especially between a leader and their follower (Fan et al., 2020). As leaders demonstrate, build, and model resilience, their followers are able to observe, learn, and develop their own resilience (Bartone, 2006; Story et al., 2013). This supports the social learning model (Bandura, 1977). Employees watch their role models (i.e., leaders), observe their behavior, and enact it themselves. In line with previous leader-follower research (e.g., Koch & Binnewies, 2015; Wu et al., 2021), it is logical to assume that when leaders are modeling resilience-building behaviors, their followers can learn from them and enact those same, or similar behaviors, themselves.

Sometimes, behaviors are not explicitly clear, especially if the witness does not experience the behavior firsthand. In the case of coping, followers may not always directly witness their leaders engaging in coping strategies or resilience-building behaviors. This does not mean that the behavior is without consequence. If the leader is engaging in resilience-building behaviors, then they should be growing in their resilience. The follower may be able to perceive the leader engaging in the resilience-building behavior simply by witnessing how the leader is talking and acting once engaging in the behavior, even if they don’t witness the behavior itself. Following social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), the follower may then adopt the behaviors and

attitudes of the leader, thus engaging in resilience-building behaviors themselves. This pattern has been demonstrated with other perceived leader behaviors, including perceived leader safety behavior leading to followers engaging in more safety behaviors (Fruhen et al., 2022), perceived leader humility leading to followers engaging in prosocial behaviors (Jia et al., 2024), perceived leader busyness leading to followers engaging in interaction avoidance behaviors (Huang & Zhang, 2021), and even perceived leader narcissistic behaviors leading to followers being hesitant to engage in voice behaviors (Zhang et al., 2022). Although the followers may not be witnessing the explicit behaviors, the perceptions of their leaders engaging in the various behaviors was enough to drive change in the followers themselves.

In summary, burnout has major implications for both the individual and the organization (Holton et al., 2016; Maslach et al., 2001; Weiss, 2020). Both the JD-R and COR assert that while job demands and a lack of resources can exacerbate and lead to burnout, adequate access to and utilization of resources can be a major protective factor (Bakker et al., 2023a; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Coping strategies, especially those targeted at building resilience, are beneficial resources over which the employee has a high degree of control (Holton et al., 2016; Kuntz et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2016). Successful coping and resilience can not only lower and prevent burnout, but also increase engagement and performance in employees (Bakker et al., 2023a; Demerouti et al., 2001; Kuntz et al., 2017). Much of the previous coping research has focused on coping and resilience from an individual level, neglecting the powerful relationship between a leader and their follower, and the influence the leader can have as a role-model to their follower.

The majority of research on leader role-modeling for follower behavior has focused on generally positive and organizationally-beneficial behaviors. Leaders have powerful effects on

the outcomes for followers and organizations (Banks et al., 2014), and are regarded as powerful role models (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Judge & Bono, 2001; Koch & Binnewies, 2015). Despite some research on leaders' influence on follower burnout through other mechanisms (e.g., Densten, 2005; Diebig et al., 2017; Stein et al., 2021), there seems to be a gap in the literature regarding leaders' influence over followers' engagement in coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors to protect against burnout (Skakon et al., 2010). Knowing the impact leaders can have on their followers by modeling behaviors, it is reasonable to suspect that this influence may extend to other burnout-related behaviors, such as engagement in coping strategies and building resilience. Sonnentag and Schiffner (2019) and Koch and Binnewies (2015) provided some evidence for this relationship, but their studies were limited to detachment. Leaders can not only facilitate but model other coping strategies and resilience-building behaviors for their followers by engaging in the behaviors themselves. When followers perceive their leaders engaging in resilience-building behaviors, they may be more likely to engage in those or similar behaviors themselves, thereby strengthening their own resilience. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived leader resilience-building behaviors will be positively related to follower resilience-building behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Follower resilience-building behavior will be (a) negatively related to burnout and (b) positively related to work engagement and (c) in-role performance.

Personal Resources

Employees within the same leader may still respond to stress and behavioral modeling in varying ways, due to their own personal characteristics and resources. Personal characteristics that can affect individuals' ability to control and influence their environment are considered as

resources under the JDR model (Hobfoll, 1989). Bakker et al. (2023a) highlight the importance of personal resources in the job demands-resources process, saying that both job and personal resources can have strong positive effects on work engagement, and buffering effects on the relationship between job demands and exhaustion. Personal resources have also been linked to higher levels of work engagement (Bakker et al., 2007; Mauno et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) and resilience (Hobfoll et al., 2003). In terms of predicting burnout, some of the most studied personal resources include external-internal locus of control, (Benveniste et al., 2024; Gan et al., 2007), cognitive or psychological flexibility (Cheng, 2001; Gan et al., 2007), optimism (Alarcon et al., 2009; Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021; Riolli & Savicki, 2002).

Optimism

Optimism is defined as the tendency to believe that one will generally experience good outcomes in life (Scheier et al., 1994, 2001). Some researchers have conceptualized optimism as a dispositional stable variable (Given et al., 1993; Wrosch & Scheier, 2003), while some argue that it is a malleable personal resource (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007, 2009; for the purposes of this study, I will be following the more stable conceptualization of optimism). No matter the conceptualization, optimism has been linked to lower levels of burnout (Alarcon et al., 2009; Fry, 1995; Marques-Pinto et al., 2021; Riolli & Savicki, 2002), higher levels of work engagement (Rasmussen et al., 2006; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), higher levels of well-being (Scheier et al., 2001), and higher levels of resilience (Nieto et al., 2022). Optimism has also been shown to have protective factors, enabling people to better deal with life-changes and stress (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Given et al., 1993; Rasmussen et al., 2006).

Beyond the direct benefits optimism can have, research has shown that optimism can have moderating effects on a variety of important relationships. Riolli and Savicki (2002) showed that optimism protected workers from the negative effects of low job resources on burnout. The workers with high optimism demonstrated significantly higher personal accomplishment levels than those with low optimism. Fry (1995) showed that optimism protected against the decline in self-esteem and increase in burnout that was associated with higher levels of daily hassles and greater time pressures at work. Similarly, Mäkikangas and Kinnunen (2003) showed that the relationship between time pressure and mental distress was worse for employees with low optimism levels. Finally, Riolli and Savicki (2003) demonstrated that optimism not only reduced burnout, but also reduced the impact that stress had on burnout symptoms.

In general, those with a high level of optimism tend to display more positive feelings and proactive personality traits, even in the midst of stress and demands, which contributes to higher levels of resilience (Rasmussen et al., 2006; Zhu & Li, 2021). When facing difficult situations, more optimistic individuals tend to adopt more adaptive coping strategies (Iwanaga et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Scheier & Carver, 1985). Those with higher levels of optimism tend to not be weighed down by previous failures, viewing them as growth and learning opportunities rather than sources of shame (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Their positivity and perseverance allow optimists to more actively perceive, seek, and develop personal and job resources, allowing them to more effectively cope with the threatening situations they encounter and proactively develop future resources (Hobfoll, 1989; Rasmussen et al., 2006). As such, and due to its relationships with engagement and burnout, and the moderating effect optimism has on the

relationships between stressors and burnout, optimism may be an important factor in the relationship between resilience building behaviors, burnout, engagement, and performance:

> **Hypothesis 3:** Follower optimism will moderate the relationships between follower resilience-building behaviors and work engagement, burnout, and in-role performance, such that (a) the relationship between follower resilience-building behaviors and burnout will become more strongly negative for those lower in optimism, (b) the relationship between follower resilience-building behaviors and work engagement will become more strongly positive for those higher in optimism, and (c) the relationship between follower resilience-building behaviors and in-role performance will become more strongly positive for those higher in optimism as compared to those lower in optimism.

Psychological Flexibility

Psychological flexibility refers to people's ability to focus on their present circumstances and situations, and take action toward their desired goals, even in the face of challenges or stressors (Bond et al., 2008; Lloyd et al., 2013). Psychological flexibility is centered around six core psychological processes: (1) remaining flexible and present in the moment, (2) maintaining an open and accepting view towards thoughts and feelings, (3), clarifying values, hopes, and goals, (4) acting toward goals in line with values, (5) accepting unwanted feelings that may occur during value-based actions, and (6) increasing defusion skills, such as recognizing unwanted thoughts and seeing them as just thoughts rather than accepting them as truths (Flaxman et al., 2013; Hayes et al., 2012; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). In addition to this, individuals high in psychological, or cognitive, flexibility will be able to focus on currently relevant information and shift between cognitive strategies in response to changes in their environment (Gabrys et al., 2018; Moore & Malinowski, 2009; Morton et al., 2011) This important personal resource has

been linked with better mental health, higher job performance (Bond & Bunce, 2003; Bond & Flaxman, 2006), lower job-related stress (Bond et al., 2008; Puolakanaho et al., 2018), and lower levels of compassion fatigue (Holding et al., 2024; Sarabia-Cobo et al., 2021). Previous research has also shown that psychological flexibility can be developed and grown over time (Kashden et al., 2006) through a number of strategies such as techniques common in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT, e.g., cognitive reappraisal, goal setting, etc.; Flaxman & Bond, 2010) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT, e.g., mindfulness, cognitive defusion, acceptance, etc., Lloyd et al., 2013; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). In the context of JD-R and COR, this positions psychological flexibility as a personal resource that can be developed, spent, and gained back, leading to better outcomes for the employee (Bakker et al., 2023a; Hobfoll, 1989).

In relation to burnout, psychological flexibility has been linked with decreased emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Lloyd et al., 2013; Puolakanaho et al., 2020), and lower levels of burnout overall (Holding et al., 2024; Kurz et al., 2014; Noone & Hastings, 2011; Sarabia-Cobo et al., 2021; Slowiak & Jay, 2023). In a study of medical residents, Terry et al. (2022) found that increased psychological flexibility was associated with higher degrees of residential program satisfaction, and those with higher levels of psychological flexibility reported feeling better prepared to deal with possible future difficulties in their program. Psychological flexibility has been shown to have a direct negative effect on burnout (Fiery, 2017; Holding et al., 2024; Onwezen et al., 2014; Ruiz & Odriozola-González, 2017; Ye et al., 2022) and a direct positive effect on performance (Onwezen et al., 2014) and engagement (Fiery, 2017). Additionally, psychological flexibility has been shown to moderate the relationship between stress factors and burnout symptoms, both in the workplace (Onwezen et al., 2014; Ruiz & Odriozola-González, 2017) and outside of it (Cao et al., 2024). Chong et al. (2023) found evidence that psychological

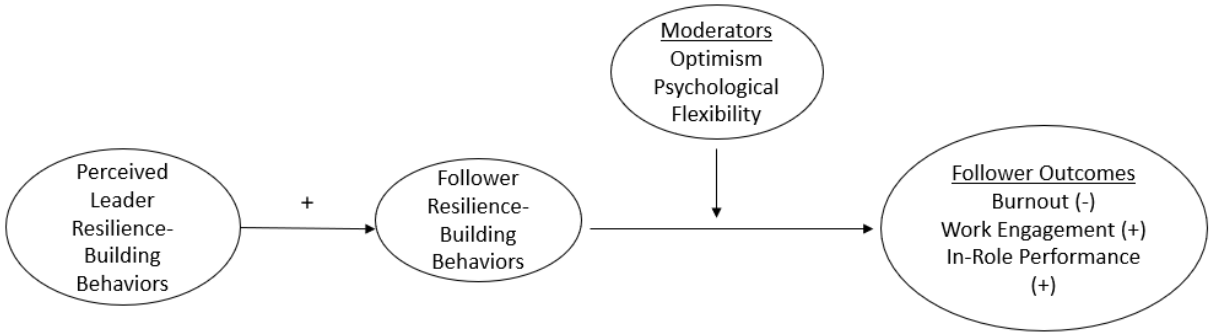
flexibility boosted the positive effects of job satisfaction on mental well-being and lessened the effects of burnout on mental health problems.

While there is a growing body of evidence that psychological flexibility can result in lower burnout, and even moderate the relationship between job stress and burnout (Holding et al., 2024; Onwezen et al., 2014), there seems to be a gap regarding the other relationships proposed in the JD-R model (i.e., engagement and performance, Bakker et al., 2023a; see Bond & Flaxman, 2006 for an exception). Following similar relationships outlined above, psychological flexibility may be an important moderating factor in the relationships between follower resilience-building behavior, burnout, engagement, and performance. Thus, I propose the following:

> **Hypothesis 4:** Follower psychological flexibility will moderate the relationships between follower resilience-building behaviors and work engagement, burnout, and in-role performance, such that (a) the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and burnout will be more strongly negative for those lower in psychological flexibility, (b) the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and work engagement will be more strongly positive for those higher in psychological flexibility, and (c) the relationship between follower resilience building-behavior and in-role performance will be more strongly positive for those higher in psychological flexibility as compared to those lower in psychological flexibility.

Figure 2

Fully Hypothesized Model



Method

Participants and Procedure

Because this study will examine the effects of leader behavior as perceived by followers, and in line with similar previous research focusing on the perception of leader behavior (Fruen et al., 2022; Huang & Zhang, 2021; Jia et al., 2024), data will be gathered from individual followers only (as opposed to dyadic pairs of leaders and followers). To test the proposed hypotheses, a series of regression analyses will be run. A power analysis conducted using G*Power (Erdfelder et al., 1996) suggested a sample size between 200-300 would be sufficient to detect even a small effect size with an alpha level of 0.05 and a power level of 0.80. As such, and to account for possible attrition or careless responses, data will be collected from 300 participants.

Participants will be recruited through the online platform Prolific. Data collected from online sources such as Prolific has been demonstrated to have similar and satisfactory psychometric properties as data collected from other sources (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Prolific also allows for recruiting from a wider, more diverse population than could be done with

convenience sampling (Aguinis et al., 2021; Henrich et al., 2010; Landers & Behrend, 2015). Although online samples do come with an increased risk of careless responding (Aguinis et al., 2021; Meade & Craig, 2012; Ward & Meade, 2023), the benefits of ease, access, lower cost, and a large participant pool outweigh the potential negatives. To minimize effects of careless responding, two attention check items will be included in the online survey, with those who fail both attention check items being removed before final analysis. I will also test for invariability in responses by calculating a longstring index, and removing participants who fall outside of two standard deviations above the mean of number of consecutive identical responses (Meade & Craig, 2012), as well as following the two-second per question per page guideline from Bowling et al., (2023).

Measures

Resilience-Building Behaviors

Resilience-building behaviors will be measured using the nine-item Employee Resilience Scale developed by Näswall et al. (2019). Each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=almost never to 7=almost always. An example item is "I seek assistance at work when I need specific resources." This scale has demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability with Cronbach's estimates scores of α=0.90. While several scales exist focusing on resilience-building behaviors (e.g., DePierro et al., 2023), this scale was chosen for its focus on resilience-building behaviors enacted in the workplace. Participants will be asked to respond to each item twice: Once to report their perceptions of what behaviors their leaders engage in, and again to report what behaviors they themselves engage in.

Burnout

Burnout will be measured using the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory developed by Demerouti (1999). This measure contains sixteen items, and each item is measured on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. This measure contains two subscales reflecting two facets of burnout: disengagement and emotional exhaustion. Example items include "It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way" (disengagement) and "There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work" (exhaustion). Several items are reverse scored, which will be appropriately coded before final analysis. Both subscales have demonstrated good levels of internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha estimates of α=0.74 for the exhaustion subscale, and α=0.79 for the disengagement subscale (Demerouti et al., 2010).

Work Engagement

Work engagement will be measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). The scale has nine-items, and each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type frequency scale ranging from 0=never to 6=always/every day. There are three subscales within this measure reflecting three facets of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Example items include "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" (vigor), "I am enthusiastic about my job" (dedication), and "I am immersed in my work" (absorption). Each subscale demonstrates adequate levels of internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha estimates between α=0.60-0.88 (median =0.77) for the vigor subscale, α=0.75-0.90 (median=0.85) for the dedication subscale, and α=0.66-0.86 (median=0.78) for the absorption subscale. This scale can also be evaluated at a higher order single factor of "work engagement." Utilizing the scale to measure this higher-order factor has also demonstrated strong levels of reliability (α=0.85-0.92, median=0.92). For the purposes of this study, I will be

averaging scores together across all nine items to evaluate the higher order factor of work engagement.

In-Role Performance

In-role performance will be measured using a version of the Job Performance Measure developed by Onwezen et al. (2014) that has been adapted for the current study. This measure contains nine items, each rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=totally not applicable to 5=totally applicable. The original items contain the stem "Today…" To better capture the followers' perceptions of their overall performance, this stem will be removed, and the items will be changed from past tense (i.e., "Today, I achieved the objectives of my job.") to present tense (i.e., "I achieve the objectives of my job."). This scale has demonstrated good levels of internal consistency reliability with Cronbach's alpha estimates of α=0.82.

Optimism

Optimism will be measured using the three-item Optimism Scale developed by Kuppens et al. (2007). Each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. An example item is "I often expect the best." This scale has demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach alpha estimates of α=0.65.

Psychological Flexibility

Psychological Flexibility will be measured using the eighteen-item Cognitive Control and Flexibility Questionnaire developed by Gabrys et al. (2018). Each item is measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The scale is split into two subscales with nine items each: (1) cognitive control over emotion and (2) appraisal and cognitive flexibility. Example items include "It is easy for me to ignore distracting thoughts" (cognitive control) and "I approach the situation from multiple angles" (cognitive flexibility).

Previous research has shown this scale to demonstrate strong internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach alpha estimates of α=0.90-0.91 for the cognitive control over emotion subscale and α=0.89-0.93 for the appraisal and coping flexibility subscale. For final analysis, appropriate items will be reverse scored prior to analysis, and scores on the two subscales will be averaged into one overall psychological flexibility score for each participant.

Demographics

A series of demographics will be collected including sex, age, race, ethnicity, marital status, industry, job tenure, and educational level, following recommendations from Holton et al. (2016).

Analyses

To test the proposed model, the overall analytic strategy will be a series of regression equations. To do this, I will utilize the base stats package in R (R Core Team, 2023). Before I begin the regression analyses, I will use a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the measurement model. Following Hu and Bentler's (1999) guidelines, model fit will be evaluated by examining the chi-square, TFI, CFI, SRMR, and RMSEA statistics. Good fit would be indicated by a non-significant chi-square value, TFI and CFI values at or above 0.95, an SRMR value at or below .08 and an RMSEA value at or below .06.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that perceived leader resilience-building behavior will be positively related to follower resilience-building behavior, and hypothesis 2 predicts that follower resilience-building behavior will be negatively related to burnout and positively related to work engagement and in-role performance. To test both of these hypotheses, I will conduct regression analyses with perceived leader resilience-building behavior being regressed onto follower resilience-building behavior, and follower resilience-building behavior being regressed onto each

proposed outcome (burnout, engagement, and in-role performance) respectively. Support for Hypothesis 1 will be established if there is a significant positive regression coefficient between perceived leader resilience-building behavior and follower resilience-building behavior. Support for Hypothesis 2 will be established if there is (a) a significant negative regression coefficient between follower resilience-building behavior and burnout, (b) a significant positive regression coefficient between follower resilience-building behavior and work engagement, and (c) a significant positive regression coefficient between follower resilience-building behavior and in-role performance.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 relate to the moderating effects of optimism and psychological flexibility (respectively) on the various outcomes. To determine whether optimism [psychological flexibility] has the proposed moderating effect on each variable, the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and burnout must be significantly lower at high levels of optimism [psychological flexibility] as compared to low levels of optimism [psychological flexibility]. Similarly, the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and work engagement and the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and in-role performance must be significantly higher at high levels of optimism [psychological flexibility] than at low levels of optimism [psychological flexibility] (Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon et al., 2002). As such, to test these hypotheses, I will conduct a series of regression analyses with each moderator regressed onto each outcome separately, and an interaction term between the moderator and independent variable (follower resilience-building behavior). A statistically significant interaction term will indicate that the proposed moderators are having an effect on the relationship between follower resilience-building behavior and the respective outcomes. To determine whether the moderator is affecting the relationship in the

hypothesized manners, I will decompose the interactions and compare levels of the outcomes at the mean of each moderator, as well as at +/- 1 standard deviation. If Hypothesis 3 [and 4] is supported, the interaction term between optimism [psychological flexibility] and follower-resilience building behavior will have a significant effect on levels of burnout, engagement, and performance. The relationship between follower-resilience building behavior and burnout will be significantly lower at +1 standard deviation of optimism [psychological flexibility] than at -1 standard deviation of optimism [psychological flexibility]. The relationship between follower-resilience building behavior and engagement and performance (respectively) will be significantly higher at +1 standard deviation of optimism [psychological flexibility] than at -1 standard deviation of optimism [psychological flexibility].

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