

‘What Do You Give Me?’ Versus ‘What Do You Mean to Me?’: Exploring the Impact of Ethical Leadership and Abusive Supervision on Employee Well-Being

Abstract

Despite anecdotal evidence linking leadership behaviors to follower psychological well-being, there have been surprisingly few empirical studies examining this link. This study addresses this gap by examining how leadership, viewed through the lens of behavioral ethics, impacts follower psychological well-being using a sample of 458 full-time employed adults occupying positions across a variety of organizations in a variety of industries. Using data collected in two waves, we provide evidence for the discriminant factorial- and criterion-related validity of two emerging and theoretically relevant leadership constructs: ethical leadership and abusive supervision. In addition, we demonstrate for the first time that differential processes explain these relationships. Theoretical implications, directions for future research, study strengths and limitations are discussed.