

# The Moderating Role of Employee Socioeconomic Status in the Relationship Between Leadership and Well-Being: A Meta-Analysis and Representative Survey

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We investigated the moderating role of employee socioeconomic status (SES) in the relationship between leadership and employee well-being. Leadership forms an important predictor of how (un)well employees feel. Conceptualizing leadership effects and employee SES from a job demands-resources perspective, we propose that the relationship between leadership and employee well-being is stronger among employees with lower SES. These workers tend to have fewer resources and can benefit more from constructive leadership, but are burdened more by destructive leadership. We find support for this in two studies: In the first, a comprehensive meta-analysis of 219 studies and 241 independent samples ( $N = 120,596$ ), we found that two markers of lower employee SES (i.e., lower education and lower occupation status) moderate the relationship of constructive and destructive leader behaviors with well-being. In the second study, we analyzed a large-scale representative employee sample ( $N = 62,602$ ) and extended these findings by examining nonpermanent work contract as an additional occupation facet, and low income as another marker of lower SES. Additionally, we show that resources (autonomy, self-efficacy) and demands (work pressure, cognitive demands) represent possible mechanisms through which constructive and destructive leadership relate to well-being. Specifically, the indirect relationship of constructive and destructive leadership with well-being, through job demands and resources, was generally stronger among employees with lower SES. In addition, the findings provide support for a stronger role of leadership in the well-being of employees with lower SES, a large group of employees who are oftentimes not the central focus of leadership scholars or organizations.

**Keywords:** leadership, well-being, socioeconomic status, meta-analysis, representative survey

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In many employment contexts, employee poor well-being, stress, and burnout have reached daunting levels (e.g., World Health Organization, 2019). Dealing with the negative implications of this is economically and societally costly (Llena-Nozal et al., 2019). To illustrate, in the European Union (EU) the total costs of mental health problems—which include the costs to health systems and social security programs, but also of lower employment and productivity—are estimated to amount to more than 4% of the gross domestic product across countries, equivalent to over EUR 600 billion per year (Health and Safety at Work, 2018). Not surprisingly, the pursuit of a more humane, transparent, and ethical

way of doing business (Van Marrewijk, 2003) as posited in the third United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (George et al., 2016) has recently become even more of a priority for policy-making, research, and practice.

Direct supervisors' leadership forms a key factor in healthy and humane workplaces. Research shows that direct supervisors who lead their employees in constructive ways (by supporting employees through offering guidance, relationship development, or inspiration; Kaluza et al., 2020) positively contribute to employee well-being, for example, shown in general psychological well-being and a positive state of mind (e.g., Nielsen et al., 2008; van Dierendonck et al., 2004). In contrast, destructive leadership (i.e., behavior that might harm followers through active abuse or passivity; Kaluza et al., 2020) is negative for employee well-being. This includes lowered positive affect, decreased mental health, and dissatisfaction (e.g., Den Hartog, 2015; Nielsen & Munir, 2009). Whereas these main effects are well substantiated (e.g., Inceoglu et al., 2018; Montano et al., 2017; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Skakon et al., 2010), only a few studies investigated boundary conditions (e.g., De Vries et al., 2002). Here, we focus on socioeconomic status (SES) as a potential boundary condition as employees with lower SES may have less autonomy and fewer other resources available and may be more dependent on their leaders to protect or gain resources than those with higher SES. As there is

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growing inequality within working population (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020), it is particularly relevant to understand to what extent the effects of leadership on employee well-being are universal or vary for different groups (Arnold, 2017; Nielsen & Taris, 2019).

Here, we argue that employees' SES shapes how strongly leadership affects their well-being building on the job demands-resources theory as an overarching framework (JD-R theory; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). SES captures one's combined economic and social status (Galobardes et al., 2006; House et al., 2002). It is a complex and multidimensional concept reflecting one's standing within a socioeconomic hierarchy related to education, income, and occupation or variations of these three markers (Baker, 2014). Research shows that employees who belong to lower SES groups (e.g., those with lower education, income, and/or occupation status or nonpermanent contracts) are more likely to get caught in a disadvantaged and lower-paid segment of the labor market, with fewer opportunities for employment and career development (Azmat et al., 2006; Booth et al., 2002). Individuals with lower SES also tend to have fewer available job and personal resources than those higher in SES (Lynch & Kaplan, 2000), which might make it more challenging to cope with job demands (Benach & Muntaner, 2007). For example, a representative longitudinal study demonstrated that the adverse effect of long working hours on cardiovascular health was more pronounced in individuals in lower SES occupations (O'Reilly & Rosato, 2013).

Leadership can be a source of job resources or demands (Breevaart et al., 2014). We propose that both constructive and destructive leadership particularly influence the well-being of employees lower in the socioeconomic hierarchy. As employees with lower SES are as likely as their higher SES counterparts to be supervised by a leader displaying constructive or destructive behavior (Kristensen et al., 2002), it is relevant to understand whether their well-being is potentially differentially affected by leadership. We thus examine how direct supervisors' leadership interacts with employee SES to affect employee well-being. We argue that constructive leadership is particularly crucial in enhancing well-being of employees with lower SES because leaders can both protect existing resources and create additional resources, which is especially important for employees with lower SES as they tend to have fewer resources than those higher in SES (Lynch & Kaplan, 2000). The negative well-being consequences of destructive leadership are also likely to be stronger for employees with lower SES, as they have fewer other resources available to cope with high demands, including those demands arising from destructive leadership, and compensate for the nonprovision of resources by these leaders. By creating understanding of how an individual's positioning within the larger socioeconomic hierarchy conditions how leadership affects employee well-being, we answer calls in the literature to address contextual factors in leadership (Avolio, 2007; Matthews & Gallo, 2011).

The present study also aims to increase visibility of lower SES employees and their well-being. This group of employees is often less visible in leadership theorizing and research despite their higher likelihood of experiencing poor well-being. As noted, we build on JD-R theory and focus on how constructive and destructive leadership form a source of (lack of) resources and demands. JD-R theory posits employee well-being as a function of the work environment and clarifies relational and contextual determinants of employee well-being within the organizational context (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Here, we extend it by focusing on leadership and integrating structural, socioeconomic variables in the broader societal context. Doing so is meaningful as socioeconomic factors (e.g., socioeconomic inequality) are known to affect employee well-being in addition to organizational conditions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018), and we test how these factors interact with leadership in predicting well-being.

We present two studies, a meta-analysis and an analysis of large-scale secondary data from a national representative survey, to test whether the relationship between well-being and constructive and destructive leadership is stronger for employees with lower compared to higher SES. The meta-analysis allows fine-grained distinctions while correcting for sampling issues because primary studies originate from varying samples and diverse occupational, national, or organizational contexts (Aguinis & Pierce, 1998). However, the information on SES of respondents in primary studies is often limited. Thus, we also present a study using a nationally representative sample to examine additional markers of (objective) SES and explore the proposed mechanisms in the leadership-well-being relationship.

## Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

### A Job Demands-Resources Perspective of the Leadership and Well-Being Relationship

A substantial body of empirical evidence shows that leader behaviors affect employee well-being (Montano et al., 2017). Here, we distinguish between constructive leadership which refers to direct supervisor behaviors that benefit followers, and destructive leadership that reflects direct supervisor behaviors that employees experience as hostile and/or obstructive (Schyns & Schilling, 2013), as both can affect employee well-being.

Change-oriented (or transformational), relational-oriented, and task-oriented leader behaviors are commonly seen as part of the constructive leadership domain (DeRue et al., 2011; Kaluza et al., 2020). Task-oriented behaviors focus on job requirements and task fulfillment and include contingent reward, active management-by-exception, initiating structure, boundary spanning, and directive behavior (Bass, 1985). Relational-oriented leader behaviors focus on support and consideration of employee needs, for example through consideration (Gurt et al., 2011), participative (Kahai et al., 1997), and empowering leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014). Change-oriented leader behaviors are aimed at encouraging followers and facilitating change (Bass, 2000), for example through transformational, charismatic, inspirational, and visionary leader behavior (DeRue et al., 2011). In addition, we included more recent moral approaches to leadership, namely ethical, authentic, and servant leadership, as an ethics-oriented category in the constructive leadership domain, given the strongly increased research attention and indications that these behaviors are linked to well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019).

Destructive leader behaviors capture harmful or deviant voluntary acts toward employees (Thoroughgood et al., 2012) and can be both passive and active (Kaluza et al., 2020). Passive destructive leadership implies a lack of support and care for employees and their work (e.g., laissez-faire), while active destructive leadership reflects active hostility toward employees, for example through abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000) or milder forms of hostility (Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

Well-being refers to physical and mental health (Danna & Griffin, 1999) and people's feelings about their lives (Sonnentag, 2015). In line with other recent meta-analyses on well-being we conceptualize well-being as a broad construct that involves the presence of positive physical health and psychological adjustments such as positive emotions, happiness, or satisfaction, and/or the absence of illness or psychological maladjustment such as negative emotionality, burnout symptoms, and psychopathological diagnoses (see Houben et al., 2015; Kaluza et al., 2020). To conceptualize the relationship between leadership and employee well-being, we build upon JD-R theory (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). JD-R theory suggests that a work environment presents both job resources and job demands. Job resources are "physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth, learning, and development" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). These resources include but are not limited to feedback, social support or autonomy and job control (e.g., Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Job demands are "physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). To prevent stress and sustain well-being employees need to balance a multitude of job demands and resources.

JD-R theory also posits that job demands and resources trigger two relatively independent processes, namely a motivational and a health impairment one. Job resources stimulate motivation, benefiting employee work enjoyment, engagement, satisfaction, and health (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Continuous and excessive job demands, in contrast, trigger health impairment as the effort of coping with job demands drains energy reserves. This leads to reduced physical and psychological well-being, which can be reflected in absenteeism (Toppinen-Tanner et al., 2005), obstructed workability (Seibt et al., 2009), exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2003), or psychosomatic complaints (Hakanen et al., 2006).

In JD-R research, leadership has been approached as both a job resource (Breevaart et al., 2014) and a job demand (Bregenzler et al., 2019), depending on the type of leader behavior under investigation. Leaders also play a key role in balancing other job demands and resources, managing resource allocation, and in controlling the impact of job demands and resources on employees (e.g., Diebig et al., 2017; Schaufeli, 2015). Constructive leadership forms a job resource that can facilitate the creation and use of other resources by offering social and developmental support, feedback, autonomy or clarity, vision, and ethical treatment (Breevaart et al., 2014; Halbesleben et al., 2014). It can contribute to a resource-abundant work environment triggering a motivational process leading to well-being (e.g., Gellis, 2000; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Constructive leadership may also decrease cognitive, emotional, and physical job demands, indirectly contributing to well-being, such as in the form of favorable job-related feelings (e.g., Fernet et al., 2015). Research shows that change-oriented leadership is associated with lower stress and burnout, and higher work engagement and positive affect because it directly provides intellectual stimulation, individual rewards, and inspiration which are resources needed for goal attainment, and stimulates motivation and trust (Gellis, 2000; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Wolfram & Mohr, 2009). Relational-oriented

leadership enhances well-being as it comprises demonstrating concern for employees, encouraging participation, and showing care and respect toward employees (Bass & Bass, 2008), thereby enriching social job resources and stimulating self-efficacy (e.g., Bobbio et al., 2012). Task-oriented leadership involves clarifying work assignments, emphasizing structure, and offering rewards for productivity and achievement (Yukl, 2012). This provides resources such as an efficient information flow, goal clarity, and sufficient autonomy (Nyberg, 2009), enhancing employees' feelings of personal accomplishment and positive attitudes (Martin, 2005). Ethics-oriented leadership increases job resources by augmenting work roles (Kalshoven et al., 2013) and shaping the subjective nature of jobs (e.g., Piccolo et al., 2010), benefiting employee well-being (Kalshoven & Boon, 2012). Ethics-oriented leadership includes providing employees with opportunities to take part in impactful and relevant work tasks, treating them in a fair and respectful manner, and clarifying expectations and responsibilities. It further comprises demonstrating concern for employees' interests, and actively developing employees by empowering them, aiding their personal growth and self-efficacy (Lemoine et al., 2019).

In contrast, destructive leadership forms a job demand and can create additional job demands such as role problems (e.g., Skogstad et al., 2007), which can lead to a health impairment process, compromising well-being (see Schaufeli, 2015). Destructive leadership also withholds job resources (e.g., by not being present when needed, withdrawing attention and support, or being abusive or exploitative), which may also lower well-being (Pyc et al., 2017; Restubog et al., 2011). Research shows that exposure to active destructive leadership such as abusive supervision (e.g., being rude to employees, publicly ridiculing and undermining them) poses a job demand which requires substantial amounts of effort to cope with it (Hoel et al., 2010) and which negatively impacts employee well-being (e.g., Rafferty et al., 2010; Tepper, 2007). Such leadership also reduces employees' sense of control over their work environment, leading to poor well-being such as emotional exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2004). Passive destructive leader behaviors imply a nonprovision of resources such as guidance and feedback due to a lack of interacting with employees and general noninterference (Buch et al., 2015; Skogstad et al., 2007). Passive destructive leadership can also add other job demands such as a lack of clarity or work overload (Vullings et al., 2020), which triggers fatigue and increases propensity to chronic stress and mental health complaints (Barling & Frone, 2017).

### Employee Socioeconomic Status as a Moderator

We argue that the relationship between leadership and well-being is stronger for employees with lower SES, who often have a scarcity of resources, experience more problems and uncertainties at work, and tend to be at a higher risk of poor well-being (Benach & Muntaner, 2007). Employees' lower SES includes lower education and income or a less-desirable type of contract and low-status occupation. These employees usually have a history of being exposed to a multitude of social and economic stressors, uncertainties, hardships, and frustrations, whereas many employees with higher SES tend to have more resources available and have moved through life shielded from many of these stressors (Lynch et al., 2000; Pearlin et al., 2005).

SES tends to be derived from three markers, education, income, and occupation, or variations thereof (Baker, 2014). Education reflects a person's knowledge-related assets or human capital (Lynch, 2000). Education is a more important marker than occupation or income (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003). Education affects knowledge and also relates to personal resources beyond this, such as access to information and greater opportunities to solve problems due to easier access to information and social capital (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010) which might help to sustain well-being. Income or wage is also a marker of SES (Galobardes et al., 2006). Low income is linked to poverty and difficulties in meeting individual needs. Lower income commonly relates to employment in lower-quality jobs and poorer working conditions. Income also reflects purchasing power, which positively relates to quality of life and having more financial leeway to support healthier lifestyle choices, and negatively relates to well-being hazards, such as hardship (Galobardes et al., 2006; Herd et al., 2007).

Occupation is a marker of SES as it implies differences in material rewards and social standing because occupations that are associated with unpredictability, narrow decision latitude, and routine and strenuous job tasks are lower in social standing (Baker, 2014). Multiple internationally standardized taxonomies exist that describe a hierarchy of occupations based on their social status, such as the International Socioeconomic Index of occupational status (ISEI) (Züll, 2016). Occupations with a lower status encompass jobs such as fast-food sales, home-based personal care work such as babysitting, being a cleaner, plant operator, security guard, and lower-rank positions in healthcare (e.g., nurses without specific functions), police, or the military. Higher occupational-status jobs include managerial positions, such as managing directors and chief executive officers, and professionals such as engineers, architects, medical doctors, and lawyers. For occupation as a marker of SES, besides its status in society, we also focus on the type of employment contract. Work contracts that are temporary with high flexibility on the employer side mean higher unpredictability and uncertainty for employees. This is linked to structural inequalities and jobs characterized by inferior working conditions (Quinlan et al., 2001).

Viewing SES from JD-R theory, we argue that direct supervisory leadership is important in both protecting and enhancing well-being of employees and that comparatively speaking this is even more so for employees with lower as compared to higher SES. Employees with lower SES are likely to experience considerable physical and/or psychological demands (Gallo et al., 2005), while simultaneously having fewer financial, psychological, and social resources to cope with these demands than others (Leana et al., 2012). While higher SES employees may also face (equally) considerable job demands (albeit often of a different nature), higher SES employees are likely to have more job and personal resources to help cope with these demands, for example, more autonomy and influence embedded in their work and more financial leeway. Given that employees with lower SES tend to have fewer resources to deal with job demands, they might experience greater benefits from inspiration, support, and guidance of their leaders than their higher SES counterparts who already have more resources available to help them cope.

According to JD-R theory, resources and demands do not only independently predict well-being, but they also interact. Specifically, JD-R theory proposes buffering (where job resources buffer the impact of job demands on strain and health impairment; for example, Bakker et al., 2005) and amplifying (when job demands

amplify the impact of job resources on motivation and well-being; Tomo & De Simone, 2019). Constructive leader behaviors such as being supportive and inspiring subordinates have been shown to be particularly useful when job demands are high (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018). For example, when leaders are supportive and acknowledge good work, this may build or protect personal resources such as efficacy. Here, we suggest that the benefits of constructive leadership for employee well-being are stronger when employees have fewer resources due to their lower SES, as leaders can protect available and help provide new job and personal resources, which are likely to have stronger effects for those with fewer resources (e.g., Varga et al., 2014). When SES is higher, employees tend to already have more available resources, thus constructive leadership may have less to add. For example, constructive leader behaviors can shape the work environment to provide more job resources such as enhanced autonomy (e.g., through ethical or transformational leadership; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Piccolo et al., 2010). This might be especially important for employees with lower SES whose often low-skilled and manual labor-intensive work is typically low in autonomy (Vidal, 2013). Hence, we hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 1:* Employee socioeconomic status moderates the positive relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being such that it is stronger among employees with lower (as compared with higher) socioeconomic status.

Destructive leader behaviors impair well-being, and here we propose this is worse for employees with lower SES. Destructive leader behaviors impose job demands (Breevaart et al., 2014) for example by increasing work pressure, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Skogstad et al., 2007), consequently triggering a health impairment process (Breevaart & Bakker, 2014), and employees with lower SES tend to have fewer job resources to cope with these demands. In addition, destructive leadership involves deliberately withholding or constraining access to job resources such as autonomy (e.g., autocratic leadership; Briker et al., 2021), which should be particularly negative for the well-being of employees with lower SES given their already compromised pool of job resources. Well-being may also suffer more from destructive leadership because for some it may lower personal resources. As individuals with lower SES are more likely to have encountered many failures and frustrations in striving to realize their aspirations due to constrained opportunities (McLeod & Nonnemaker, 1999), active or passive destructive treatment by the leader might more easily form an additional source of frustration that can hurt self-evaluations (e.g., low self-efficacy; Zhou et al., 2021). For many individuals with fewer resources, the social interaction with their leaders may be more important for forming beliefs about their ability to acquire and build resources than for those with more available resources (see Halbesleben et al., 2014).

In addition, research shows that destructive leadership forms a demand and can reduce resources (e.g., Breevaart & Bakker, 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014) and we expect that this is more detrimental to the well-being of individuals with lower SES who have fewer resources to cope than for those with higher SES who tend to have more resources. We hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2:* Employee socioeconomic status moderates the negative relationship between destructive leadership and

employee well-being such that it is stronger among employees with lower (as compared with higher) socioeconomic status.

### Resources and Demands as Mediators

So far, we have argued that lower employee SES strengthens the positive relationship of constructive and negative relationship of destructive leadership with employee well-being. Constructive leadership provides and helps create resources, which is most beneficial to those facing both high demands and low resources and less so for those who have more resources available already. This suggests a stronger positive relationship of constructive leadership with well-being through resources for employees with lower SES. In contrast, destructive leadership withholds and uses resources to cope with the imposed demands. This is harder for those with fewer resources, suggesting a stronger negative relationship of destructive leadership with well-being through resources of lower SES employees. We thus explore the mediational role of resources in the relationship between leadership and well-being for employees with lower compared to higher SES. Specifically, we focus on the resources of job autonomy and self-efficacy, both of which positively relate to well-being (Karademias, 2006) and have been argued and shown to be positively affected by constructive and negatively affected by destructive leadership (Schyns, 2004; Zhou et al., 2021).

In addition, we explore the mediating role of job demands, based on the argument that constructive leadership reduces job demands and destructive leadership imposes extra job demands consequently having negative implications for employee well-being (Breevaart & Bakker, 2014). These relationships should be particularly pronounced for lower SES employees as their resource pool is already limited and thus, they have fewer resources to cope with these higher demands, compromising well-being. We focus on work pressure and cognitive job demands, two demands shown to relate to leadership (Breevaart & Bakker, 2014; Syrek & Antoni, 2014) as well as to employee well-being (Schaufeli, 2015).

*Research Question 1a:* Is the (moderated) positive relationship of constructive leadership with employee wellbeing mediated by job autonomy and self-efficacy?

*Research Question 1b:* Is the (moderated) positive relationship of constructive leadership with employee wellbeing mediated by work pressure and cognitive job demands?

*Research Question 2a:* Is the (moderated) negative relationship of destructive leadership with employee wellbeing mediated by job autonomy and self-efficacy?

*Research Question 2b:* Is the (moderated) negative relationship of destructive leadership with employee wellbeing mediated by work pressure and cognitive job demands?

We present two studies. In Study 1, we review and meta-analytically integrate the empirical evidence on the links of employee well-being with established forms of leadership in the constructive (change-oriented, relational-oriented, task-oriented, ethics-oriented) and destructive domain (active and passive destructive) to test whether these are contingent on employee SES. We focus on education and occupation status as a facet of occupation as

these core markers of SES are best available in the meta-analyzed primary research. In Study 2, we analyze a large-scale data set collected from a representative employee sample to provide a more encompassing test of the moderating role of SES by including income as additional marker and employment contract as additional facet of occupation. We also explore mechanisms through which leadership relates to employee well-being by investigating the mediating roles of resources (job autonomy and self-efficacy) and job demands (work pressure and cognitive job demands) among lower and higher SES employees (Figure 1).

## Study 1

### Method

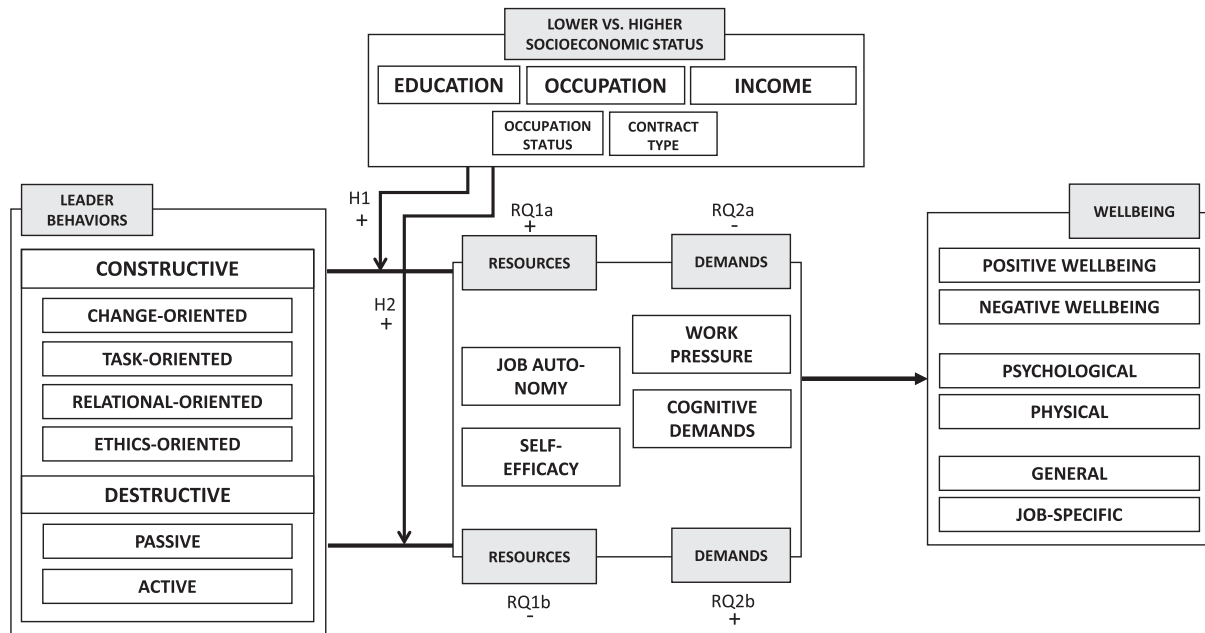
#### Literature Search

We conducted a systematic and comprehensive search for published and unpublished studies presenting quantitative data on the association between leadership and well-being through February 2019. We searched for relevant publications across different databases (i.e., PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Business Source Premier) and major conference programs (e.g., Academy of Management meeting, EAWOP). We used combinations of leadership and well-being-related keywords. This encompassing search query was composed through an iterative process with the help of a professional librarian. The keywords were: leadership (leadership OR leader OR manager OR supervisor OR boss OR superordinate), well-being (well-being OR well-being OR health\* OR satisfaction OR burnout OR exhaust\* OR stress\* OR strain\* OR symptom\* OR anxiety\* OR depress\* OR ill-being OR affect OR emotion\* OR diagnosis OR psychosomatic OR somatic). Our initial search yielded 14,429 hits after deletion of duplicates, of which 1984 were relevant and 219 reported the necessary information, including information on SES (see PRISMA Chart in Figure 2).

#### Inclusion Criteria, Study Selection, and Coding

We scanned the studies against the set of inclusion criteria (publication after 1970, report of the correlation between leadership and at least one well-being outcome, focus on employee well-being, including information on at least one employee SES variable). We coded the information in the included studies in a standardized coding scheme classifying (a) leader behaviors in the broader groupings of constructive (change-oriented, relational-oriented, task-oriented, ethics-oriented) and destructive domain (active and passive) and (b) well-being in the categories positive versus negative; job-specific versus general; short-term versus long-term; and psychological versus physical (following Kaluza et al., 2020). The coding scheme included: (a) authors; (b) source characteristics: published versus unpublished; publication year; country of data collection; (c) sample size; (d) sample characteristics: mean and *SD* of sample age; percentage of female participants; mean and *SD* of sample education; occupation, (e) methodological characteristics: study design (cross-sectional/longitudinal); (f) characteristics of leadership measure: measure reference; leadership category; number of items; response scale; scale reliability; (g) characteristics of well-being measure: measure reference; well-being category; number of items; response scale; scale reliability; (h) effect sizes, that is, correlations between leadership and well-being variables as reported

**Figure 1**  
Overview of the Conceptual Model



in the primary studies. Additionally, we composed effect sizes for overall well-being (negative well-being effects were reverse coded); we coded (i) associations of leadership with job autonomy and self-efficacy; and (j) associations of leadership with workload and cognitive job demands. Two-thirds of the studies were double coded. The first author coded 100% of the studies, and two other coders (MSc students) individually coded 30%. Inter-coder agreement ranged from .90 to 1.00, indicating a high level of agreement. Coder disagreements were resolved through collaboratively reevaluating studies on which there was disagreement until consensus was reached. Some of the included studies reported on multiple samples (e.g., employees from different countries, industries, or occupations), in which case we coded each sample separately. For longitudinal studies, where possible, we coded the relationships between leadership measured at T1 and well-being measured at a subsequent time point reflecting the temporal ordering proposed in the present study. For intervention studies, only coefficients from the first wave or control group were included to rule out effects of the intervention as an alternative explanation. When we identified multiple publications based on the same data set, we coded the overlapping relationships only once.

### Characteristics of the Included Studies

The 219 studies and 241 independent samples that satisfied our inclusion criteria encompassed samples from peer-reviewed journal articles (85.9%) and PhD dissertations (13.7%) published between 1998 and 2019 with the majority (78.3%) published after 2010. Most had a cross-sectional design (88.6%) and 11.4% a longitudinal one. Among the included studies, 5.23% (110 studies) investigated change-oriented; 35.16% (77 studies) relational-oriented; 19.18% (42 studies) task-oriented, and 21.92% (48 studies) ethics-oriented

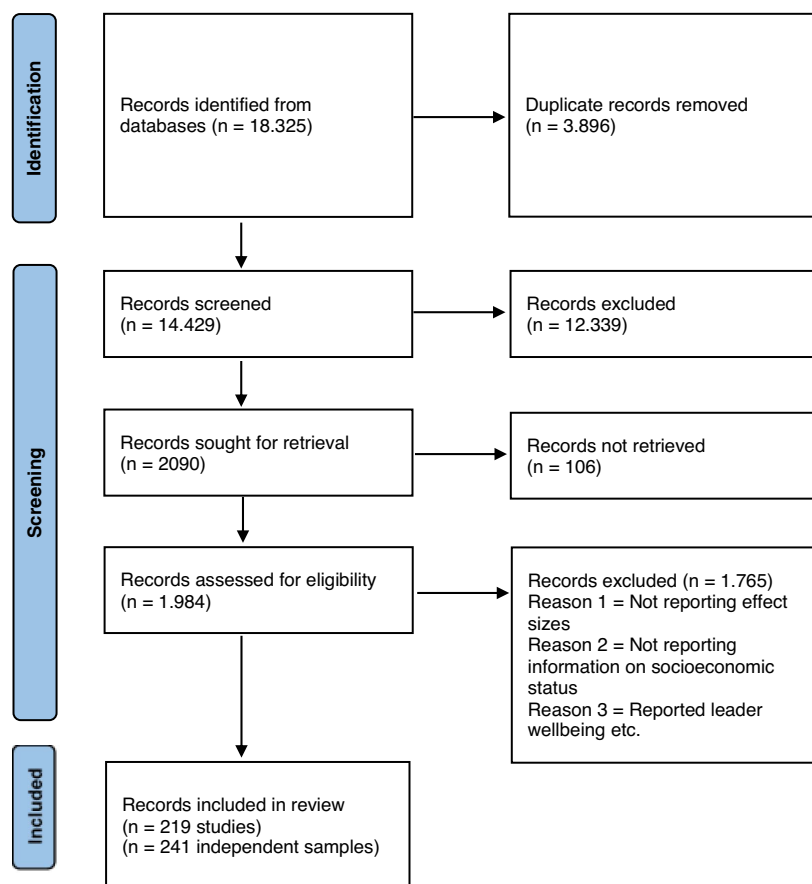
leadership. In the destructive leadership domain, 9.13% (20 studies) studied active and 5.94% (13 studies) passive destructive leadership. The total number of participants across samples was  $N = 120,596$ . Average sample size was 500.28 ( $SD = 1412.30$ ). Samples of participants originated from 37 countries, with U.S.-based studies being most numerous (37.5%). Participants were on average 37.02 ( $SD = 9.37$ ) years old, and on average 55.62% female. Studies reporting organizational tenure indicated an average tenure of 11.6 years ( $SD = 5.86$ ).

### Measures of Socioeconomic Status

To measure education, we coded the percentage of participants in the sample with less than a university degree (i.e., high school diploma or less). We also classified samples into lower (=1) versus higher (=2) education samples, based on the information on the education level of study participants that formed the majority of the sample. Using education as binary variable enabled us to include studies that did not report percentages per education level (e.g., only reporting that the “majority” of the participants had a university degree which we then classified as “higher” education sample). As for some relationships investigated in the present study, the number of studies that included exact information on education was relatively small, the additional use of a categorical moderator enabled us to contrast samples with “lower” and “higher” education.

We used two classification systems (the Occupational information network or O\*Net; Peterson et al., 2001, and the Standard International Index of Socioeconomic Status or ISEI; Ganzeboom, 2010) to aid our coding of Occupation status as lower versus higher. We classified assistant medical professionals and related occupations such as nursing, blue-collar jobs such as manufacturing, agriculture, and construction, jobs in hospitality such as hotel

**Figure 2**  
PRISMA Chart (Study 1)



Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

employees, or lower-level sales such as shop assistants as lower-status occupations. We classified white-collar jobs, professional and technical jobs such as those of IT professionals or higher medical professions such as medical doctors or physicians, and teaching jobs such as university and high school teachers, as higher-status occupations. In addition to these education and occupation (status) markers of SES we coded average yearly income as a third marker, contract type (permanent vs. temporary) as an additional facet of occupation, and others, however due to the low representation in the primary data, these additional indicators of SES were not analyzed here.

### Meta-Analytical Strategy

We used the “psychmeta” package in R (Dahlke & Wiernik, 2018, version 2.2.0) to calculate meta-analytic estimates and perform moderator analyses. Based on the random-effects model (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004), we calculated raw effect sizes and effect sizes individually corrected for reliability of predictor and outcome measures. Multiple effect sizes from the same sample referring to the same relationship (e.g., different indicators of the same well-being

domain; multiple leadership constructs measured in the same study) were consolidated as composites to ensure independence.

### Heterogeneity and Moderator Analyses

To assess homogeneity of effect sizes across studies, we first computed 80% credibility intervals showing the range of values in which 80% of the population correlations lie (Whitener, 1990). Wide credibility intervals indicate the presence of meaningful moderators (Wiernik et al., 2017). Second, we calculated the *Var %* statistic referring to the percentage of variance accounted for by statistical artifacts. According to Hunter and Schmidt (2004) moderators are likely to be present when this percentage is <75%. Third, in line with Borenstein (2009), we report the size and significance of Cochran’s Q statistic. Finally, as the sample size for moderator analyses is the number of studies (*k*), to ensure sufficient statistical power of the analyses we conducted these analyses only for relationships represented in at least *k* = 10 samples (Schmidt, 2017). We present 80% credibility intervals within all result tables, and other heterogeneity indices can be obtained upon request.

We examined available markers of SES reported in the primary studies (education and occupation status) as moderators via meta-regression and subgroup analyses. Both assume a mixed-effects model that accounts for the fact that observed studies deviate from the true overall effect due to sampling error and between-study heterogeneity. In addition, these techniques allow predicting variation in true effect sizes based on one or more moderator variables. Subgroup analyses are a special case of meta-regression with a categorical moderator. We test the role of SES markers via subgroup analyses for categorical markers, and via meta-regression for numerical markers. Further, we perform subgroup moderator analyses when  $k$  is small or when there is low variability in moderator levels across studies as recommended (Schmidt, 2017).

### Exploring Indirect Relationships

In exploring Research Question 1, we were constrained by the information available in the primary studies. Because there were too few studies in our data set to explore the mediating role of job demands, no studies that reported the relationship between destructive leadership and autonomy, and only one study that reported the relationship between destructive leadership and self-efficacy, in Study 1 we focused on providing some insight into Research Question 1a on the mechanism linking constructive leadership and well-being. We performed meta-analytic path analysis using conventional ordinary least squares regression in MPlus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012) to explore the potential mediating roles of job autonomy and self-efficacy in the relationship between leadership and well-being. First, we compiled a full meta-analytic correlation matrix containing meta-analytic correlations among constructive leadership, positive and negative well-being, and the two resources. We complemented the correlations of our meta-analysis with correlations from existing meta-analyses between job autonomy and self-efficacy, and well-being (Alarcon, 2011; Shoji et al., 2016), and conducted a supplementary meta-analysis of the correlations between leadership, job autonomy ( $k = 20$ ), and self-efficacy ( $k = 11$ ). To estimate the sample size for the path analysis we computed the harmonic mean of the sample sizes across the studies included in the correlation matrix (Viswesvaran & Ones, 1995).

### Results

We present the relationships between constructive leadership and well-being in Table 1. Constructive leadership related positively with overall well-being ( $\rho = .42, k = 227$ ). In addition, all constructive leader behaviors related positively with positive well-being outcomes ( $\rho = .46, k = 164$ ), and negatively with negative well-being outcomes ( $\rho = -.27, k = 130$ ). Relationships for constructive leadership were significant across psychological ( $\rho = .42, k = 227$ ); job-related ( $\rho = .45, k = 180$ ) and general ( $\rho = .24, k = 88$ ); and short-term ( $\rho = .44, k = 79$ ) and long-term ( $\rho = .37, k = 189$ ) well-being. Table 1 also presents the meta-analytic estimates for change-, relational-, task-, and ethics-oriented leadership. The relationship between destructive leadership and employee well-being was negative for positive ( $\rho = -.19, k = 19$ ) and positive for negative well-being ( $\rho = .28, k = 25$ ). Destructive leadership was significantly negatively related to psychological ( $\rho = -.22, k = 56$ ); job-related

( $\rho = -.33, k = 32$ ) and general ( $\rho = -.12, k = 27$ ); and long-term ( $\rho = -.24, k = 41$ ) and short-term ( $\rho = -.16, k = 18$ ) well-being.

### Hypothesis Testing

We tested Hypotheses 1 and 2 for constructive and destructive leadership overall, and for the specific leader behaviors within the constructive and destructive leadership domains using education and occupation status as SES markers. Due to inconsistent sample sizes across positive and negative well-being domains, and too small sample sizes for certain combinations of leadership, SES, and well-being, we only tested the hypotheses for overall well-being. The results of the moderator analyses are presented in Table 2 and Figures 3–7 (for the numerical moderator education). For categorical moderators, we present meta-analytic estimates for lower and higher categories. To preserve space, results are presented in text and through plots.

Hypothesis 1 stated that employee SES moderates the positive relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being such that it is stronger among employees with lower (as compared to higher) SES. Supporting Hypothesis 1, education (the percentage of participants with lower education) moderated the positive relationship between constructive leadership and overall well-being such that it was stronger for less-educated samples ( $\beta = .10, p < .001$ ; Figure 3). Moderation was significant for change-oriented ( $\beta = .08, p = .026$ ; Figure 4), task-oriented ( $\beta = .10, p = .025$ ; Figure 5), and ethics-oriented ( $\beta = .14, p = .003$ ; Figure 6) but not relational-oriented leadership. Occupation status also moderated the relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being as predicted. The positive relationship between constructive leadership and overall well-being was stronger among samples working in occupations with lower ( $\rho = .34; k = 87$ ) as compared with higher occupation status ( $\rho = .26, k = 94; \Delta\rho = .08 [.07, .09]$ );  $Z = 11.82, p \leq .001$ . This relationship was significant across leader behaviors. For change-oriented leadership the relationship was stronger among the lower ( $\rho = .36, k = 54$ ) compared to the higher occupation status group ( $\rho = .30, k = 58; \Delta\rho = .06 [.04, .07]$ );  $Z = 6.23, p \leq .001$ , and the effect sizes were also consistently stronger among the lower versus higher occupation status group for relational-oriented ( $\rho = .38, k = 39$  vs.  $\rho = .31, k = 32; \Delta\rho = .07 [.05, .08]$ );  $Z = 7.19, p \leq .001$ ), task-oriented ( $\rho = .27, k = 22$  vs.  $\rho = .08, k = 15; \Delta\rho = .19 [.15, .21]$ );  $Z = 9.79, p \leq .001$ ), and ethics-oriented leadership ( $\rho = .54, k = 10$  vs.  $\rho = .33, k = 11; \Delta\rho = .21 [.16, .23]$ );  $Z = 10.71, p \leq .001$ ).

Hypothesis 2 stated that employee SES moderates the negative relationship between destructive leadership and employee well-being such that this relationship is stronger among employees with lower (as compared to higher) SES. The relationship between destructive leadership and well-being was moderated by education ( $\beta = -.15, p < .001$ ; Figure 7). Education also moderated the relationship with well-being for active ( $\Delta\rho = -.15 [-.25, -.10]$ );  $Z = -3.18, p \leq .001$ ) and passive ( $\Delta\rho = -.14 [-.22, -.10]$ );  $Z = -3.56, p \leq .001$ ) destructive leadership. The relationship of destructive leadership with well-being was also more negative among samples of employees in lower ( $\rho = -.29, k = 28$ ) compared to higher status occupations ( $\rho = -.11, k = 20; \Delta\rho = -.18 [-.21, -.16]$ );  $Z = -11.89; p \leq .001$ ). This was found for active ( $\rho = -.35, k = 10$  vs.  $\rho = -.14, k = 6; \Delta\rho = -.21 [-.26, -.18]$ );  $Z = -7.83, p \leq .001$ ) and passive ( $\rho = -.34, k = 5$  vs.  $\rho = -.22, k = 7; \Delta\rho = -.12 [-.20, -.08]$ );  $Z = -3.16, p \leq .001$ ) destructive leader behaviors, supporting Hypothesis 2.



**Table 1**  
*Results of Meta-Analyses (Study 1)*

Leader behaviors	Well-being	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{r}$	<i>SD<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>SD<sub>res</sub></i>	$\bar{p}$	<i>SD<sub>r<sub>e</sub></sub></i>	<i>SD<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI	80% CR
Constructive leadership	Overall	227	116,078	.36	.20	.20	.42	.23	.22	[.39, .45]	[.13, .70]
	Positive	164	90,946	.39	.22	.22	.46	.24	.23	[.42, .49]	[.16, .75]
	Negative	130	68,238	-.23	.15	.15	-.27	.18	.17	[-.30, -.24]	[-.49, -.05]
	Short-term	79	45,000	.39	.28	.28	.44	.30	.30	[.37, .51]	[.05, .82]
	Long-term	189	86,323	.32	.17	.16	.37	.19	.18	[.34, .40]	[.13, .61]
	General	88	35,464	.21	.20	.20	.24	.23	.22	[.19, .29]	[-.05, .53]
	Job-related	180	99,054	.39	.21	.20	.45	.23	.22	[.41, .48]	[.16, .73]
	Psychological	227	116,078	.36	.20	.20	.42	.23	.22	[.39, .45]	[.13, .70]
Change-oriented leadership	Physical	10	4,016	.07	.12	.10	.08	.13	.12	[-.01, .18]	[-.08, .25]
	Overall	110	54,625	.42	.24	.24	.47	.26	.26	[.42, .52]	[.14, .80]
	Positive	85	45,091	.48	.22	.21	.54	.23	.22	[.50, .59]	[.25, .83]
	Negative	56	20,676	-.14	.17	.16	-.16	.19	.18	[-.21, -.11]	[-.39, .07]
	Short-term	46	35,207	.45	.25	.25	.50	.27	.27	[.42, .58]	[.15, .85]
	Long-term	85	27,802	.32	.23	.22	.37	.25	.24	[.32, .42]	[.06, .68]
	General	50	19,846	.24	.18	.18	.27	.20	.20	[.21, .32]	[.01, .52]
	Job-related	82	43,704	.45	.28	.28	.51	.30	.30	[.45, .58]	[.13, .90]
Relational-oriented leadership	Psychological	110	54,625	.42	.24	.24	.48	.26	.25	[.43, .52]	[.15, .80]
	Physical	5	1,855	.02	.11	.10	.02	.13	.12	[-.14, .19]	[-.16, .21]
	Overall	77	45,720	.30	.13	.12	.35	.15	.14	[.32, .39]	[.17, .54]
	Positive	55	39,939	-.27	.14	.13	-.32	.17	.16	[-.36, -.27]	[-.52, -.11]
	Negative	52	35,876	.26	.17	.16	.31	.19	.19	[.26, .37]	[.07, .56]
	Short-term	24	7,138	.14	.34	.33	.15	.39	.38	[-.01, .31]	[-.35, .65]
	Long-term	69	44,217	.31	.12	.11	.36	.14	.13	[.32, .39]	[.19, .53]
	General	29	12,190	.18	.20	.19	.21	.22	.22	[.13, .30]	[-.07, .50]
Task-oriented leadership	Job-related	63	40,783	.33	.12	.11	.38	.14	.13	[.35, .42]	[.21, .55]
	Psychological	77	45,720	.31	.13	.13	.36	.15	.15	[.32, .39]	[.17, .55]
	Physical	6	1,931	.07	.12	.11	.09	.14	.12	[-.05, .23]	[-.09, .27]
	Overall	42	12,192	.18	.18	.17	.22	.22	.21	[.15, .29]	[-.05, .49]
	Positive	28	7,260	.22	.24	.23	.27	.29	.28	[.16, .38]	[-.10, .64]
	Negative	29	10,451	-.09	.19	.18	-.11	.22	.22	[-.20, -.03]	[-.40, .17]
	Short-term	18	4,282	.18	.20	.19	.23	.25	.23	[.11, .35]	[-.08, .54]
	Long-term	30	9,437	.18	.19	.18	.22	.22	.21	[.13, .30]	[-.06, .49]
Ethics-oriented leadership	General	14	4,770	.17	.19	.18	.21	.23	.22	[.08, .34]	[-.08, .51]
	Job-related	34	10,545	.20	.19	.18	.24	.22	.21	[.16, .32]	[-.04, .52]
	Psychological	42	12,192	.19	.18	.17	.23	.22	.20	[.16, .30]	[-.04, .50]
	Physical	4	1,281	-.03	.12	.10	-.04	.15	.13	[-.27, .20]	[-.25, .18]
	Overall	48	16,961	.35	.18	.17	.40	.20	.20	[.34, .36]	[.15, .66]
	Positive	35	12,490	.39	.19	.18	.44	.22	.21	[.37, .52]	[.17, .72]
	Negative	19	7,100	-.25	.10	.09	-.29	.11	.09	[-.35, -.24]	[-.42, -.17]
	Short-term	8	2,525	.31	.23	.23	.37	.24	.24	[.16, .57]	[.03, .70]
Destructive leadership	Long-term	43	15,649	.36	.17	.16	.41	.19	.19	[.35, .47]	[.16, .65]
	General	9	3,946	.34	.21	.21	.39	.23	.22	[.21, .56]	[.07, .70]
	Job-related	42	15,249	.34	.16	.16	.39	.19	.19	[.33, .45]	[.15, .63]
	Psychological	48	16,961	.35	.18	.17	.40	.20	.20	[.35, .46]	[.15, .66]
	Physical	1	592	.23	—	—	.26	—	—	[.17, .34]	[—, —]
	Overall	59	22,136	-.18	.24	.24	-.22	.28	.28	[-.29, -.14]	[-.58, .14]
	Positive	19	5,570	-.16	.19	.18	-.19	.23	.22	[-.30, -.08]	[-.47, .10]
	Negative	25	9,866	.24	.14	.13	.28	.17	.16	[.22, .35]	[.08, .49]
Active destructive leadership	Short-term	18	6,057	-.14	.27	.26	-.16	.31	.30	[-.31, -.00]	[-.56, .25]
	Long-term	41	16,079	-.20	.23	.23	-.24	.27	.26	[-.33, -.16]	[-.59, .10]
	General	27	11,798	-.10	.27	.27	-.12	.32	.31	[-.25, .01]	[-.53, .29]
	Job-related	32	10,338	-.28	.16	.16	-.33	.18	.17	[-.40, -.26]	[-.55, -.10]
	Psychological	56	21,503	-.18	.25	.24	-.22	.28	.28	[-.30, -.14]	[-.58, .14]
	Physical	3	633	-.14	.07	.01	-.19	.11	.05	[-.45, .08]	[-.29, -.09]
	Overall	20	6,403	-.22	.19	.18	-.25	.21	.20	[-.35, -.15]	[-.52, .02]
	Positive	12	4,721	-.13	.18	.18	-.15	.21	.21	[-.28, -.01]	[-.43, .13]
Destructive leadership	Negative	17	5,777	.25	.16	.15	.29	.18	.16	[.20, .38]	[.07, .51]
	Short-term	9	4,174	-.11	.31	.31	-.12	.35	.35	[-.39, .15]	[-.61, .36]
	Long-term	19	6,208	-.22	.14	.13	-.26	.16	.14	[-.34, -.19]	[-.45, -.07]
	General	12	4,967	-.06	.33	.32	-.08	.38	.37	[-.32, .16]	[-.58, .43]
	Job-related	17	5,807	-.29	.17	.16	-.34	.19	.18	[-.44, -.25]	[-.58, -.11]
	Psychological	20	6,403	-.21	.20	.20	-.25	.23	.22	[-.35, -.14]	[-.54, .05]
	Physical	3	633	-.14	.07	.01	-.19	.11	.05	[-.45, .08]	[-.29, -.09]

(table continues)

**Table 1** (continued)

Leader behaviors	Well-being	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{r}$	<i>SD<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>SD<sub>res</sub></i>	$\bar{\rho}$	<i>SD<sub>r<sub>c</sub></sub></i>	<i>SD<sub>ρ</sub></i>	95% CI	80% CR
Passive destructive leadership	Overall	14	4,847	-.25	.13	.12	-.31	.16	.15	[-.41, -.22]	[-.51, -.11]
	Positive	7	849	-.35	.13	.10	-.43	.16	.12	[-.58, -.28]	[-.61, -.25]
	Negative	7	3,998	.23	.13	.12	.29	.15	.15	[.14, .43]	[.07, .50]
	Short-term	6	1,248	-.20	.16	.14	-.26	.20	.18	[-.48, -.05]	[-.54, .01]
	Long-term	8	3,599	-.27	.12	.12	-.33	.15	.14	[-.45, -.20]	[-.52, -.13]
	General	4	2,608	-.29	.04	.02	-.35	.05	.01	[-.43, -.28]	[-.38, -.33]
	Job-related	10	2,239	-.21	.18	.17	-.26	.23	.21	[-.43, -.10]	[-.56, .03]
Psychological	14	4,847	-.25	.13	.12	-.31	.16	.15	[-.41, -.22]	[-.51, -.11]	

*Note.* *k* = number of studies contributing to meta-analysis; *N* = total sample size;  $\bar{r}$  = mean observed correlation; *SD<sub>r</sub>* = observed standard deviation of *r*; *SD<sub>res</sub>* = residual standard deviation of *r*;  $\bar{\rho}$  = mean true-score correlation; *SD<sub>r<sub>c</sub></sub>* = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations (*r<sub>c</sub>*); *SD<sub>ρ</sub>* = residual standard deviation of  $\rho$ ; CI = confidence interval around  $\bar{\rho}$ ; CR = credibility interval around  $\bar{\rho}$ . Correlations corrected individually. There were no studies investigating the physical well-being and passive destructive leadership relationship.

**Exploratory Examinations of Research Question 1a**

In addition to testing the hypotheses, we aimed to provide preliminary insights into one potential mechanism (that of the resources job autonomy and self-efficacy, RQ 1a) in the (moderated) relationship of constructive leadership and well-being. In Study 1, given the information available in the primary studies, we were constrained to exploring only the indirect relationship between constructive leadership and well-being via resources. The meta-

analytic correlation matrix is presented in Table 3, the path model test in Table 4. The results indicate positive relationships of constructive leadership with job autonomy ( $\beta = .47, p < .001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ), explaining a significant amount of their variance (22.1% for autonomy and 6.8% for efficacy). Job autonomy ( $\beta = .13, p < .001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $\beta = .34, p < .001$ ) both positively related to positive well-being above and beyond constructive leadership, explaining 33.2% of its variance.

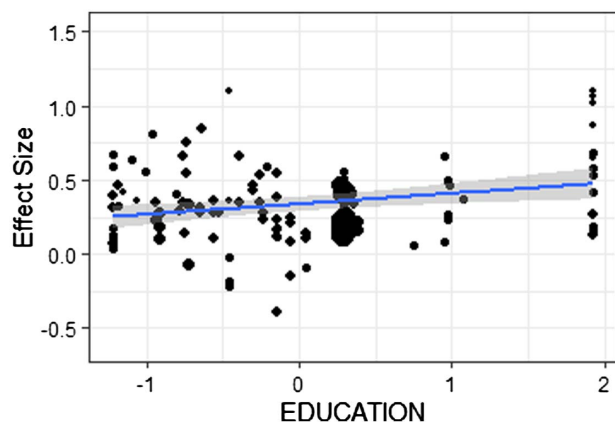
**Table 2**  
*Meta-Analytic Correlations Per Socioeconomic Status Marker (Study 1)*

Leader behaviors	Socioeconomic status marker	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{r}$	<i>SD<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>SD<sub>res</sub></i>	$\bar{\rho}$	<i>SD<sub>r<sub>c</sub></sub></i>	<i>SD<sub>ρ</sub></i>	95% CI	80% CR
Constructive leadership	Lower education	27	5,597	.33	.27	.26	.38	.30	.29	[.26, .50]	[-.01, .77]
	Higher education	69	45,797	.31	.15	.14	.35	.17	.16	[.31, .39]	[.14, .56]
	Lower status occupation	87	42,698	.29	.17	.16	.34	.19	.19	[.30, .39]	[.10, .58]
	Higher status occupation	94	31,290	.22	.18	.17	.26	.20	.19	[.22, .30]	[.01, .51]
Change-oriented leadership	Lower education	33	14,719	.25	.21	.20	.29	.23	.22	[.21, .37]	[-.00, .58]
	Higher education	8	1,356	.18	.19	.18	.20	.23	.21	[.01, .39]	[-.10, .50]
	Lower status occupation	54	14,960	.31	.24	.23	.36	.27	.26	[.29, .43]	[.02, .69]
	Higher status occupation	58	19,942	.27	.19	.18	.30	.20	.20	[.25, .36]	[.05, .56]
Relational-oriented leadership	Lower education	11	2,008	.37	.13	.11	.43	.16	.14	[.42, .53]	[.23, .62]
	Higher education	21	25,034	.32	.08	.08	.38	.09	.09	[.34, .43]	[.26, .50]
	Lower status occupation	39	31,058	.32	.10	.10	.38	.12	.12	[.34, .42]	[.23, .53]
	Higher status occupation	32	11,089	.27	.17	.16	.31	.19	.18	[.24, .38]	[.07, .55]
Task-oriented leadership	Lower education	3	725	.29	.17	.16	.35	.20	.19	[-.14, .85]	[.00, .70]
	Higher education	9	2,487	.12	.17	.15	.13	.20	.19	[-.02, .28]	[-.13, .39]
	Lower status occupation	22	7,598	.23	.17	.16	.27	.20	.19	[.19, .36]	[.02, .53]
	Higher status occupation	15	3,685	.07	.16	.15	.08	.19	.18	[-.03, .18]	[-.16, .32]
Ethics-oriented leadership	Lower education	10	2,774	.52	.23	.23	.58	.27	.26	[.39, .77]	[.22, .94]
	Higher education	17	6,343	.34	.16	.15	.38	.19	.18	[.29, .48]	[.14, .62]
	Lower status occupation	10	2,950	.49	.21	.21	.54	.25	.24	[.36, .72]	[.21, .87]
	Higher status occupation	11	3,916	.30	.16	.16	.33	.18	.18	[.21, .46]	[.09, .57]
Destructive leadership	Lower education	6	1,117	-.29	.20	.19	-.34	.23	.21	[-.58, -.11]	[-.66, -.03]
	Higher education	15	3,255	-.13	.18	.17	-.17	.22	.20	[-.29, -.05]	[-.44, .11]
	Lower status occupation	28	7,239	-.23	.18	.17	-.29	.21	.19	[-.37, -.21]	[-.55, -.04]
	Higher status occupation	20	8,922	-.09	.32	.32	-.11	.37	.37	[-.29, .06]	[-.60, .37]
Active destructive leadership	Lower education	4	672	-.29	.28	.27	-.35	.31	.30	[-.84, .14]	[-.83, .14]
	Higher education	4	895	-.16	.14	.12	-.20	.15	.12	[-.44, .03]	[-.41, .00]
	Lower status occupation	10	2,321	-.28	.20	.19	-.35	.22	.21	[-.51, -.19]	[-.64, -.06]
	Higher status occupation	6	2,561	-.12	.20	.19	-.14	.22	.22	[-.38, .09]	[-.46, .17]
Passive destructive leadership	Lower education	2	600	-.24	.02	.00	-.32	.05	.00	[-.80, .16]	[-.32, -.32]
	Higher education	5	795	-.13	.28	.26	-.18	.35	.33	[-.61, .25]	[-.69, .33]
	Lower status occupation	5	854	-.26	.11	.08	-.34	.14	.10	[-.51, -.17]	[-.50, -.18]
	Higher status occupation	7	1,702	-.17	.19	.18	-.22	.23	.22	[-.44, -.00]	[-.54, .10]

*Note.* *k* = number of studies contributing to meta-analysis; *N* = total sample size;  $\bar{r}$  = mean observed correlation; *SD<sub>r</sub>* = observed standard deviation of *r*; *SD<sub>res</sub>* = residual standard deviation of *r*;  $\bar{\rho}$  = mean true-score correlation; *SD<sub>r<sub>c</sub></sub>* = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations (*r<sub>c</sub>*); *SD<sub>ρ</sub>* = residual standard deviation of  $\rho$ ; CI = confidence interval around  $\bar{\rho}$ ; CR = credibility interval around  $\bar{\rho}$ . Correlations corrected individually.

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**Figure 3**  
*Relationship Between Constructive Leadership and Overall Well-Being Moderated by Education (Percentage of Participants With Lower Education; Study 1)*



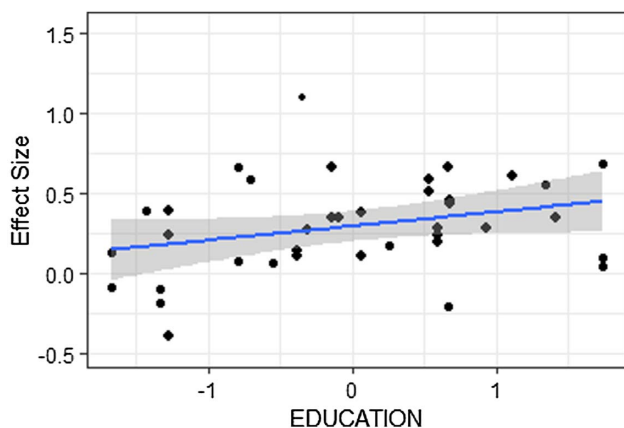
Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

Autonomy ( $\beta = -.09, p < .001$ ) and efficacy ( $\beta = -.26, p < .001$ ) negatively related to negative well-being, explaining 14.9% of its variance. Finally, the indirect relationships were significant and in the expected direction for both well-being domains. Job autonomy mediated the relationship between constructive leadership and positive well-being (indirect effect = .06;  $SE = .01$ ) and negative well-being (indirect effect =  $-.04$ ;  $SE = .01$ ). Self-efficacy also mediated the relationship for positive (indirect effect = .09;  $SE = .00$ ) and negative well-being (indirect effect =  $-.07$ ;  $SE = .00$ ).

### Sensitivity Analyses and Publication Bias

To assess the extent to which methodological features of the primary studies affected effect size estimates, we tested the moderating role of study design (cross-sectional vs. longitudinal) and

**Figure 4**  
*Relationship Between Change-Oriented Leadership and Overall Well-Being Moderated by Education (Study 1)*



Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

publication type (journal publication vs. doctoral dissertation). To assess the robustness of our meta-analytic results, we performed additional sensitivity analyses (bootstrapping and cumulative meta-analysis). Full results of the sensitivity analyses are presented in the [Supplemental Material](#). First, we calculated the bootstrapped confidence intervals for the focal relationships of constructive and destructive leadership with well-being. The bootstrapped effect size estimate was .36 [.29; .49] for constructive and  $-.23$  [ $-.28$ ;  $-.14$ ] for destructive leadership and well-being, indicating stability of the effects. Second, to test whether publication bias might have affected the results, we performed cumulative meta-analyses (Banks et al., 2012) for the broader constructs of constructive and destructive leadership. Overall, the meta-analytic estimates do not change substantially, and the estimated parameters are situated within the 95% confidence interval of the full model. These results provide indirect evidence that publication bias is unlikely to have affected the results.

### Brief Discussion Study 1

The results dominantly supported the expectation that employee SES (education and occupation status) moderates the relationships between constructive (Hypothesis 1) and destructive (Hypothesis 2) leadership and well-being as we found stronger relationships among employees with lower SES. An exploration of the underlying mechanism suggests that resources (i.e., job autonomy and self-efficacy) are possible mechanisms in the leadership-well-being relationship. To further test the moderating role of SES by examining its third marker, income, and to extend our mediational testing to include destructive leadership as well as the moderation by SES, we conducted Study 2.

### Study 2

#### Method

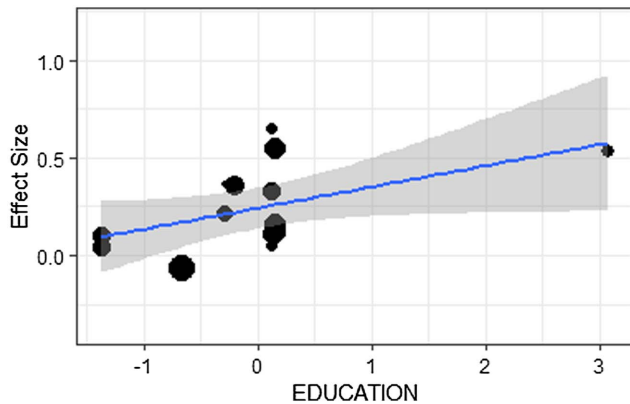
##### Data and Participants

We used panel data from the Dutch employment survey (Nationale Enquête Arbeidsvoorwaarden, NEA), which is a large annual survey on the labor situation of Dutch employees conducted by the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS). The data are collected from a representative sample of the Dutch working population stratified based on branch. The survey focuses on assessing working conditions, occupational accidents, work content, and work experiences. We used the latest available data for our research purposes (2018). In total 62,602 participants were surveyed, 52.5% identified themselves as male and 47.5% as female. Most participants (64.0%) were aged between 25 and 54. Three percent had only primary education, 14.1% had lower secondary education, 4.1% had upper secondary education, 27.2% had higher education, and 14% had a high education degree. In addition, 21.8% of participants had a flexible work contract.

#### Measures

**Leadership.** Constructive and destructive leadership were operationalized through available leadership-related items in the Dutch Working Conditions (NEA) survey. Upon careful inspection of the survey we selected two available items as indicators of constructive leadership, and two items as indicators of destructive

**Figure 5**  
*Relationship Between Task-Oriented Leadership and Overall Well-Being Moderated by Education (Study 1)*

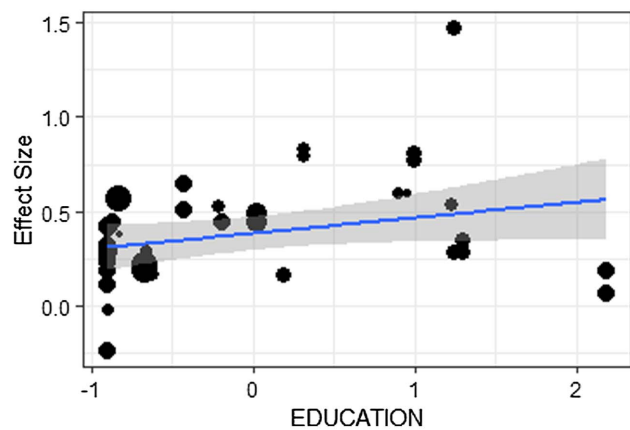


Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

leadership. Constructive leadership was measured with two available direct supervisor-specific items from the social support scale (Karasek et al., 1998). These items are: “My manager looks out for the well-being of the employees” and “My manager pays attention to what I say.” Destructive leadership was assessed using two items that were developed for the NEA survey in 2005. Respondents were asked to rate the extent and duration of conflict with their leaders, for example, “Have you had conflict with your direct supervisor?”<sup>1</sup>

**Employee Socioeconomic Status.** We assessed all three markers of SES (education, occupation, income). First, on a single item participants indicated their highest obtained education level based on the Dutch standard classification of education (Schaart et al., 2008) that distinguishes three education levels (low = 1, medium = 2, high = 3). Occupation was captured by two facets. First, occupation status was assessed through a four-level classification of occupations based on the complexity and range of tasks and

**Figure 6**  
*Relationship Between Ethics-Oriented Leadership and Overall Well-Being Moderated by Education (Study 1)*



Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

duties performed within these occupations, according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (International Labor Organization, 2008). Occupations are divided into professions with simple and routine, physical and manual work using hand tools (a); professions with tasks such as serving machines and electronic devices (b); professions with tasks such as performing complex technical and practical tasks (c); and professions with tasks such as solving complicated problems and decision-making (d). Second, the type of contract (permanent = 1 vs. flexible = 0) was also used here. In the Netherlands, flexible contracts are limited in duration and/or without a fixed number of hours. Employees with short-term contracts, on-call contracts, substitute workers, and temporary workers can all be classified as employees with a flexible contract (Remery et al., 2002). Flexible employment is frequently accompanied by lower employment protection, higher job insecurity, and inferior chances of promotion (e.g., Kalleberg et al., 2000). Last, income was measured as self-perceived salary.

**Resources.** Job autonomy was measured using a 6-item scale. Participants were asked to rate whether they can control different aspects of their work from 1 = no to 3 = yes, regularly. An example item is: “Can you decide for yourself how you do your work?.” Internal consistency was .77. Self-efficacy was measured with three items asking participants to rate on a 5-point scale the extent to which they are able to perform different demands within their job, such as “I can easily meet the physical demands of my job.” Internal consistency was .76.

**Job Demands.** Work pressure was measured with three items assessing how often participants have a high workload and need to work with speed, such as “Do you have to work very fast?.” Internal consistency was .86. Cognitive demands were measured with five items. Participants were asked to rate how often they experience a number of cognitive demands at work, such as the need to use high cognitive effort in their work, or operate with large amount of information during work day. A sample item is: “Does your work require intensive thinking?.” Internal consistency was .88. All job demands items were rated with four options from 1 = Never to 4 = Always.<sup>2</sup>

**Employee Well-Being.** We assessed well-being through burnout as an indicator of negative well-being.<sup>3</sup> The Dutch Working conditions survey measures burnout through five items based on the

<sup>1</sup> In the Dutch language, conflict (same word) has a stronger negative connotation as milder and nondestructive forms of task conflict are more often referred to as disagreements (“onienigheid”).

<sup>2</sup> NEA survey also measures physical job demands, measured with five items asking employees whether and how often they experience a number of physically demanding aspects in their work, for example “Do you use a tool, device or vehicle that causes vibrations or shaking in your work?.” Internal consistency of this scale was .71. We also performed all analyses with this demand and obtained similar results to those for work pressure and cognitive demands. However, we focus on and present the remaining two demands as they are more easily influenced by leaders.

<sup>3</sup> We also assessed positive well-being using a single item from Self-Rated General Health (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992) asking “How is your general health?” on a scale from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good). Single item self-rated general questions demonstrated good reproducibility, reliability, and concurrent and discriminant validity in comparison to established health status measures (DeSalvo et al., 2006). We performed all analyses for this indicator. The results for positive well-being are aligned with the results obtained for negative well-being. Given space restrictions, we therefore do not present them in the article. However, they are available from the first author upon request.

Utrecht Burnout Scale (UBOS; [Schaufeli & van Dierendonck, 2000](#)). Participants rated how often they experienced symptoms of burnout on a scale from 1 = *never* to 7 = *every day*. Example items are: "I feel emotionally drained from my work" and "I feel completely exhausted by my work." Scale reliability was .89.

**Control Variables.** In all analyses, we controlled for gender, age, number of employees working in the organization, and working hours. We controlled for gender because women are overrepresented in (employer-directed) flexible employment contracts and their representation through trade union memberships and coverage by collective bargaining agreements remain limited ([Ledwith, 2012](#)). We controlled for age and tenure as both might relate to human capital growth over time, which could yield higher job security or employability, but also to institutional practices and norms that regulate the employment relationship in favor of older and more senior employees (e.g., [Kovalenko & Mortelmans, 2016](#)). We controlled for organization size because the relationships between employees and leaders might differ between smaller and larger organizations (e.g., [Oh & Oh, 2017](#)). We controlled for working hours because of the potential impact on well-being. Long working hours related to a higher risk of lower well-being but involuntarily short working hours might also be negatively related to well-being (e.g., [Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2008](#)).

### Analytical Strategy

We tested our hypotheses using univariate hierarchical regression analyses in SPSS for the different well-being indicators. First, we entered the control variables and leader behavior in each model. Second, numerical indicators of employee SES were introduced. Third, all interaction terms were added to the model. We performed the regressions separately for constructive and for destructive leadership to maximize consistency in analytical strategy used in the first and the second study. However, examining constructive and destructive leadership in the same regression equations yielded results that were comparable to those reported. The research questions were explored applying regression-based path analysis (moderated mediation) and indirect and interaction effects were estimated in the same model ([Preacher et al., 2007](#)). In the moderated mediation analyses, we treated SES variables as categorical to be able to provide indirect effects per group.

## Results

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 was on the moderating role of SES in the relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being ([Table 5](#)). The results of Study 2 show that the negative relationship between constructive leadership and burnout is moderated by education ( $\beta = .06, p = .040$ ), contract type ( $\beta = -.10, p < .001$ ), and income ( $\beta = .19, p < .001$ ). As the interaction plots show, constructive leadership has a stronger negative relationship with burnout among those who have lower education and who have lower salary. However, contrary to our expectations, the relationship between constructive leadership and burnout was not affected by employee occupation status ( $\beta = -.01, p = .824$ ) and was stronger for employees with permanent work contract. The overall model explained 12.8% of variance in burnout.

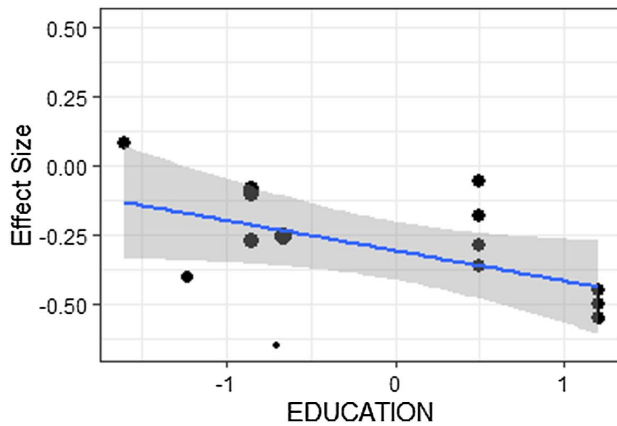
Hypothesis 2 states a moderating role of employee SES in the relationship between destructive leadership and employee well-being ([Table 6](#)). We controlled for gender, age, company size, and working hours. First, the positive relationship between destructive leadership and burnout was moderated by occupation status ( $\beta = -.05, p = .003$ ), income ( $\beta = -.04, p = .012$ ), and contract type ( $\beta = .05, p = .003$ ). However, contrary to our expectations, the relationship between destructive leadership and burnout was not affected by employee education ( $\beta = .00, p = .857$ ) and in case of contract type, it was stronger for employees with permanent work contract. As the interaction plots reveal, the positive relationship between destructive leadership and burnout is stronger among employees who are employed in lower-status occupations, or, contrary to our predictions, with permanent work contracts. The overall model explained 11.2% of variance in burnout.

### Exploratory Examinations of Research Questions

In Research Question 1a, we asked whether employee SES moderates the indirect relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being through job autonomy and self-efficacy. We controlled for gender, age, company size, and working hours. The indirect relationship between constructive leadership and negative well-being (burnout) through self-efficacy was moderated by education level ( $B_{\text{medium\_education}} = -.02, SE = .01, p = .028$ ;  $B_{\text{high\_education}} = -.04, SE = .01, p < .001$ ; [Table 7](#)) and occupation status ( $B_{\text{level2}} = -.04, SE = .01, p = .002$ ;  $B_{\text{level3}} = -.04, SE = .02, p = .016$ ;  $B_{\text{level4}} = -.06, SE = .01, p < .001$ ; [Table 8](#)) showing stronger negative relationships among lower compared to higher education groups, bootstrapped estimate<sub>low\_education</sub> =  $-.14 [-.15; -.13]$ ; bootstrapped estimate<sub>medium\_education</sub> =  $-.13 [-.13; -.12]$ , and bootstrapped estimate<sub>high\_education</sub> =  $-.11 [-.12; -.11]$ , and lower compared to higher occupation status, bootstrapped estimate<sub>level1</sub> =  $-.15 [-.16; -.13]$  versus bootstrapped estimate<sub>level4</sub> =  $-.12 [-.12; -.11]$ . However, contract type and income did not significantly moderate the indirect relationship of constructive leadership with negative well-being through efficacy, indicating equally strong positive indirect relationships among employees with flexible versus permanent contract, as well as among those with varying income. We also tested the indirect relationship between constructive leadership and burnout through job autonomy, and explored the variation in this indirect relationship across the lower and higher SES groups. The relationship between constructive leadership and burnout through job autonomy was moderated only by employment contract such that it was significantly more negative among employees with flexible contracts, bootstrapped estimate =  $-.03[-.04; -.03]$ , compared to permanent contracts, bootstrapped estimate =  $-.03[-.03; -.02]$  ([Table 9](#)). Although the estimates for all effects were consistently higher for lower SES individuals also for the other markers of SES, group differences in indirect effects through job autonomy were not significant.

In Research Question 1b, we asked whether employee SES moderates the indirect relationship between constructive leadership and employee well-being through work pressure and cognitive job demands. The indirect relationship between constructive leadership and burnout through work pressure was moderated by education ( $B_{\text{medium\_education}} = .03, SE = .01, p = .002$ ;  $B_{\text{high\_education}} = .07, SE = .01, p < .001$ ; [Table 7](#)) and occupation status ( $B_{\text{level2}} = .04, SE = .02, p = .014$ ;  $B_{\text{level3}} = .08, SE = .02, p < .001$ ;  $B_{\text{level4}} = .10, SE = .01, p < .001$ ; [Table 8](#)) demonstrating stronger negative

**Figure 7**  
*Relationship Between Destructive Leadership and Overall Well-Being Moderated by Education (Study 1)*



Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

relationships among groups with lower compared to higher education, bootstrapped estimate<sub>low\_education</sub> =  $-.11[-.12; -.10]$ ; bootstrapped estimate<sub>medium\_education</sub> =  $-.09[-.10; -.08]$ , and bootstrapped estimate<sub>high\_education</sub> =  $-.07[-.08; -.06]$ , and lower compared to higher occupation status, bootstrapped estimate<sub>level1</sub> =  $-.12[-.14; -.10]$  versus  $-.07[-.08; -.06]$ . Contract type also moderated the relationship between constructive leadership and burnout via work pressure ( $B = .04$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Table 9) indicating a stronger negative indirect relationship among employees with flexible compared to permanent work contracts, bootstrapped estimate =  $-.10[-.11; -.09]$  versus  $-.08[-.08; -.07]$ . Finally, income significantly moderated the indirect relationship between constructive leadership and burnout through work pressure ( $B = .03$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Table 10) indicating a stronger negative indirect relationship among those with lower versus higher income, bootstrapped estimate =  $-.08[-.09; -.08]$  versus  $-.07[-.07; -.06]$ . We further examined the indirect relationship between constructive leadership and burnout through increased cognitive demands, and explored the variation in this indirect relationship across the lower and higher socioeconomic status groups. The results indicate the relationship between constructive leadership and burnout

through increased cognitive job demands was not moderated by any of the SES markers.

To answer Research Question 2a, we explored the moderated indirect relationships between destructive leadership and well-being through self-efficacy and job autonomy. The indirect relationship between destructive leadership and burnout through self-efficacy was significantly moderated by education (Table 11) and occupation status (Table 12). The estimates of conditional effects indicate higher significant indirect relationships among lower as compared with higher SES groups. For education, the estimates of the indirect effect are  $.14[.12; .16]$  for the low education group,  $.12[.11; .13]$  for the medium education group, and  $.10[.09; .11]$  for the high education group. For occupation status, the indirect relationship estimate is  $.16[.12; .19]$  for the lowest and  $.09[.08; .11]$  for the highest occupation status group. The indirect relationships through self-efficacy were not affected by contract and by income. In addition, education and occupation status also moderated the indirect relationship between destructive leadership and burnout through job autonomy, demonstrating a stronger positive relationship among employees with lower compared with higher education (Table 11) and occupation status (Table 12). For education, the estimates of the indirect effect are  $.04[.04; .05]$  for the low education group,  $.03[.02; .03]$  for the medium education group, and  $.03[.02; .03]$  for the high education group. In case of occupation status, only the contrast between the lowest  $.04[.03; .05]$  and the highest  $.02[.02; .03]$  occupation group was significantly different. However, the indirect relationship were not affected by contract and income.

To answer Research Question 2b, we explored the moderated indirect relationships between destructive leadership and well-being through work pressure and cognitive job demands. The indirect relationship between destructive leadership and burnout through work pressure was significantly moderated by all markers of SES indicating higher significant indirect relationships among lower as compared with higher SES groups. Namely, the estimates of the indirect effect are  $.13[.12; .15]$  for the low education group,  $.11[.10; .12]$  for the medium education group, and  $.10[.09; .11]$  for the high education group (Table 11). For occupation status, the indirect relationship estimate was  $.13[.10; .16]$  for the lowest occupation status group and  $.09[.08; .10]$  for the highest group (Table 12). Contract type significantly moderated the relationship between destructive leadership and burnout via work pressure, with a stronger positive relationship among employees with flexible ( $.13[.11; .14]$ ) compared to permanent work contracts ( $.10[.10; .11]$ )

**Table 3**  
*Meta-Analytic Correlation Matrix Underlying Indirect Effect Testing (Study 1)*

Variable	Constructive leadership	Job autonomy	Self-efficacy	Positive well-being	Negative well-being
Constructive leadership	1	4,517	6,196	90,946	68,238
Job autonomy	.47 <sup>c</sup>	1	2,612	17,895	17,165
Self-efficacy	.26 <sup>c</sup>	.28 <sup>d</sup>	1	12,903	22,774
Positive well-being	.46	.37 <sup>c</sup>	.45 <sup>f</sup>	1	32,517
Negative well-being	-.27	-.24 <sup>a</sup>	-.33 <sup>b</sup>	-.51 <sup>a</sup>	1

Note. Pooled sample size  $N = 9456$ ; Values below diagonal represent reliability-corrected meta-analytic correlations; values above the diagonal present sample sizes attributable to each meta-analytic correlation.

<sup>a</sup>Alarcon, 2011. <sup>b</sup>Shoji et al., 2016. <sup>c</sup>Supplemental analyses of the current data set. <sup>d</sup>Supplemental meta-analysis via MetaBUS. <sup>e</sup>Spector, 1986. <sup>f</sup>Judge & Bono, 2001.

**Table 4**  
Results of the Meta-Analytic Path Model Test (Study 1)

Outcome	Predictor	B	SE B	Est./SE	p	R <sup>2</sup>	Direct and indirect effects			
							B	SE B	Est./SE	p
Job autonomy	Constructive leadership	.47	.01	58.66	<.001	.22				
Self-efficacy	Constructive leadership	.26	.01	27.12	<.001	.07				
Positive well-being	Constructive leadership	.32	.01	33.16	<.001	.33	.32	.01	33.16	<.001
	Self-efficacy	.34	.01	40.13	<.001		.09	.00	22.59	<.001
Negative well-being	Job autonomy	.13	.01	13.83	<.001		.06	.01	13.40	<.001
	Constructive leadership	-.16	.01	-14.48	<.001	.15	-.16	.01	-14.48	<.001
	Self-efficacy	-.26	.01	-27.69	<.001		-.07	.00	-19.20	<.001
	Job autonomy	-.09	.01	-8.59	<.001		-.04	.01	-8.48	<.001

Note. B = STDYX standardization standardized regression weight; SE<sub>B</sub> = standard error.

(Table 13). Income significantly moderated the indirect relationship between destructive leadership and burnout through work pressure ( $B = -.03$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p = .009$ ) demonstrating a slightly stronger positive indirect relationship among employees with lower income (.11[.10; .12]) compared to higher (.10[.09; .10]) (Table 14). For cognitive job demands, education (Table 11) and occupation status (Table 12) moderated the indirect relationship as predicted, demonstrating a stronger negative relationship between destructive leadership and well-being among employees with lower compared to higher education and occupation status. Namely, the estimates of the indirect effect are .03[.03; .04] for the low education group, .02[.01; .02] for the medium education group, and .01[.01; .02] for the high education group. For occupation status, the indirect relationship estimate was

.04[.02; .05] for the lowest occupation status group and .01[.01; .02] for the highest group. The indirect relationships were not affected by contract and income.

### Brief Discussion Study 2

Study 2 extends the findings of Study 1 in two ways. First, by assessing an additional marker of SES, income, and another facet of occupation, employment contract type, in the relationship between leadership and well-being. Second, by exploring the roles of autonomy, self-efficacy, work pressure, and cognitive demands as potential mechanisms. The results indicate that lower SES tends to strengthen the relationships of both constructive and destructive leadership with employee well-being.

**Table 5**  
Constructive Leadership and Burnout (Study 2)

Predictors	R <sup>2</sup>	B	SE	β	t	p
Intercept	.126	3.26	.04		82.31	<.001
Gender		.16	.01	.06	14.23	<.001
Age		-.01	.00	-.05	-11.99	<.001
Working hours		.01	.00	.08	17.12	<.001
Company size		.02	.00	.03	6.79	<.001
Occupation status		.13	.01	.10	19.94	<.001
Contract type		.03	.01	.01	2.32	.021
Income		-.26	.01	-.12	-30.46	<.001
Education		.09	.01	.05	9.81	<.001
Constructive leadership		-.50	.01	-.27	-66.93	<.001
Intercept	.128	3.69	.10		35.85	<.001
Gender		.16	.01	.06	14.30	<.001
Age		-.01	.00	-.05	-11.96	<.001
Working hours		.01	.00	.08	16.98	<.001
Company size		.02	.00	.03	6.97	<.001
Occupation status		.14	.03	.11	4.81	<.001
Contract type		.33	.06	.10	5.74	<.001
Income		-.54	.04	-.26	-15.55	<.001
Education		.01	.04	.01	.33	.743
Constructive leadership		-.65	.03	-.35	-20.11	<.001
Constructive leadership × Education		.03	.01	.06	2.06	.040
Constructive leadership × Occupation status		-.00	.01	-.01	-.22	.824
Constructive leadership × Contract type		-.10	.02	-.10	-5.32	<.001
Constructive leadership × Income		.09	.01	.19	8.48	<.001

Note.  $N = 59,881$ . Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects.

**Table 6**  
*Destructive Leadership and Burnout (Study 2)*

Predictors	$R^2$	$B$	$SE$	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Intercept	.112	1.08	.04		28.93	<.001
Gender		.17	.01	.07	16.05	<.001
Age		-.00	.00	-.05	-11.07	<.001
Working hours		.01	.00	.08	17.23	<.001
Company size		.02	.00	.04	10.46	<.001
Occupation status		.11	.01	.09	16.75	<.001
Contract type		.06	.01	.02	4.40	<.001
Income		-.35	.01	-.17	-42.92	<.001
Education		.05	.01	.04	7.58	<.001
Destructive leadership		.71	.01	.23	59.33	<.001
Intercept	.112	.94	.07		13.55	<.001
Gender		.18	.01	.07	16.16	<.001
Age		-.00	.00	-.05	-11.04	<.001
Working hours		.01	.00	.08	17.20	<.001
Company size		.02	.00	.04	10.51	<.001
Occupation status		.16	.02	.12	9.38	<.001
Contract type		-.05	.04	-.02	-1.24	.216
Income		-.29	.02	-.14	-12.54	<.001
Education		.05	.01	.04	3.96	<.001
Destructive leadership		.82	.05	.27	16.00	<.001
Destructive leadership × Education		.00	.01	.00	.18	.857
Destructive leadership × Occupation status		-.04	.01	-.05	-3.01	.003
Destructive leadership × Income		-.05	.02	-.04	-2.53	.012
Destructive leadership × Contract type		.09	.03	.05	2.99	.003

Note.  $N = 59,881$ . Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects.

More specifically, indirect relationships between constructive and destructive leadership and well-being through resources (self-efficacy and job autonomy) and demands (work pressure and cognitive demands) were all moderated by (somewhat varying) markers of SES.

### General Discussion

Our findings in two studies largely supported our hypotheses predicting that relationships of both constructive and destructive forms of leading with employee well-being would be stronger for employees with lower SES compared to higher SES. In addition, especially in the second study, we explored the mediational roles of resources and demands relevant to employee well-being, namely job autonomy and self-efficacy as well as work pressure and cognitive demands, in these (moderated) relationships. We found that both resources and demands mediated the relationship between leadership and well-being, with these indirect relationships generally tending to be stronger among employees with lower SES.

### Theoretical Implications

Building on JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) we argued that constructive leadership represents a job resource that can help buffer the demands and improve well-being of employees with lower SES who tend to have fewer resources such as autonomy available in their job and who thus can gain more from constructive leadership than those with higher SES. We further argued that the negative well-being consequences of destructive leadership are also

likely to be stronger for employees with lower SES. While they tend to face high demands, they have fewer other resources available to cope with these. Destructive leadership might systematically withhold or diminish available job resources and create additional job demands, which hurts more when other available resources are scarce. Answering calls in the literature to explicate contextual factors in leadership, the results of this two-study investigation are aligned with the idea that leader behaviors represent both a resource and a demand which, in combination with other job demands and resources, might affect employees and their well-being. For constructive leadership, this happens by either buffering the impact of job demands (Bakker et al., 2005) or adding or strengthening the impact of job resources (Tomo & De Simone, 2019). We argued that the effects of leadership on employee well-being are stronger when employees are in a weaker position, here operationalized as lower SES, as leaders can either (help) protect or create more resources (Varga et al., 2014) or they can withhold and further reduce such resources (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018), which hurts more when fewer resources are available. We find that for those lower on SES leadership forms a double-edged sword in that constructive leader behavior benefits these employees more than employees higher on SES, but destructive leader behavior also hurts the same group more. For employees with higher SES who tend to have more resources, good leadership might add less, but bad leadership also hurts less in terms of affecting well-being.

The tentative test of the mediating mechanisms suggests that this might be due to the fact that constructive leader behaviors serve to provide and create resources in form of job autonomy and self-efficacy, whereas destructive leaders might withhold and further impoverish these resources as well as create additional job demands,



**Table 7***Constructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Education (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constructive leadership	.24***	.01	.15***	.01	-.22***	.01	-.02	.01	-.29***	.02
Self-efficacy									-.58***	.01
Job autonomy									-.21***	.01
Work pressure									.48***	.01
Cognitive demands									.25***	.01
Education level 2	.16***	.03	.07**	.02	-.04	.03	.21***	.03	.10	.06
Education level 3	.32***	.03	.22***	.02	-.03	.03	.40***	.03	.36***	.06
Constructive leadership × Education level 2	-.02*	.01	.01	.01	.03**	.01	.00	.01	-.02	.02
Constructive leadership × Education level 3	-.04***	.01	-.01	.01	.07***	.01	.02	.01	-.03	.02
Gender	-.10***	.01	-.14***	.00	.13***	.01	.04***	.01	.02*	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	-.00	.00	.00***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.00***	.00	.02***	.00	.00**	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.10		.13		.07		.17		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot	
			Lower Level Confidence Interval (LLCI)	Upper Level Confidence Interval (ULCI)
Self-efficacy	Education level 1	-.14	-.15	-.13
	Education level 2	-.13	-.13	-.12
	Education level 3	-.11	-.12	-.11
Work pressure	Education level 1	-.11	-.12	-.10
	Education level 2	-.09	-.10	-.08
	Education level 3	-.07	-.08	-.06

Note. *N* = 57,961. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect for the levels of education is performed only for significant interaction effects.

\* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

especially in form of work pressure. Also, constructive leaders seem to lower work pressure and cognitive work demands, which has especially positive impact on well-being among employees with lower education and lower occupation status. In addition, although our results show that employees with higher SES reported slightly, but significantly higher burnout, leadership was still more impactful in influencing well-being of workers with lower SES, through shaping demands and resources more. These results might indicate that both lower and higher SES individuals do experience workplace demands and challenges, which puts their psychological well-being at risk. At the same time, leaders might have a more prominent role in mitigating these factors among employees with lower SES. It could be that job resources in the form of autonomy and self-efficacy are more often intrinsic to higher SES occupations due to job design, and that the extent to which these vary depending on leader input is therefore smaller than for lower SES employees.

By creating understanding of how an individual's positioning within the larger socioeconomic hierarchy conditions how leadership affects employee well-being, we extend JD-R theory to integrate socioeconomic aspects that play a role in employee well-being in addition to personal and organizational context. The results for constructive leadership suggest that the relationships are conditioned by SES (education, occupation status, and employment contract type), suggesting that leader-provided resources are more valuable for sustaining well-being among less-educated employees and employees working in occupations with lower status. However, the exact constellation of dimensions of SES that affect the link between leadership and well-being is complex, and dimensions might differentially interact with different leader behaviors,

which is in need of further research. Here, the relationships were similar across the two studies, although not fully consistent. Education did not moderate the relationship between relational-oriented leadership and well-being (in the meta-analysis), while it did moderate for other constructive behaviors, and neither did it affect the indirect relationship through constructive leadership and burnout via job autonomy (Study 2). Relational-oriented leadership which is focused on supporting employees and considering their needs (e.g., Gurt et al., 2011) seems to be equally valuable for well-being regardless of employee education. Occupation, however, moderated the relationship between all domains of constructive leadership and well-being (meta-analysis), as well as in the indirect relationship through resources and job demands (Study 2). Thus for employees who work in jobs that tend to offer less autonomy and fewer opportunity for development and growth, leader-provided resources might be highly valuable in fostering well-being. Not only the provision of resources seems to matter for well-being, but also managing demands, especially work pressure. This does not imply that employees with more resources do not need constructive input from their leader because they also profit from experienced support from their leader for increasing their knowledge, skills and abilities, or in the form of feedback, development, and responsiveness to their needs, as our main effects show. The indirect effects are just stronger for those with fewer resources.

In contrast, destructive leadership had negative relationships with indicators of well-being for all employees, although again stronger for those with fewer resources. The relationship between destructive leadership and well-being was moderated by education, indicating higher negative relationships among less-educated employees.

**Table 8***Constructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Occupation Status (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constructive leadership	.25***	.01	.15***	.01	-.24***	.01	-.02	.01	-.24***	.02
Self-efficacy									-.58***	.01
Job autonomy									-.21***	.01
Work pressure									.49***	.01
Cognitive demands									.24***	.01
Occupation status 2	.17***	.04	.04	.03	-.15***	.05	.49***	.04	.17*	.08
Occupation status 3	.24***	.05	.21***	.04	-.20***	.05	.70***	.05	.34***	.09
Occupation status 4	.32***	.04	.25***	.03	-.17***	.05	.79***	.04	.52***	.08
Constructive leadership × Occupation status 2	-.04**	.01	.01	.01	.04*	.02	-.02	.01	-.06*	.03
Constructive leadership × Occupation status 3	-.04*	.02	-.00	.01	.08***	.02	-.01	.02	-.08**	.03
Constructive leadership × Occupation status 4	-.06***	.01	-.02	.01	.10***	.01	.01	.01	-.08**	.03
Gender	-.10***	.01	-.14***	.00	.13***	.01	.03***	.01	.04***	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	-.00	.00	.00***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.00**	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.10		.14		.07		.22		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Self-efficacy	Occupation status 1	-.15	-.16	-.13
	Occupation status 2	-.12	-.13	-.11
	Occupation status 3	-.13	-.14	-.11
	Occupation status 4	-.12	-.12	-.11
Work pressure	Occupation status 1	-.12	-.14	-.10
	Occupation status 2	-.10	-.11	-.09
	Occupation status 3	-.08	-.09	-.07
	Occupation status 4	-.07	-.08	-.06

*Note.* *N* = 58,180. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.

\* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

Exploring the potential mechanism behind this relationship indicates that job resources and job demands play a role, with these indirect relationships also being stronger among the less educated. Our results indicate that working with destructive leaders can be particularly harmful for these employees because destructive leaders deny the provision of job-related resources and might amplify the existing job demands. Finally, income did not moderate most of the indirect relationships. Alternatively, mechanisms for why these relationships are universal may differ for higher versus lower SES individuals which is an area for further research.

In the present study, we tentatively tested the relationship between leadership and well-being through resource and demand provision or withholding. JD-R theory proposes a health impairment process through which destructive leadership would also relate to negative health via creation of job demands, in what is called a health impairment process. It can also be that SES has more impact on the relationship of destructive leadership with negative as compared with positive indicators of well-being given affect symmetry as put forward in the well-being literature (Sonnentag, 2015). Affect symmetry refers to the notion that reactions to positive aspects (here, constructive leadership) may be primarily reflected in positive well-being whereas reactions to negative ones (here, destructive leadership) may be mostly apparent in negative well-being. Further research into the role of different elements of SES

and destructive leadership is warranted. This may also require more fine-grained theorizing regarding destructive leader behaviors. Certain aspects of destructive leadership are universally seen as negative whereas the interpretation of others may be shaped more by the context (e.g., Van de Vliert & Einarsen, 2008).

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes by clarifying that structural resources and demands of groups with lower SES play a role in the relationships proposed in JD-R theory. Specifically, we address structural variables that are typically considered in sociological research at more macro levels from the viewpoint of an occupational stress theory (JD-R), to understand how being lower in the socioeconomic hierarchy imposes demands on employees that increase the relevance and impact of leadership in supplying or curtailing or lowering resources. This allows us to nuance the so far implicitly held view of universality of the effects of leadership on employee well-being.

### Limitations and Future Research

This research has several limitations. First, a meta-analysis is by definition limited by the information provided in the primary studies. In the meta-analysis, we could include only two SES markers (education and occupation status), because only information on those and not income or contract type as a second facet of occupation is relatively frequently and consistently reported in the

**Table 9***Constructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Contract Type (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constructive leadership	.22***	.01	.17***	.01	-.20***	.01	.04***	.01	-.23***	.01
Self-efficacy									-.56***	.01
Job autonomy									-.19***	.01
Work pressure									.49***	.01
Cognitive demands									.29***	.01
Contract type			.17***	.02	-.00	.03	.29***	.03	.26***	.05
Constructive leadership × Contract type	-.01	.01	-.03***	.01	.04***	.01	-.04***	.01	-.08***	.02
Gender	-.08***	.01	-.12***	.00	.14***	.01	.08***	.01	.06***	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	.00***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.01***	.00	.02***	.00	.01***	.00	.02***	.00	.02***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.09		.12		.06		.12		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Job autonomy	Contract 0	-.03	-.04	-.03
	Contract 1	-.03	-.03	-.02
Work pressure	Contract 0	-.10	-.11	-.09
	Contract 1	-.08	-.08	-.07

*Note.* *N* = 59,543. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.

\*\*\* *p* < .001.

existing body of primary research. To overcome this limitation, we also examined the hypotheses in Study 2 using a representative data set measuring more detailed dimensions of SES. However, this came with the downside of less sophisticated leadership measures.

Primary studies that use sophisticated measures of both leadership and SES are thus recommended. Relatedly, due to limited information in the primary studies, we also were not able to simultaneously test the mediating role of demands and resources that might further

**Table 10***Constructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Income (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constructive leadership	.19***	.01	.13***	.01	-.21***	.01	.01	.01	-.41***	.02
Self-efficacy									-.56***	.01
Job autonomy									-.17***	.01
Work pressure									.48***	.01
Cognitive demands									.29***	.01
Income	.13***	.02	.13***	.01	-.21***	.02	-.02	.02	-.30***	.03
Constructive leadership × Income	.00	.01	-.00	.00	.03***	.01	.00	.01	.07***	.01
Gender	-.07***	.01	-.11***	.00	.14***	.01	.09***	.01	.06***	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	.00***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.02***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.01***	.00	.02***	.00	.01***	.00	.03***	.00	.02***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.11		.14		.07		.12		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Work pressure	-1SD	-.08	-.09	-.08
	<i>M</i>	-.07	-.07	-.06
	+1SD	-.07	-.07	-.06

*Note.* *N* = 58,298. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.

\*\*\* *p* < .001.

**Table 11**  
*Destructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Employee Education (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Destructive leadership	-.23***	.01	-.16***	.01	.27***	.02	.15***	.01	.50***	.03
Self-efficacy									-.61***	.01
Job autonomy									-.26***	.01
Work pressure									.49***	.01
Cognitive demands									.22***	.01
Education level 2	.06**	.02	.04*	.02	.11***	.02	.30***	.02	.04	.04
Education level 3	.15***	.02	.14***	.02	.26***	.02	.56***	.02	.33***	.04
Destructive leadership × Education level 2	.04*	.02	.05***	.01	-.05*	.02	-.07***	.02	.01	.03
Destructive leadership × Education level 3	.07***	.02	.06***	.01	-.08***	.02	-.09***	.02	-.05	.03
Gender	-.11***	.01	-.15***	.00	.14***	.01	.04***	.01	.03**	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	-.00	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.00	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.02***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.06		.11		.06		.18		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Self-efficacy	Education level 1	.14	.12	.16
	Education level 2	.12	.11	.13
	Education level 3	.10	.09	.11
Job autonomy	Education level 1	.04	.04	.05
	Education level 2	.03	.02	.03
	Education level 3	.03	.02	.03
Work pressure	Education level 1	.13	.12	.15
	Education level 2	.11	.10	.12
	Education level 3	.10	.09	.11
Cognitive demands	Education level 1	.03	.03	.04
	Education level 2	.02	.01	.02
	Education level 3	.01	.01	.02

*Note.* *N* = 59,652. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.  
 \* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

interact with leadership and SES. A large-scale multilevel examination would be recommended.

Second, most primary studies included in our meta-analysis relied on correlational, cross-sectional designs, as did our second study. Even though we considered leadership as an antecedent of employee well-being, the possibility of reverse or reciprocal relationships remains and causal inference cannot be drawn (e.g., Dul, 2016). For example, it is possible that leaders whose employees face burnout or physical health diagnoses adjust their behavior toward them. Moreover, although we tentatively explore mechanisms through which leadership relates to well-being, due to the correlational nature of our data, causality cannot be implied. Hence, more longitudinal research and intervention studies are needed. In Study 2 in which we sought to replicate and extend findings, constructive leadership was operationalized via relational-oriented leadership and destructive leadership was operationalized via having ongoing and destructive conflicts with the leader. Whereas this means that distinctions between change-, relational-, task-, and ethics-oriented leadership as in our meta-analysis were not possible, the test of destructive leadership's well-being effects can be considered conservative and in need of replication. The overall consistency in findings does bolster our confidence in the validity of the established relationships.

Although relying on individual perceptions forms a valuable and necessary source of insight when studying subjective evaluations of well-being, such as happiness or exhaustion, relying exclusively on self-ratings increases the risk of common source and common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Also, fewer than 5% of the studies included in the current meta-analysis focus on aspects of physical health. For leadership research, this might represent an exciting avenue of future investigation, highly relevant for employees with lower SES who are often at greater risk for physical health problems (e.g., Adler & Ostrove, 1999)

Our findings highlight several additional opportunities for future research. One avenue for advancing research on leadership and well-being is to embark on a more extensive investigation of the role of context in shaping the impact of leadership. In leadership research, contextual antecedents or moderators are studied less often than personal ones. Specific organizational policies and barriers may also form factors that affect leader behaviors toward more resource-poor employees. Additionally, examining the role of context requires studies with multilevel designs that assess how other occupational, organizational, and job design characteristics interact with leadership and SES in affecting well-being. Taking into account not only objective dimensions of SES but also subjective SES and perceived standing within the socioeconomic

**Table 12***Destructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Occupation Status (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Destructive leadership	-.26***	.02	-.14***	.02	.26***	.02	.17***	.02	.41***	.04
Self-efficacy									-.61***	.01
Job autonomy									-.26***	.01
Work pressure									.49***	.01
Cognitive demands									.21***	.01
Occupation status 2	-.01	.03	.05*	.02	-.05	.03	.52***	.03	-.08	.05
Occupation status 3	.08*	.03	.19***	.03	.07	.04	.78***	.03	-.05	.06
Occupation status 4	.09**	.03	.16***	.02	.20***	.03	.95***	.03	.19***	.06
Destructive leadership × Occupation status 2	.05*	.02	.01	.02	-.01	.03	-.06**	.03	.07	.04
Destructive leadership × Occupation status 3	.07*	.03	.03	.02	-.05	.03	-.09**	.03	.13**	.05
Destructive leadership × Occupation status 4	.10***	.03	.06**	.02	-.08**	.03	-.10***	.03	.05	.04
Gender	-.11***	.01	-.15***	.00	.15***	.01	.03***	.01	.04***	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Company size	-.00	.00	.00***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
Working hours	.00	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.02***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>		.06		.11		.06		.22		.30

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Self-efficacy	Occupation status 1	.16	.12	.19
	Occupation status 2	.12	.11	.14
	Occupation status 3	.11	.10	.13
	Occupation status 4	.09	.08	.11
Job autonomy	Occupation status 1	.04	.03	.05
	Occupation status 2	.03	.03	.04
	Occupation status 3	.03	.02	.04
	Occupation status 4	.02	.02	.03
Work pressure	Occupation status 1	.13	.10	.16
	Occupation status 2	.13	.12	.14
	Occupation status 3	.11	.09	.12
	Occupation status 4	.09	.08	.10
Cognitive demands	Occupation status 1	.04	.02	.05
	Occupation status 2	.02	.02	.03
	Occupation status 3	.02	.01	.02
	Occupation status 4	.01	.01	.02

*Note.*  $N = 59,881$ . Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

hierarchy is recommended, as individual attitudes and behavior tend to be determined by perceptions of reality and not just reality itself (cf. Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990). Finally, more longitudinal and experimental research is needed to examine the causal paths and mechanisms linking leadership and employee well-being.

### Practical Implications

Our meta-analytic findings have a number of implications for policymakers and practitioners. For example, our results suggest that investment in leadership development through training and strengthening relational resources at work may be especially important for employees with lower SES and their supervisors. At the same time organizations must take extra care to avoid destructive leadership as it backfires for all employees, but again particularly for individuals with low SES. While some resource-dependence-inducing factors are pervasive and difficult to change, leadership can be altered, and leader capabilities may be developed to better support employees with

lower SES. In addition, leader-provided autonomy and self-efficacy seem to form useful resources to bolster for lower SES employees, contributing to their well-being. Leader-provided resources might be particularly valuable for employees with lower SES, as they might typically not receive as much training or be provided with as much job autonomy and other resources as those in higher SES jobs. This also implies that organizational investment in increasing resources of low SES employees through different means, such as human resource management practices and working conditions, might also create value by preserving or enhancing employee well-being.

With rising awareness of the importance of high employee well-being and the costs of poor well-being related to work, companies are implementing practices and initiatives targeted at improving workplace health and well-being. These are often individual-level initiatives, promoting wellness programs, healthy food, or offering health checks for employees, however this places the burden solely on employees. Although of course such programs and initiatives may have some positive impact for improving or protecting employee well-being, here we focused on direct supervisor leadership as a factor

**Table 13**  
*Destructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Contract Type (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Destructive leadership	-.19***	.01	-.11***	.01	.25***	.02	.08***	.02	.41***	.03
Self-efficacy									-.59***	.01
Job autonomy									-.23***	.01
Work pressure									.50***	.01
Cognitive demands									.26***	.01
Contract type	-.02	.02	.09***	.02	.16***	.02	.18***	.02	-.07*	.03
Destructive leadership × Contract type	-.00	.02	-.01	.01	-.05**	.02	-.01	.02	.08**	.03
Gender	-.09***	.01	-.13***	.00	.15***	.01	.08***	.01	.06***	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	-.00	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.02***	.00	.02***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.04		.09		.05		.13		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Work pressure	0	.13	.11	.14
	1	.10	.10	.11

*Note.* *N* = 59.543. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.  
\* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

that is already present in the workplace and related to workplace well-being that can be prioritized and influenced by organizations.

Societal-level policy initiatives may also improve the resources available to lower SES employees. Differences in SES mean structural inequality and reducing inequality has been formulated as a key United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (George et al., 2016).

Societies, governments, policymakers, and businesses all play a role in reducing inequality (e.g., by ensuring equal access to education, paying a fair income, and regulating work contracts). Finally, while our study focuses on SES as reflective of some institutional conditions that might represent a barrier to employee well-being, other structural factors, such as employment protection legislation, might represent an

**Table 14**  
*Destructive Leadership, Job Resources, Job Demands, and Burnout: Moderating Role of Income (Study 2)*

Predictors	Self-efficacy		Job autonomy		Work pressure		Cognitive demands		Burnout	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Destructive leadership	-.15***	.02	-.08***	.01	.25***	.02	.09***	.02	.54***	.03
Self-efficacy									-.57***	.01
Job autonomy									-.20***	.01
Work pressure									.49***	.01
Cognitive demands									.26***	.01
Income	.19***	.01	.17***	.01	-.10***	.01	.01	.01	-.08***	.02
Destructive leadership × Income	-.01	.01	-.01	.01	-.03**	.01	-.01	.01	-.04**	.02
Gender	-.07***	.01	-.11***	.00	.15***	.01	.09***	.01	.06***	.01
Age	-.01***	.00	.00***	.00	-.00***	.00	.01***	.00	-.01***	.00
Working hours	.00***	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.02***	.00	.01***	.00
Company size	.00	.00	.01***	.00	.01***	.00	.03***	.00	.02***	.00
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.07		.12		.06		.12		.30	

Mediator variable	Moderator value	Indirect effect	95% Boot LLCI	95% Boot ULCI
Work pressure	-1SD	.11	.10	.12
	<i>M</i>	.10	.09	.10
	+1SD	.10	.09	.10

*Note.* *N* = 60.002. Analysis of simple slopes of the indirect effect is performed only for significant interaction effects. LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval.  
\*\* *p* < .01. \*\*\* *p* < .001.

additional resource that helps individuals sustain well-being. To what extent these institutional resources might interact with organizational ones warrants further investigation.

### Conclusion

Across two studies we investigated to what extent constructive and destructive leadership interact with markers of SES that form a set of structural conditions associated with individual resource scarcity, in affecting employee well-being. For all employees, constructive leader behaviors demonstrate positive associations with psychological, physical, short-term, long-term, job-specific, or general well-being outcomes and destructive forms of leadership consistently link to negative well-being outcomes. The results demonstrate these effects are mostly stronger among employees with lower compared to higher SES.

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