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Master thesis: Perception of Destructive Leadership and Well-Being Among Guest Workers in Sweden

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Abstract

This paper investigates differences in perception of leadership and well-being between guest workers and native workers in Sweden. Guest workers are individuals who take up temporary employment in a foreign country. While previous research has found cultural differences in well-being, there is limited research investigating the well-being of guest workers in a host country. Similarly, previous research on the perception of destructive leadership has found cultural differences. However, the existing research has not investigated this in the context of guest workers. Two groups of white collar workers were recruited as participants from a Swedish construction company. The first group consisted of 30 native Swedish workers. The second consisted of 29 guest workers, the majority of which came from the UK/Ireland (N = 20). Each participant completed a questionnaire which included the Destrudo-L, Maslachs Burnout Inventory (MBI), and Areas of Worklife Scale (AWS). The results found differences in the perception of destructive leadership between guest workers and native workers. In turn, these differences were found to have a significant influence on well-being in areas such as fairness and community.

Keywords: destructive leadership, well-being, cultural differences, guest workers

Perception of Destructive Leadership and Well-being Among Guest Workers in Sweden

Globalisation of many organisations increases the diversity of the workforce as it allows individuals to more freely move for work (Brannen & Thomas, 2010). In Europe, the European Union (EU) has stepped in to facilitate this movement. By opening the borders between countries, the EU enables individuals to take up temporary employment in a foreign country as guest workers without the need for permanent relocation (Migrationsverket, 2017). Additionally, the EU allows global organisations to move their workforce to different countries on a project basis, based on where there is a demand for specific skills allowing for the retention of talented employees. In other words, workers can be employed by a global company and moved between different branches in different countries as guest workers, which allows a company to retain talent they already have (Blossfeld, 2008). Alternatively, companies can employ guest workers with skills that the company has a temporary demand for regardless of residency or citizenship.

Increasing the cultural diversity of the workplace however, comes with its own set of challenges. Organisations may, for instance experience difficulties in accommodating the well-being of a workforce with many different cultures (Tröster & Knippenberg, 2012). Temporary contracts and environmental changes mean that guest workers may be at an increased risk for negative impacts on their well-being (Du, Gregory, & Meng, 2006). This risk is also present as guest workers are often the cultural minorities when working in a foreign country. It is thus critical that leaders of diverse workplaces understand and thereby adjust their behaviour and leadership style to accommodate different cultures (Tröster & Knippenberg, 2012). If leaders fail to adjust, the potential differences in leadership style may

increase the risk of burnout among employees (Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016; Nyberg et al. 2011).

Burnout, as well as other stress related illnesses, have been linked to negative effects on organisations. Firstly, burnout has been found to be linked to a decrease in productivity which in itself has a negative effect on an organisation (Dewa, Loong, Bonato, Thanh, & Jacobs, 2014). Secondly, there are high financial costs associated with burnout. For instance, organisations in Sweden are estimated to spend approximately 388,000 SEK on each case of burnout. This cost encompasses, for example, sick days and the recruitment and training of a replacement (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2017). Organisations who employ guest workers can therefore save on costs by investigating burnout among guest workers consequently being able to implement appropriate interventions.

Within the field of psychology, research exists on the burnout and well-being continuum (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) as well as cultural differences in burnout (Puig, Yoon, Callueng, An, & Lee, 2014; (Pines, Ben-Ari, Utasi, & Larson, 2002; Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Tang, 2000). Research also exists on cultural differences in the workplace (Cem Ersoy, Born, Deros, & Molen, 2012; Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Dorfman, & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1999). However, few studies have examined these areas in relation to one another in the same workplace. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to measure the well-being of guest workers in comparison to their native counterparts using burnout scales. Destructive leadership will be investigated as a mediating factor, as destructive leadership has been found to be a potential antecedent to burnout (Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016; Nyberg et al. 2011). When looking at this mediating factor, a distinction will be made between guest workers and native workers as leadership may be perceived differently depending on culture (Tröster & Knippenberg, 2012).

Leadership in Multicultural Workplaces

Studies have shown that individuals respond differently to different leadership styles depending on the culture they come from (Cem Ersoy, Born, Derous, & Molen, 2012; Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Dorfman, & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1999). This absence of a cross-cultural, or universal, leadership style may suggest that leaders of a multi-cultural work group may face more issues than leaders of a less diverse group. In addition to the increase in diversity guest workers bring, they by definition don't permanently move to the country they work in. Therefore, they may not be looking to fully integrate into the country they work in or adapt as well to the locally accepted leadership styles.

Despite the evidence for cultural differences in perception of leadership, a common limitation to studies which look at differences is that they often examine very similar cultures. Such studies look at either collectivist or individualist cultures but not both (Gibson & Marcoulides, 1995). This means that any evidence suggesting a commonly preferred leadership style is not generalisable. The limitations can be minimised by dividing cultures into collectivist cultures and individualistic cultures which have been defined by Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, and Lucca (1988). They defined collectivist cultures are those that emphasize a strong and stable ingroup (e.g. family, club, etc.) where the goals of the group come before the goals of the individuals. In contrast, an individualist culture was defined as a culture where the goals of the individual are not necessarily in line with the goals of the ingroup. This prioritisation of goals leaves the ingroup of the individualist cultures less stable than the ingroups of the collectivist cultures. It is commonly recognised that western cultures belong to the individualistic category (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

Studies have considered the differences in leadership styles between collectivist and individualist cultures and have found some conflicting results. Spreitzer, Perttula, and Xin (2005) found that fundamental differences between these two cultures mean that theories

about leadership styles developed in the west cannot simply be transferred to other cultures without modification. In contrast, a study by House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004) looked at leadership from 62 different countries and found some cross-cultural similarities. They identified the characteristics of charismatic leadership and team-oriented leadership as being consistently perceived as positive regardless of culture. Considering both these studies, the conclusion may be drawn that it is possible to find a common ground between cultures where traits of certain leadership styles can work for everyone in a diverse group. However, there may still be overarching differences between cultures that influence well-being and leadership styles. One example of such a difference is the issue of giving and receiving feedback. While it may be acceptable and even encouraged to give feedback to superiors in some cultures, it can be seen as highly inappropriate to do so in other cultures (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991).

Regardless of the issues with leadership style faced by the leaders of multicultural teams, research has identified factors that may aid organisations in maximising the benefits of such a team. A study by Fitzsimmons (2013) found that workers were more likely to draw on the skills and ideas they have from their cultural background if the organisation's ideologies match their own. Therefore, Fitzsimmons suggests that in order to better benefit from an international workforce, organisations should take a holistic approach when looking at their ideologies to include multiculturality. Furthermore, a study by Tröster and Van Knippenberg (2012) found two factors that aid in constructive changes within the organisation. The first factor they identified was openness from the leaders toward the workers. The second factor was national similarity between leader and workers. Both factors were found to increase the likelihood of nationality minorities voicing beneficial opinions which may lead to constructive changes within the organisation. Finally, Rodríguez (2005) found that no changes towards the minority individuals needed to be made if the organisation had a strong

company culture. Provided that the organisation has culturally balanced groups, a new culture can be created within the organisation.

There are two major problems with the existing research on leadership in multicultural teams. Firstly, the research that exists has a tendency to look at the problems associated with multiculturalism. This may give a misleading representation of the diverse workforce, as well as less being known about the use and how to promote the potential possibilities of a diverse workforce (Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander, & Maznevski, 2010; Stahl, & Tung, 2015). Secondly, while some research has been conducted, more research is still needed to fully understand leadership in multicultural teams (Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2012).

Destructive Leadership

Destructive leadership is considered somewhat of a vague and broad concept. The definition most commonly used, and therefore the one used for this study, is “The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates” (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007 p 208).

A study by Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, and Einarsen (2010) looked at the prevalence of destructive leadership in Norwegian employees. The study investigated 4500 randomly selected employees and found that around 60% of workers had at some point been exposed to destructive leadership. Additionally, the study found that the majority of the exposures of destructive leadership was leadership which the authors considered less severe in comparison to other forms of leadership. One of these less severe forms of destructive

leadership was laissez-faire which was overall found to be the most common form of destructive leadership.

Research by Nyberg et al. (2011) found some cultural differences in the prevalence of different types of destructive leadership. They investigated the differences in leadership practices between Sweden, Poland and Italy. While there was no difference found between the countries when it came to selfish leadership, there were differences found in other areas. The study found that Sweden had lower prevalence of autocratic and malevolent leadership than the other two countries. This suggests that there are differences in perception of leadership which may create further discrepancies between guest workers and native workers.

As destructive leadership is so prevalent, organisations risk destructive leaders having a great negative impact on their employees and thereby on the organisation. Destructive leadership has been negatively correlated with employees' overall well-being (Nyberg et al., 2011). For instance, destructive leadership has been found to lead to stress, which may lead to lowered self-efficacy. This lowered self-efficacy reduces the productivity of the employees in turn results in a negative financial impact for the organisations (Einarsen, 1999).

Compared to constructive leadership, a study by Fors Brandebo, Nilsson, and Larsson (2016) found that the impacts of destructive leadership differed depending on the factors that were measured. For example, they found that destructive leadership had a greater negative impact than constructive leadership had a positive impact on what were classed as negative factors. These negative factors included for example emotional exhaustion, and the desire to leave a job or workplace. By contrast, constructive leadership was found to have more of a positive impact on factors that were classed as work-related relationships than destructive leadership had a negative impact. These factors included trust in the supervisor, and work atmosphere.

Many models have been developed to examine the different aspects of destructive leadership (Einarsen et al. 2007; Schilling, 2009; Tepper, 2000). Larsson, Fors Brandebo, and Nilsson (2012) compiled several different models into one comprehensive survey and found five factors which were reflected in most models of destructive leadership. However, it is important to note that this compilation of destructive leadership models does not offer a cut-off point for destructive leadership. Rather, it measures the perception of destructive leadership through an overall score and through the subscales in the survey. Following is a recount of the five factors found in the study by Larsson and colleagues. For the purpose of illustrating and defining the factors in relation to other models, seven categories in Schilling's (2009) model of destructive leadership will be defined alongside the five factors.

The factors Arrogant/Unfair and Threats/Punishments/Overdemands seem to cover the same type of behaviours and are therefore found to fit into both Schilling's despotic and exploitative leadership categories. Despotic leadership is most commonly recognised as an authoritarian leadership style with emphasis on status. These leaders strive for a large power distance between themselves and their followers and instead of motivating followers to complete tasks, force is used to incite productivity. Exploitative leaders push the organisations agenda and tries to prevent followers from making mistakes by using threats, fear as well as extrinsic rewards. Both despotic and exploitative leaders are often described as inconsiderate or ruthless and tend to demand obedience from their followers.

The Ego-oriented/False factor was found to cover the same type of behaviour as insincere leadership and restrictive leadership. Insincere leadership is one of the most commonly mentioned behaviours in Schilling's (2009) study. It encompasses behaviours where the leader tries to achieve personal goals by taking advantage of others. They tend to do this without confronting the individual at whose expense the action is made and are therefore often seen as deceitful unjust, disloyal, or as withholding information. Restrictive

leadership encompasses leaders who have very strict rules and regulations. Their motivation is to ensure that the followers work in the way that follows the leaders' decisions and preferences. These leaders are often seen as non-involving and disregarding towards their followers.

The factor Passive/Cowardly was found to be overlapping with the passive-avoiding and laissez-faire categories. Avoiding leadership has two branches, passive and active. However, as passive-avoiding is the category that overlaps with the factors this will be the one described. Passive-avoiding leaders are those who make sure they are not held accountable for decisions that are made. They are seen as inconsistent, unreliable, and unconvincing. Individuals tend to have a hard time deciphering these leaders' character or opinions. Laissez-faire leaders are those who are completely indifferent to their role as leaders. They do not communicate efficiently or set relevant goals.

The factor Uncertain/Unclear/Messy, fits in well with Schilling's failed leadership category. Failed leadership involves a leader asserting themselves too much into daily work and therefore fails at completing managerial tasks such as strategizing operations in a holistic manner.

The incorporated factors described above, are the basis for measuring the destructive leadership in the current study. However, as Larsson and colleagues only tested the identification of destructive leadership in a military context, they identified that some factors may be missing in an organisational context. This may be due to the relationships between employee and leader being more likely to be on a personal and friendly basis in a civilian context compared to a military context. In addition to this limitation, there may also be cases of mislabelling. A study by Shaw, Erickson, and Harvey (2011) found that leaders did not need to fit the complete description of destructive leadership to be labelled as destructive. It was enough that the leader possessed some destructive behaviours in order for their followers

to label them as destructive. They also found that once a leader had been categorised as destructive by followers, the leader lost social power and was more frequently blamed for negative outcomes in the workplace compared to other leaders. Therefore, the current study will investigate the differences in perceptions of destructive leadership traits rather than looking at destructive leaders who encompass the full description.

As previously mentioned, a negative relationship has been found between destructive leadership and well-being and therefore a positive correlation between destructive leadership and burnout (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012; Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016). Nevertheless, a study by Li, Qian, Han, and Jin (2016) found two moderating factors that could lessen the effect of destructive leadership on burnout. The first moderator factor was found to be perceived organisational support. If organisational support was perceived as high, the likelihood of burnout decreased. Likewise, if the individual possessed high political skills, the likelihood of burnout decreased in workers with a destructive leader in comparison to those with low political skills (Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016).

Burnout and Well-Being

Burnout is a broad concept where the definition often depends on the field of study (Schaufeli, Enzmann, & Girault, 1993). Within psychological research, burnout is commonly viewed as a continuum with burnout at one extreme end and well-being at the other. This study uses Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter's (2001) definition: "Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy".

On the continuum, and as the definition suggests, burnout is commonly divided into three dimensions consisting of exhaustion, cynicism and lack of efficacy (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). The three dimensions are often considered in this causal order as it has been

shown to be the best representation of the progression of burnout (Toppinen-Tanner, Kalimo, & Mutanen, 2002). The following is an explanation of each dimension and how they are linked to burnout.

Exhaustion is argued to be the most common aspect of burnout and is associated and strongly linked with the stress component of burnout. When an individual experiences exhaustion it pushes the person to depersonalisation by distancing themselves from the job (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Cynicism and depersonalisation have been found to be an immediate response to exhaustion. In other words, exhaustion leads to cognitive distancing which in turn leads to depersonalisation which either manifests itself as, or results in, cynicism (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Cynicism has to do with the interpersonal context, it is self-protection and may be due to an overload of the exhaustion dimension (Leiter & Maslach, 2004).

Inefficacy has been linked to exhaustion and cynicism but has predominantly been found to develop separately (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). While cynicism has been found to develop as a result of exhaustion, inefficacy has been found to develop in parallel with the other two dimensions (Leiter, 1993). It seems to develop as the result of a lack of resources, rather than social conflict and workload (Leiter, 1993; Leiter & Maslach, 2004) and may result in feelings of incompetency (Leiter & Maslach, 2004).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) derived the six areas of working life from the three dimensions by creating a model for burnout. The areas consist of workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. They have been found to interact with the three domains of burnout in a mediation model, where the six areas negatively correlate with the dimensions leading to burnout (Figure 1; Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Perception of these six areas of working life are compared between individuals to find discrepancies and therefore better understand why, under the same circumstances, one individual may risk burn out and another

might not. Following is a brief description of each area and how it is related to well-being and burnout.

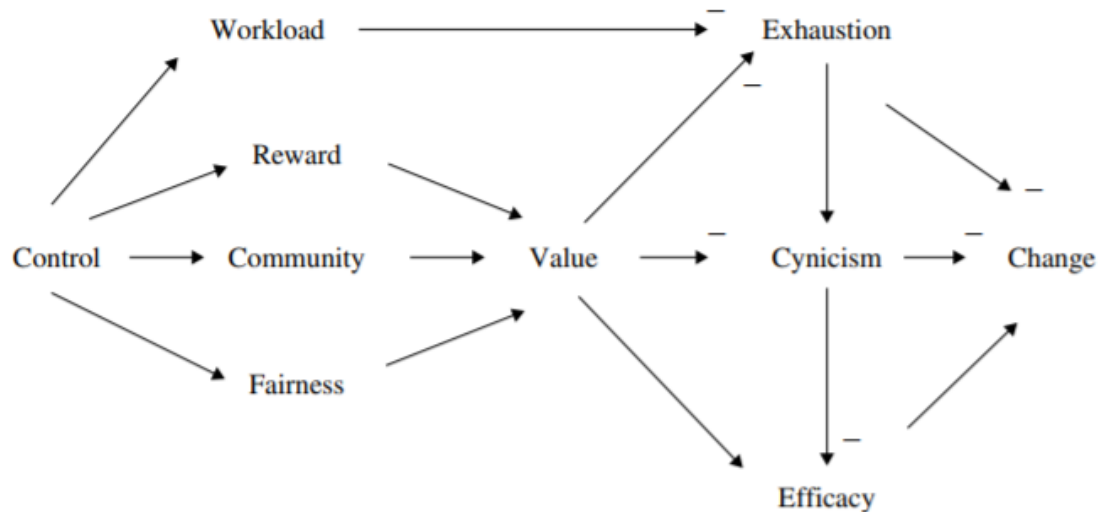


Figure 1 (Leiter & Maslach, 2005).

Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) describe workload as an individual having so much work that it leads to the depletion of an individual's energy to a point where they are not able to recover. High workload under time pressure has been consistently related to burnout and has been especially associated with exhaustion. Workload does not necessarily only have to do with having too much to do but may also be when the skills to complete tasks are missing.

Control is positively associated with efficacy. It is based on the control demand theory of stress (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Control measures to what extent an individual perceives that they have the autonomy to make decisions in their work environment. For instance, an individual may lack control over the resources they need in order to complete their task at hand. Alternatively, they may feel overwhelmed by responsibilities; their tasks may exceed what is considered their responsibility. Additionally, the authority needed to complete tasks that the individual believes to be the most important may also be missing

(Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The sense of being in control increases well-being through the feeling of efficacy.

Discrepancies between the rewards an individual receives and either the effort they put in, or the expectations they have, may cause strain. This imbalance is based on the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996). Like control, this perceived imbalance is associated with inefficacy. The less an individual perceives that they are being rewarded for their effort, the less effort they tend to exert. There are however different types of rewards that can be influential. Monetary rewards are when the individual feels that the perceived exerted effort is reflected in a financial exchange. Social rewards are when an individual perceives that they are getting the recognition they feel they deserve for the work they are doing. Intrinsic rewards are those where an individual gets internal satisfaction from their work, for example by feeling like their work is fun, they are doing it well, or that they are making a difference (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Community consists of the social interaction, positive emotional exchange, and social support individuals experience with the people around them in a work environment. The perceived quality of the social interaction is positively correlated with perceived support and the closeness of the group which in turn increases the well-being of the individual. This sense of belonging is strengthened when the individuals share values (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter 2001). Research consistently finds that a workplace has lessened levels of burnout if it is lively, attentive, and responsive as a community (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). In contrast, isolation from social contact or continual conflict at a workplace can lead to constant feelings of negativity and frustration (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Fairness is an individual's perception that decisions are made equally and that they are treated with respect. A lack of perceived fairness leaves individuals feeling upset and exhausted, as well as triggering feelings of cynicism. These negative feelings can arise from

unfair treatment such as unequal pay or promotions, cheating, preferential treatment of others, etc. This also extends to how fair work-related evaluations and promotions are perceived to be (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Values are the ideals that individuals hold, often linked to the personal goals that individuals have and include organisational fit (Scherer, 2016). Values can act as strong motivators as they further intrinsic rewards by, for example, enabling a sense that their work is meaningful. However, a discrepancy between the values of an individual and those of the organisation has been found to lead to lowered engagement. This discrepancy has also been found to be linked to exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Additionally, values have been shown to explain a large portion of the variance in these three dimensions of burnout (Tartakovsky, 2016). An especially strong link has been found between values and emotional exhaustion which in turn influences the feeling of dedication an individual has towards their work (Matziari, Montgomery, Georganta, & Doulougeri, 2017). A conflict of values can arise when, for example, the job requires an individual to do something they would consider unethical, such as lie or when mission statements or value words that a company has doesn't match the everyday practice of the organisation (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

In similar situations where discrepancies in areas of working life occur, individual differences lead to some suffering from burnout while others do not. Research has found several mediating factors explaining these individual differences. One factor is how resilient the individual is. Resilience is particularly strong as a mediating factor when looking at control and value in the six areas of working life (McFadden, Mallett, & Leiter, 2017). Similarly, coping strategies for how changes and hardships are dealt with also plays a mediating role in burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). Along with these two mediating factors,

an individual's level of education and how supported they perceive that they are has also been found to mediate burnout (Liat, 2009; Tartakovsky, 2016).

Cultural Differences and Burnout

Differences in burnout between individual and collectivist cultures have been found (Pines, Ben-Ari, Utasi, & Larson, 2002; Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Tang, 2000; Pedrabissi, Rolland, & Santinello, 1993). However, similarities in rates of burnout between people of the same occupation regardless of culture have also been found (Puig, et al., 2014;). These similarities between occupations were found to be greater and more influential on the individual compared to differences in culture. For example, psychotherapists tend to have similar levels of exhaustion regardless of their culture (Puig, et al., 2014). Similarly, there are no significant differences between different cultures and the antecedents to burnout (Liat, 2009). However, it has not been investigated if placing an individual in a foreign country influences the rates of- or antecedents to burnout. For example, workers who are away from their home on a temporary basis leave their home and thereby also their social support. This may lead to them perceiving a lower level of social support which has been shown to influence burnout, and thus guest workers may experience higher rates of burnout (Liat, 2009; DeFreese, & Smith, 2013; Tartakovsky, 2016).

For the current study, native Swedish workers will be compared to English-speaking guest workers, mostly from the UK. Following is a brief overview of burnout in these two countries. In Sweden, stress related illnesses are a costly and common issue. The Swedish national insurance include burnout in the category "adjustment disorder and reaction to severe stress" (Försäkringskassan, 2017). According to them, approximately half of individuals who take sick leave do so because of this category of diagnoses. The Swedish

official statistics show that in the 3rd quarter of 2017 alone, 32,267 individuals were on sick leave because of the disorder (Sveriges Officella Statistik, 2017).

In the UK, burnout is included in the category “Work-related Stress, Depression or Anxiety” (Health and safety executive, 2017). Despite measuring burnout using a different category than Sweden, the same trend is found. The Health and safety Executive in the UK reported that in 2016/2017, 526,000 people in Great Britain fell under this category. This accounted for 40% of work related ill-health in the UK.

Although it is difficult to directly compare the two nations due to how burnout is measured, some similarities were found. For example, both countries found that more women than men suffer from stress related disorders. However, other studies have found that there are no significant gender differences but rather occupational differences when it comes to burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). A meta-analysis showed that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and burnout regardless of culture or gender (Shoji et al., 2016).

Hypotheses

This study explores the well-being of guest workers and their perception of local leadership. Previous research has indicated that there are differences in leadership between different cultures (Spreitzer, Perttula, & Xin, 2005). Further, guest workers are subject to the added stress of being in a different country without the close social support that would be present in one's native country. These two factors may lead to lowered well-being of guest workers compared to native workers.

This study has two main aims. The first aim of this study is to investigate the differences in well-being and burnout between native workers and guest workers. As previously discussed, there is very limited research looking at the psychological well-being of guest workers. The differences in antecedents leading up to burnout have been found to be

similar regardless of culture (Puig, Yoon, Callueng, An, & Lee, 2014; Liat, 2009). However, the individual guest worker will experience cultural differences while in the host country, as well stressors such as differences in social support (Liat, 2009; DeFreese & Smith, 2013; Tartakovsky, 2016) and leadership (Spreitzer, Perttula, & Xin, 2005). Because of this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1.1 There is a difference between the overall well-being of native workers and guest workers. Guest workers will be more likely to score higher on the burnout scales.

H1.2 There is a difference between native workers and guest workers in the subscales of the burnout scales.

The second aim of this study is to look at the influence perceived destructive leadership may play in the well-being of guest workers. Destructive leadership has been found to be positively correlated to burnout (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012; Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016). As there are cultural differences in how leadership is perceived (Nyberg et al., 2011) which may result in guest workers perceiving local leadership as more destructive in comparison to native workers, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2.1 There is a difference in the overall perception of destructive leadership between native workers and guest workers, where guest workers perceive higher levels of destructive leadership.

H2.2 Destructive leadership mediates the relationship between the different areas of burnout.

Methods

Participants

This study involved two groups of participants. All participants were recruited based on convenience sampling through a private construction company with international branches. The first group consisted of 30 native Swedish, white collar workers. These workers lived permanently in Sweden (Male = 20, Female = 10). The second group consisted of 29 white collar guest workers of which the majority were from the UK (Table 1). The guest workers had recently worked or at the time were working in Sweden (Male = 25, Female = 4). They were employed by a different international branch of the same construction company as the Swedish workers and had been relocated to the Swedish branch on a project basis.

Participants were between the age of 23-63 in the native group and between 28-63 in the guest worker group. The UK participants had spent varying lengths of time in Sweden depending on the projects they worked. The time spent in Sweden was divided into three groups: more than five years ($N = 14$), between two and five years ($N = 7$), and less than two years ($N = 8$).

Table 1

Participant country of origin

	Country of origin	<i>N</i>
Native Workers	Sweden	28
	Honduras	1
	Lebanon	1
Guest Workers	UK/Ireland	20
	Australia	2
	New Zealand	1
	US	2
	Poland	2
	Zimbabwe	1

Material/measures

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of a collection of three questionnaires, as outlined below, with the addition of demographic questions. The demographic questions included age, country of origin and time spent working in Sweden. A briefing explaining the aim of the study was given to the participants. Following is a brief description of the questionnaires used.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was developed by Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, and Schwab (1986) and is an inventory designed to measure burnout. For the current study, the General Survey version of this inventory was used. The MBI consists of 16 items that measure the three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy, on a scale from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*). These dimensions are measured individually and cannot be grouped together, meaning that there is no overall MBI score. One

study looked at the validity of the questionnaire and found that Cronbach's alpha for the three subscales ranged from .75 and .86 (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo, & Schaufeli, 2000). The questionnaire included items such as: *I feel emotionally drained from my work* (Exhaustion); *I have become less enthusiastic about my work* (Cynicism); *I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job* (Professional Efficacy).

The Areas of Worklife Scale (AWS) measures burnout and well-being within the six areas of working life: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Leiter and Maslach (2004) developed the scale by including 29 items to measure the six areas as subscales. The areas are scored on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), and these scores can be analysed by using the overall mean or divided up into the six subscales. Cronbach's alpha for the subscales ranged from .70 to .82. The following are three example items from the AWS: *I am a member of a supportive work group* (Community); *Management treats all employees fairly* (Fairness); *My personal career goals are consistent with the Organization's stated goals* (Values).

Destrudo-L is a questionnaire developed by Larsson, Fors Brandebo, and Nilsson (2012) designed to measure destructive leadership where participants are asked to rate 20 items on a scale from 1 (*never/very rarely*) to 5 (*always/very often*). Taking different forms of destructive leadership into account, the scale is based on the aforementioned five factor model: Arrogant/Unfair, Threats/Punishment/Over-demand, Ego-oriented/False, Passive/Cowardly, and Uncertain/Unclear/Messy. The Cronbach's alpha for the subscales were found to range between 0.80-0.84. The scores from this test can be analysed by calculating the overall mean, or by dividing the different subscales. The survey was originally Swedish but was translated for the purposes of this study. It was independently translated twice by two bilingual (Swedish and English) individuals. The translations were then compared, and a consensus on the translation was reached. The following are three examples

of items from the Destrudo-L: *Takes credit for the work of subordinates* (Ego-oriented/False); *Does not show active interest* (Passive/Cowardly); *Gives unclear instructions* (Uncertain/Unclear/Mess).

Procedure

This study used a cross-sectional design where the questionnaires were distributed depending on the availability of participants. All native workers and five of the guest workers were given printed copies of the survey on-site. The remaining 24 guest workers filled out the questionnaire online as their availability was limited. The participants were given a briefing explaining the aim of the study and that the questionnaire would take approximately 20 minutes.

The questionnaire included the AWS, the MBI, and the Destrudo-L which were complemented with demographic questions. The study data was collected in collaboration with another study, therefore there was an additional questionnaire (the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5 x Short; Bass & Avolio, 1995) added to the survey as well as qualitative questions. Pens were provided, and ice-cream was given out as compensation whenever possible. In order to ensure anonymity, no names were collected. The data was coded and stored on a locked computer.

Ethics

Ethics set out by Lund University as well as the ethics outlined by the private company were followed during this study. All participants were informed that they could stop the study at any point and their results would not be used. The data were coded to ensure anonymity and were kept on a locked computer.

Results

As the number of participants for this study was limited (native workers $N = 30$, guest workers $N = 29$), bootstrapping (1000 times) was used to get a better idea of the sampling distribution. The results from the bootstrap were used to compare against the results and identify any anomalies.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for scores by both Native and Guest workers

	Native		Guest	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
AWS	3.85	.39	3.72	.47
Workload	3.32	.85	3.33	.86
Control	4.10	.67	4.08	.45
Reward	3.87	.73	3.79	.64
Community	4.22	.42	3.88	.71
Fairness	3.72	.51	3.36	.67
Values	4.07	.45	4.09	.60
Exhaustion	2.04	1.29	2.21	1.16
Cynicism	1.50	1.40	1.77	1.24
Professional Efficacy	4.62	.99	4.60	.81
Destructive leadership	1.28	.23	1.57	.65
Arrogant/Unfair	1.24	.32	1.53	.75
Threats/Punishment/Overdemand	1.19	.28	1.51	.87
Ego-oriented/False	1.25	.30	1.51	.71
Passive/Cowardly	1.33	.50	1.59	.69
Uncertain/Unclear/Messy	1.34	.40	1.71	.64

Note. *SD* = Standard Deviation; *M* = mean;

Hypothesis 1

Independent sample t-tests were used to test the differences in well-being between native and guest workers (Table 3). The results from these tests showed that there was no significant difference between the groups when it came to the scores of the MBI subscales or the overall AWS scores. However, there was a significant difference found in community and fairness. Community was rated lower by guest workers ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$) in comparison to native workers ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.42$; $t(57) = 2.26$, $p = .03$). When bootstrapping was used, this result did not change ($p = .03$). Similarly, fairness was rated significantly lower by guest workers ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.67$) than by native workers ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.51$; $t(57) = 2.29$, $p = .03$). When the data was bootstrapped, this result became slightly more significant ($p = .02$).

Table 3

Results from t-tests looking at the differences between Native and Guest Workers

	<i>t</i>	Sig.	<i>CI</i>
AWS	1.124	.266	-.10, .35
Workload	-.049	.961	-.46, .44
Control	.150	.881	-.28, .32
Reward	.412	.682	-.28, .43
Community	2.259	.028*	.04, .65
Fairness	2.290	.026*	.04, .67
Values	-.181	.857	-.30, .25
Exhaustion	-.522	.604	-.81, .47
Cynicism	-.788	.434	-.96, .42

Professional Efficacy	.081	.936	-.45, .49
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Note. Unstandardized scores were used. $df = 1, 58$; $CI = 95\%$ Confidence intervals. $SD =$ Standard Deviation. * $p < .05$;

Hypothesis 2

A t-test (Table 4) was performed to investigate the difference in the perception of destructive leadership between the two groups. The results show that guest workers ($M = 1.57, SD = 0.63$) perceived the local leadership to be significantly more destructive than native workers ($M = 1.28, SD = 0.65; t(57) = 1.95, p = .02$). The results from the bootstrapped data found the same effect ($p = .05$). The results also showed differences in perception of the subscales of destructive leadership. While most of the subscales approached significance, the subscale Uncertain/Unclear/Messy was the only one found to be perceived as significantly different by the two groups. Guest workers ($M = 1.71, SD = .64$) scored this subscale as more prominent than native workers ($M = 1.34, SD = .40; t(57) = -2.67, p = .01$) and these results were also shown in the bootstrapped data ($p = .01$).

An ANCOVA was used to further investigate these results. In order to compare the different scales, the scores were first standardised. The ANCOVA confirmed that the subscale Uncertain/Unclear/Messy explained most of the variance between destructive leadership and the two groups of workers, $F(1, 58) = 58.72, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .51$. When this subscale was controlled for, there was no longer a significant difference between the two groups when it came to the overall perception of destructive leadership ($p = .59$).

An ANCOVA was performed to test the influence of destructive leadership on well-being. When destructive leadership was used as the covariant, the ANCOVA found that destructive leadership was significantly related to several of the well-being scales. For example it was found to be influential on Exhaustion, $F(1,58) = 10.34, p = .002, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .16$, as well as the overall AWS scores, $F(1,58) = 25.34, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .31$. Within

the subscales of the AWS, the only area that was not significantly influenced by destructive leadership was values ($p = .79$). Finally, if destructive leadership was controlled for, there was still no significant differences found between the two groups of workers. On the contrary, when the covariant was controlled for, the subscales that were previously found to be significant became non-significant. Community was no longer found to be significant, $F(1,58) = 1.12$, $p = .28$, and neither was fairness, $F(1,58) = 1.58$, $p = .22$.

Table 4

T-tests comparing the perception of destructive leadership Guest and Native workers

	<i>t</i>	Sig.	<i>CI</i>
Destructive leadership	-2.321	.024*	-.54, -.04
Arrogant/Unfair	-1.953	.056	-.60, -.01
Threats/Punishment/Overdemand	-1.890	.064	-.66, .03
Ego-oriented/False	-1.822	.074	-.55, -.03
Passive/Cowardly	-1.707	.093	-.59, .05
Uncertain/Unclear/Messy	-2.650	.010**	-.65, -.09

Note. Unstandardized scores were used. $df = 1, 58$; $CI = 95\%$ Confidence intervals; $SD =$ Standard Deviation. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Exploratory

An ANCOVA revealed that the covariate age was significantly related to scores of the destructive leadership subscale: Passive/Cowardly, $F(1,57) = 4.25$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .07$. There was also significant influence on how this subscale was rated depending on if the individual was a native worker or guest worker after controlling for age $F(1,57) = 4.01$, $p = .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. Age was also significantly related to scores of professional efficacy, $F(1,57) = 5.57$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .09$. However, controlling for age did not change the non-significant, or significant results between the two groups in any of the previous tests.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1.1 and 1.2

The first hypothesis assumed that firstly, there is a difference in the overall well-being between native workers and guest workers where guest workers will be more likely to score higher on the burnout scales (H1.1). Secondly, the first hypothesis assumed that there is a difference between native workers and guest workers in the subscales of the burnout scales (H1.2).

The results concerning the differences in well-being between native workers and guest workers found no difference in the overall scores of the AWS or MBI, rejecting the first part of the hypothesis. One explanation for this could be that the company's policies or norms are strong and relevant to the six areas of working life and that they reach all the different branches of the global organisation (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Alternatively, this may simply come down to the low participant numbers or similarities between the cultures. The second part of the hypothesis was partially confirmed (H1.2). There were differences found in two of the six areas of work life. Both fairness and community were scored lower by guest workers compared to the native workers. This may be a result of cultural differences in social interaction. For example, workers being put into a new environment without their usual social support systems may influence the well-being scores (Liat, 2009; DeFreese, & Smith, 2013; Tartakovsky, 2016). Moreover, as guest workers are working on a temporary basis, there may not be enough time to build up a new social support system. However, it is important to note that differences that are found do not necessarily indicate that the individuals in a certain group are at risk of burnout, but rather indicate a significant difference between the scores.

Hypothesis 2.1 and 2.2

The second hypothesis looked at the differences in perception of destructive leadership between native workers and guest workers. Firstly, this hypothesis assumed that there is a difference in the overall perception of destructive leadership between native workers and guest workers where guest workers perceive higher levels of destructive leadership (H2.1). The second part of the hypothesis assumed that destructive leadership mediates the relationship between the different types of burnout (H2.2).

Overall, the results confirmed the first part of the second hypothesis (H2.1) by showing that guest workers perceived the local leadership to be more destructive than native workers. Upon further investigation of the subscales of destructive leadership, the results showed that one of the subscales differed significantly between the two groups. Local leadership was rated significantly higher in the subscale Uncertain/Unclear/Messy by guest workers compared to native workers. Although only one of the subscales was significant, the other four subscales were approaching significance (Table 4). A significant difference may be found with a larger sample size. These results are in line with previous research which has shown that there are differences in perception of leadership between cultures. For example, Nyberg et al. (2011) found differences in which types of leadership were perceived to be present in different cultures. However, it is once again important to note that differences found in the perception of leadership do not necessarily indicate that the local leadership is viewed as destructive, but rather that there is a difference between the groups.

The second part of the second hypothesis looked at the potential mediating influence of destructive leadership (H2.2). As there was no significant difference found between the two groups with respect to the MBI or the overall AWS scores as predicted, a mediation regression was not performed to test this. Instead, the variance within these scores was tested. An ANCOVA was used to investigate the influence destructive leadership had as a covariant.

This test found that destructive leadership accounted for most of the variance in the well-being scores between the two groups. One example is in the subscales of the AWS, specifically the scores from community and fairness which a t-test previously found to be significantly different between native and guest workers. If destructive leadership is controlled for, these two subscales were no longer significantly different between the groups. This means that the most influential factor effecting discrepancy in well-being between guest workers and native workers is based on the perception of destructive leadership. In other words, destructive leadership can mediate the well-being of the workers. This is in line with previous research that found destructive leadership is negatively associated with well-being (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012; Li, Qian, Han, & Jin, 2016). It is important to identify these differences in perception when it comes to leadership. As guest workers may perceive local leadership differently than native workers, more emphasis should be put on leadership development within this area. Previous research has noted that while destructive leadership is a prevalent issue, it is possible to prevent destructive leadership by aiming interventions at an organisational level (Nyberg et al. 2011)

Practical implications

Given the limited previous research, this study introduces tendencies in the perception of leadership. In the growing global market these results draw attention to an issue which is in the need for additional future research. As previously discussed, each case of burnout cost Swedish companies approximately 388,000 SEK (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2017). Therefore, there are obvious benefits for both workers and organisations in maximising well-being and minimising the risk of burnout (Dewa et al., 2014).

This knowledge of where the discrepancies lie will aid in developing targeted interventions for and changing practices to ensure the well-being of the guest workers. These interventions could, for example, include workshops for both local leaders who will be in

contact with guest workers from different cultures as well as the guest workers in preparation for their work in the host country.

Limitations

This study was limited by a number of factors which can be divided into four main categories: participants, culture and language, design, and questionnaires used. Following is a recount of these limitations and suggestions on how future research could address them.

Firstly, the low participant number and the unequal gender distribution of the study decrease the generalisability of the study. This was due to the limited availability of participants and the time constraint the study was under. There were also individual participant situations that acted as limitations to the study. Some guest workers had, for example, already completed their work in Sweden and gone home at the time of data collection. This may have affected the way they answered the questionnaires as they would have to think back to the situation in Sweden which may bias their answers. This limitation may be addressed by future research only using participants who are still residing in the host country and have spent a similar amount of time there. An additional limitation regarding the participants is differences in social desirability. As native workers have a long-term contract in Sweden, despite the questionnaire being anonymous, they may be more inclined to want to give positive answers as to not jeopardise their standing with the organisation.

Secondly, there are limitations in this study regarding culture and language. For instance, there may be cultural differences in how the participants answered the questionnaires. Individuals from some cultures may be more comfortable and liberal when voicing their opinions than other cultures (Ting-Toomey et al., 1991). Furthermore, differences in the scores may be due to a language barrier. All the questionnaires were

distributed in English which may lead to the Swedish participants understanding the statements in the questionnaire differently than the native English speakers. In order to address this limitation, future research could distribute the questionnaire in different languages depending on the participants' native language. Alternatively, the design of the study can be altered into a within study design. The well-being of guest workers could be measured before moving to the host country and then again at the host country to investigate potential changes among these workers before and after the move. The well-being of the local workforce can then be measured as an additional control group.

Thirdly, there are limitations regarding the design of the study. As previously discussed using a cross sectional design and therefore measuring variables at one point in time, may not be representative of the true levels of well-being or burnout (Shoji et al., 2016; Skogstad, et al., 2014). This could be addressed by the MBI and the AWS being measured on separate occasions. Alternatively, data from the questionnaires could be collected on multiple occasions from the same individuals. This would provide a better overview of the true well-being scores.

Finally, there are two main issues with using the questionnaires that were used. Firstly, there may be biases inherent in the MBI itself. The concept of burnout is mostly based on the MBI, therefore the questionnaire makes up the concept of burnout instead of representing it. Because the definition used for burnout is based on human service sector professions, it may be less suitable to measure burnout in other sectors, such as the construction industry (Schaufeli, Enzmann, & Girault, 1993). Secondly, the Destrudo-L was originally designed in a military context. This may affect the wording and the assumed hierarchy in the questionnaire making it less applicable to other sectors. Although Larsson, Fors Brandebo, and Nilsson (2012) claimed that the survey was generalizable this assertion

would need to be supported by study results in order to ensure the transferability of the survey to other sectors.

Future research

Specific suggestions for correcting limitations in the present study's participants, culture and language, design, and questionnaires used were incorporated into the previous section. More generally the study provides a good base as a pilot study for future research to replicate the findings and expand the research to ensure generalisability. For instance, future research could measure tendencies across fields and with different cultures. One way to do this could be to investigate whether the native country of the guest worker influences how they perceive their well-being or the leadership of the host country. Alternatively, future studies might explore the differences in different sectors to study how widespread the differences are and if the findings could be reliably generalised.

Future research should also aim to develop interventions and leadership development workshops or courses. These should be developed both for local leaders who will be in contact with guest workers from different cultures. Additionally, workshops should be aimed at guest workers to better prepare them for work in the host country.

Conclusion

This study found differences in the perception of destructive leadership between white-collar guest workers and native workers in the construction industry. In turn, these differences were found to have a significant influence on well-being in areas such as fairness and community. This study found tendencies which indicate that future research will likely be

able to find evidence for the difference in well-being for the two groups. Additionally, future research should develop interventions and leadership development courses targeting the well-being of guest workers in Sweden.

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