Nursing under Inconsistent Organizational Conditions: Evidence of Double Bind Situations?

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Abstract

Organizations exhibit differences in their ability to achieve consistency in espoused norms and values, instrumental policies, rules and routines (so-called organizational conditions), on the one hand, and employee attitudes and behavior (so-called employee outcomes), on the other hand. Although previous research has pointed out that inconsistency in organizational conditions negatively affects employee outcomes, there is a lack of knowledge about the processes mediating the relationship between organizational conditions and employee outcomes. In this paper, we develop the concept of ‘double bind situation’ to account for possible mediation processes, and empirically study it using a large sample of Dutch nurses. Our results indicate that, although three of the four distinguished characteristics of the double bind situation (i.e. intensity of the relationship, incongruence of messages, and being prevented from withdrawal) show the expected direction and strength of impact, they account for only 20 percent explained variance in negative employee outcomes (negative affectivity and personal burnout). We conclude with a discussion of some practical, theoretical and methodological implications of our study.

Introduction

The extent to which organizations are able to align espoused norms and values, instrumental policies, rules and routines (hereafter referred to as organizational conditions) in a consistent way, so that they uniformly influence employee attitudes and behavior (hereafter referred to as employee outcomes) in desired directions, has increasingly received attention in the organization literature (Meyer, Tsui, & Hinings, 1993; Siggelkow, 2002). HRM researchers, in particular, have attempted to develop empirical research within this field by, over and above studying the impact of single HR conditions, determining the impact of ‘bundles’ of HR conditions on employee outcomes (e.g., Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Kaarsmaker & Poutsma, 2006; Sanders & Looise, 2006; Visser, 2010a).

Notwithstanding their assumed potential for alignment, from two other perspectives, it seems questionable whether organizations are able to consistently align conditions, and thus to influence employee attitudes and behavior in desired directions. First, researchers within the tradition of the behavioral theory of the firm (Cyert & March, 1963) have regarded organizations as adaptive political coalitions, confronting (yet only partly solving) internal conflicts of interest, and endowed with only limited capacities for information search, storage and retrieval (e.g., Augier, 2004; Augier & March, 2002). Related influential conceptualizations of organizations are those of the political arena (Morgan, 1997), and of bureaucratic politics (Allison, 1971). Second, some researchers have drawn attention to paradoxes and system contradictions in working organizations. The latter may expose employees to tensions, contradictions and oppositional tendencies, which they can only partially resolve, and from which they may only partially escape (e.g., Argyris, 1988; Ford & Backoff, 1988; Lewis, 2000; Putnam, 1986).

Concrete, from previous research, it appears that organizations differ in their ability to consistently align conditions, and thus are expected to differ in terms of adequacy to influence employee outcomes in desired directions. Therefore, the question arises what the effects of inconsistency of conditions are on employee attitudes and behavior. Fairly recent research has shown that inconsistent conditions negatively affect innovative behavior (Lee, Edmondson, Thomke, & Worline, 2004), and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). More in general, inconsistent conditions may lead to symptoms of behavioral disturbance, like
anxiety, fear, rigidity, inhibition, and aggression (e.g., Mineka & Kihlstrom, 1978; Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981).

Although the effects of inconsistent conditions are relatively well-known, much less is known about the actual processes mediating the relationship between inconsistent conditions, on the one hand, and employee attitudinal and behavioral reactions to it, on the other. For example, Lee et al. (2004) have found that the impact of inconsistent conditions on employee outcomes is mediated by evaluative pressures from proximal others, i.e., the degree to which employees are supervised in a more judging and controlling way versus a more helping and supportive way. Similarly, Leiter and Maslach (1988, 2009) have noted the importance of interaction between employees and management in the light of the prevention of burn-out, and the enhancement of organizational commitment. Notwithstanding these important contributions, much more empirical work is needed in order to better understand possible mediation processes (see also Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008).

In this paper, our first objective is to develop the concept of double bind situation to account for the processes mediating between inconsistent organizational conditions and employee outcomes. A rather substantial body of clinical, experimental and organizational research evidence (reviewed in Visser, 2007a,b; 2010b) suggests that exposure to double bind situations negatively affects attitudes and behavior, leading to stress, anxiety, and other symptoms of behavioral, affective and cognitive disturbances. As a second objective, we empirically assess the occurrence of double bind situations among nurses in Dutch health care organizations, analyzing data from the European NEXT (Nurses’ Early Exit) research project\(^1\) (Hasselhorn, Tackenberg, & Müller, 2003; Hasselhorn, Müller, & Tackenberg, 2005). Nurses, in particular, may be expected to experience inconsistent conditions, given competing demands resulting from a large variety of (emotionally) highly demanding caring tasks imposed on them by different parties involved, over and above the administrative duties, budget constraints, and professional norms and standards that have to be dealt with (see for instance Diestel & Schmidt, 2011; Van der Heijden, Demerouti, Bakker, & the NEXT Study Group coordinated by Hasselhorn, 2008). Our contribution aims at providing more insight in the alignment of health care institutions’ internal conditions and nurses’ attitudes and behavior, and thus to contribute to the development and retention of staff in a sector that suffers from high personnel turnover (Janiszewski & Goodin, 2003; Price & Mueller, 1996).

This paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, we provide an outline of the core concept of double bind situation. Next, we operationalize this concept by using appropriate ‘proxy’ scales from the NEXT study. After providing the results, the paper ends with a discussion section wherein the main conclusions and some practical, theoretical and methodological implications of our study will be dealt with.

**Organizational Double Bind Situation and Employee Outcomes**

The concept of double bind situation enables theorizing about the ways in which inconsistency in organizational conditions may affect employee outcomes (Bateson, 1972, 1979; Visser, 2003, 2007a, 2010b). This theorizing elaborates on the role of managers, directors and others in supervisory positions, who are charged with the tasks of espousing organiza-

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tional norms and values and implementing organizational policies, rules and routines. In performing these tasks, they occupy a relative powerful position vis-à-vis their employees, and are taken to be responsible for significant knowledge sharing and communication within the organization. As a rule, employees (ought to) pay close attention to the verbal and nonverbal behavior of their managers (Konst, Vonk, & Van der Vlist, 1999; Visser, 2010b).

Inconsistency in organizational conditions is likely to be reflected in incongruence in managerial communication. To cover all possible inconsistent consequences, managers may consciously or unconsciously send ambiguous messages, in two ways. First, they may send messages that are verbally incongruent. Examples are: ‘You are running the show, however...’; ‘You make the decisions, but clear with...’; ‘That’s an interesting idea, but be careful...’ (Argyris, 1988; Visser, 2007a). Second, managers may send messages that are verbally and nonverbally incongruent. Their nonverbal behavior seems to convey a different message than their verbal utterances. An example is a manager praising the work of an employee with a cynical tone of voice (Visser, 2007b).

Experimental evidence suggests that incongruent communication by itself does not lead to stress and anxiety. Subjects participating in experiments, who were exposed to verbal-nonverbal incongruence, generally resolved it by taking the non-verbal cues as leading, after some initial puzzlement and hesitation (e.g., Domangue, 1978; Iwamitsu et al., 2001; Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967; Newman, 1977; Yogo, Ando, Hashi, & Yamata, 2000). The concept of double bind situation proposes that incongruent managerial communication will only negatively affect employee attitudes and behavior when it is embedded within the following characteristics:

(1) Two or more communicants are involved in an intense relationship with a high (physical or psychological) survival value for at least one of them. The first part of this characteristic, the ‘intensity of the relationship’, may be related to the degree of identification employees feel toward their organizations and/or to their job. When employees feel psychologically attached, they experience difficulty in dealing with incongruent management communication (Tracy, 2004).

The second part of this characteristic, ‘survival value of the relationship’, may be related to power and authority differences, and hence to dependency, in organizations. When employees perceive a large power distance between themselves and their managers, they come to feel more dependent on them for their job security and working conditions, and hence for their organizational survival (Dopson & Neumann, 1998; Steier, 1995).

(2) On a regular basis incongruent messages are given, that, at one level, assert something, yet, at another level, negate or conflict with this assertion. The first message often takes the form of a negative injunction, threatening some behavior with punishment. The second message conflicts with the first one, at one or more points, and is also enforced by punishments or signals that threaten survival. The first part of this characteristic (‘messages that, at one level, assert something, yet, at another level, negate or conflict with this assertion’) may be related to verbal and verbal-nonverbal incongruence in managerial communication, as discussed above.

The second part of this characteristic, ‘the threat of punishment’, may be related to the degree to which the atmosphere in an organization may be characterized as supportive or punitive. In psychological experiments wherein subjects were exposed to incongruent communication and threats of punishment, a significant amount of stress and anxiety was
measured among these subjects. The stress and anxiety occurred, in spite of the relatively short period of the experiment, the transient nature of the subjects’ relation to the experimenter, and the relatively lenient nature of the punishments involved (e.g., Bowers & Sanders, 1974; Dush & Brodsky, 1981; Kuiken & Hill, 1985; Smith, 1976). It may be supposed that in organizations wherein employees are generally more involved, and in which more is at stake for them, a punitive atmosphere will even have more impact than in the experiments mentioned above.

(3) The receiver of the incongruent messages is prevented from withdrawal from the situation and/or from commenting on it. The receiver may be prohibited from escaping the field or (s)he may not have learned on which level of communication to respond. The first part of this characteristic, being ‘prevented from withdrawal from the situation’, may be related to the personal and financial status and benefits employees receive from their organizations, and to their beliefs that alternative organizations do not provide equal status and benefits, or worse, to beliefs that being fired and unemployment are imminent possibilities. Especially late career employees or employees with work ability problems, and/or relatively obsolete skills and qualifications may come to feel ‘trapped’ in their organizations (Camerino et al., 2006; Dopson & Neumann, 1998; Van der Heijden, De Lange, Demerouti, & Van der Heijde, 2009).

The second part of this characteristic, being ‘prevented from commenting on the situation’, may be related to the ‘total institution’ atmosphere of organizations that deal with life-death emergencies and emotionally intense problems. According to Goffman (1961: xiii), a total institution is ‘a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life.’ Examples are jails, prisons, correctional facilities, police, armed forces, health care institutions and fire departments. The large differences in emotional intensity between life inside and outside such organizations, the necessity of strong unit cohesion, clear leadership in recurrent emergency situations, and the classified nature of some activities all limit the possibilities of meta-communication inside and outside these organizations (Tracy, 2004).

(4) Double binding is a long lasting characteristic of the situation, which, once established, tends toward self-perpetuation. This characteristic refers to the amount of time employees are exposed to a double bind situation.

The four conditions that have been outlined above are interdependent and should be jointly operative in order for a double bind situation to occur. Thus, we hypothesize that the higher the intensity and survival value of a relationship, the higher the degree of incongruence of managerial messages and threat of punishment, the higher the degree of being prevented from withdrawal from and/or commenting on the situation, and the longer this situation lasts, the higher the prevalence of negative employee outcomes will be (Visser, 2007a,b).

Health care professionals, in particular, with nurses being no exception, experience primarily emotional demands (De Jonge, Mulder, & Nijhuis, 1999; Van Vegchel, De Jonge, Meijer, & Hamers, 2001). More concrete, nursing staff is confronted with serious illness and death, as well as with violence at work (Camerino et al., 2008; Estryn-Behar et al, 2008). These demands, together with the competing caring tasks imposed by different parties and
stakeholders involved, and the fact that nursing comprises individually-experienced double binds and crises that are strongly connected to emotions (Kerosuo, 2011), forms the rationale behind our choice to study the prevalence of the double bind situation, and its effects, within the nursing sector.

Method

Empirical research on the double bind situation, and its effects, has long been the province of experimental psychology. However, reviewers of double bind research have repeatedly emphasized the limitations of the experimental method in bringing out the various interrelated elements of double binding. In addition to experiments, they have advocated an ethological or natural history research approach, taking relationships in real-life social settings as the appropriate level of analysis (Abeles, 1976; Sluzki & Ransom, 1976). Our research takes a first step in this direction by surveying nurses in health care organizations.

In order to assess the occurrence of double bind situations among nurses, we analyzed data from the European NEXT (Nurses' Early Exit) research project (Hasselhorn et al., 2003, 2005). For this paper, we used the data of 4,018 Dutch nurses, sampled across nine hospitals, nine nursing homes, and four home care organizations (Van der Heijden et al., 2008).

Further, in order to operationalize the concept of double bind situation, we employed thoroughly validated scales from the NEXT study, that in our view best approximated the characteristics of double bind situation (hence the term ‘proxy’ scales in the remainder of this paper). Table 1 provides an overview of the variables and proxy scales (for a more detailed description of these scales see Hasselhorn et al., 2003, 237-258).

Insert Table 1 about here

Results

Before testing our hypothesis, we computed means, standard deviations, and reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s alpha) (see Table 2). The reliabilities for all scales are sufficient or good. Seven scales score a Cronbach alpha higher than .70, while one scale scores slightly below 0.70, where 0.60 is generally regarded as the lowest acceptable minimum value (Hair et al., 2005). We looked at possible improvement of the alpha of the lowest scale by deleting items, but in the light of its construct validity we have decided to not eliminate any of the scale items.

Insert Table 2 about here

Subsequently, we conducted correlation analyses to test whether the relationships between the model variables showed the hypothesized direction and strength. Next, multiple hierarchical regression analyses were performed in order to test the joint influence of the double bind situation variables on the two negative employee outcomes, being the dependents.

Regarding the correlation analyses, the first step was to determine whether the two proxy scales used to operationalize three of the four characteristics of the double bind situation (i.e. intense relationship, high survival value, incongruent messages, threat of punishment, prevention from withdrawal, and prevention from commenting) showed the expected direction and strength. In Table 2, these correlations appear in italics. The two scales comprising
the first characteristic of the double bind situation appear to be negatively and weakly related \( (r = -0.09, p < 0.01) \), which is conform expectation. A higher score on ‘overcommitment’ corresponds to a higher intensity of the relationship, while a higher score on ‘quality of leadership’ corresponds to a higher survival value. The two scales comprising the second characteristic of the double bind situation are negatively and moderately related \( (r = -0.22, p < 0.01) \), which again is conform expectation. A higher score on ‘uncertainty concerning treatment’ corresponds to a higher incongruence of messages, while a higher score on ‘quality of interpersonal relations’ corresponds to a lower threat of punishment. The two scales comprising the third characteristic of the double bind situation are positively and moderately related \( (r = 0.23, p < 0.01) \), which again is conform expectation. A higher score on ‘influence at work’ corresponds to a lower degree of being prevented from withdrawal from the situation, while a higher score on ‘influence at work’ corresponds to a lower degree of being prevented from commenting on the situation. Finally, the two scales comprising the negative employee outcomes are positively and moderately related \( (r = 0.37, p < 0.01) \).

The second step in our correlation analyses was to determine whether the correlations between the four characteristics of the double bind situation and the two negative employee outcomes show the expected direction and strength. As Table 2 shows, with one exception, this appears to be the case. Specifically, the first characteristic, that is, the intensity of the relationship (as measured by ‘overcommitment’) appeared to correlate positively and fairly strongly with the distinguished negative employee outcomes \( (r = 0.41, p < 0.01, \text{ and } r = 0.40, p < 0.01) \), while survival value (as measured by ‘quality of leadership’) appeared to correlate negatively and weakly with those outcomes \( (r = -0.11, p < 0.01, \text{ in both cases}) \). Regarding the second characteristic, the incongruence of messages (as measured by ‘uncertainty concerning treatment’), we found that it correlates positively and moderately with negative employee outcomes \( (r = 0.22, p < 0.01, \text{ and } r = 0.20, p < 0.01) \), while threat of punishment (as measured by ‘quality of interpersonal relations’) appeared to correlate negatively and weakly with those outcomes \( (r = -0.16, p < 0.01, \text{ and } r = -0.14, p < 0.01) \). Regarding the third characteristic, being prevented from withdrawal from the situation (as measured by ‘reward’), we found a negative and moderate correlation with negative employee outcomes \( (r = -0.24, p < 0.01, \text{ in both cases}) \), while being prevented from commenting on the situation (as measured by ‘influence at work’) appeared to correlate negatively and weakly with the distinguished employee outcomes \( (r = -0.13, p < 0.01, \text{ and } r = -0.15, p < 0.01) \).

The fourth characteristic, that is, the long lasting nature of the double bind situation, was included in order to test for possible differences depending upon the tenure of the nurses with their current organizations. It is expected that the influence of the three previous characteristics of the double bind situation on negative employee outcomes will become stronger, the longer an employee is exposed to these characteristics. In operational terms, this implies that nurses with tenure of more than five years are expected to exhibit higher correlations between double bind characteristics and negative employee outcomes, compared to nurses that are employed between 1 to five years. However, this expectation is not supported by the data. A comparison of correlation coefficients between the two tenure groups revealed no or very small differences (tables not shown).

As far as the multiple regression analyses are concerned, we tested the joint influence of the double bind situation variables on the two negative employee outcomes. Table 3 shows the results for the two dependents separately.
It appears that the double bind situation variables have an impact on both negative employee outcomes, but not uniformly so, and with only moderate explanatory power. Only intensity of the relationship (as measured by ‘overcommitment’) appeared to have a significant and moderate effect on both employee outcomes (respectively $\beta = .36$, $p < .001$ for negative affectivity; and $\beta = .34$, $p < .001$ for personal burnout), while incongruence of messages (as measured by ‘uncertainty concerning treatment’) and being prevented from withdrawal from the situation (as measured by ‘reward’) have significant but small effects on both dependents (for uncertainty concerning treatment: $\beta = .10$, $p < .001$ for negative affectivity; and $\beta = .09$, $p < .001$ for personal burnout) (for reward: $\beta = -.13$, $p < .001$ for both negative affectivity and personal burnout). For the other three double bind factors small or effects that are generally not significant were found (see Table 3 for more specific outcomes). Together the double bind variables appeared to account for about 20 percent explained variance in both negative employee outcomes.

**Discussion and conclusions**

In this contribution, we developed the concept of double bind situation to account for the processes mediating between inconsistent organizational conditions and negative employee outcomes. In particular, we hypothesized that the higher the intensity and survival value of a relationship, the higher the degree of incongruence of managerial messages and threat of punishment, the higher the degree of being prevented from withdrawal from or commenting on the situation, and the longer this situation lasts, the higher the prevalence of negative employee outcomes will be.

From an empirical test using a large sample of Dutch nurses, it appeared that the relationship between three out of four characteristics of the double bind situation (as measured by several proxy scales) and the two employee outcomes show the expected direction and strength. Only our expectation regarding the impact of the long lasting characteristic was not supported by the data. Further, the characteristics of the double bind situation appeared to have an impact on negative employee outcomes, but not uniformly so, and with only moderate explanatory power.

Several practical, theoretical, operational and methodological implications follow from these findings. Practically, we have tried to get more insight into which factors among nurses may, in particular, lead to negative outcomes, and thus might induce them to consider turnover or leaving their profession. Nurses experiencing an intense relationship with their organizations and their jobs may show a high commitment and zeal in their work, but beyond a certain point they may become overcommitted, and hence more susceptible to negative outcomes. Similarly, incongruent communication by doctors and managers may lead to negative outcomes for nurses, as does their feeling of being prevented from withdrawal from the situation. However, given the moderate level of explained variance, other factors such as job demands, job resources, work schedules, work ability, physical load, effort-reward imbalance, work-home interference, to mention but a few factors that might predict negative employee consequences, have to be taken into account in future research as well (see also Van der Heijden et al., 2008).

Theoretically, the concept of double bind situation seems only partly capable of capturing the processes mediating between inconsistent organizational conditions and employee out-
comes. Its current conceptualization presents a somewhat pessimistic view of interaction between organization and employee, which could be balanced by a broader and more optimistic view that, for example, also incorporates the role of creativity, problem solving and humor (e.g., Beech et al., 2004; Hatch & Ehrlich, 1993; Wendt, 1998).

Operationally, the use of proxy scales has positive and negative sides. On the positive side, it permits a far more extensive empirical testing of double bind characteristics than is permitted by experimental and qualitative methods. On the negative side, proxy scales by definition only partly approximate the theoretical nature of the double bind characteristics, leaving more room between the concept-as-intended and the concept-as-measured than an original operationalization might have left. But, given the paucity of quantitative research on the double bind situation and possible practical advantages for nurses and health care organizations, we find the current approach both defensible and relevant for theory and practice.

Methodologically, it may be argued that a survey cannot accurately capture the relational nature of double bind situations, since only single employees are surveyed, instead of dyads or groups of employees. Also, a survey measures a retrospective account of persons’ perceptions of and experiences with relationships, and thus misses much of the dynamic nature of instant, face-to-face communication in which the double bind situation is formed and maintained.

Future research on double bind situations in organizations should preferably be carried out through a combination of methods. It should include quantitative methods (like surveys and tests), together with more qualitative methods (like interviews, participant observation, and informal conversation). Ideally, the researcher should be committed to an organization for a longer period of time, in order to be able to experience first-hand the ongoing verbal and nonverbal communication. It is by combining these methods that we may hope to empirically unravel the mysteries of the double bind situation and, in Abeles’ (1976) terms, may succeed in ‘researching the unresearchable.’

References


Table 1 Variables and ‘Proxy’ Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables: Double Bind Situation</th>
<th>‘Proxy’ Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a intense relationship</td>
<td>6-item ‘overcommitment’ scale (Siegrist et al., 2004). An example item was:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘work rarely lets me go, it is still on my mind when I go to bed’. A 4-category</td>
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<td></td>
<td>response scale was used, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1b high survival value</td>
<td>4-item ‘quality of leadership’ scale (Kristensen, 2000). An example item was:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘to what extent would you say that your immediate superior gives high priority to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>job satisfaction’. A 5-point response scale was used, ranging from 1 (‘to a very</td>
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<td></td>
<td>small extent’) to 5 (‘to a large extent’).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2a incongruent messages</td>
<td>5-item ‘uncertainty concerning treatment’ scale (Gray-Toft &amp; Anderson, 1981).</td>
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<td>An example item was: ‘please indicate how often you are stressed by the</td>
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<td>following situation: a 4-point response scale was used, ranging from 1 (‘never’)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>to 4 (‘very frequently’). ‘Quality of interpersonal relations’ between nurses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and 5 relevant groups (‘nursing management’, ‘the sister/charge nurse’, ‘colleagues’, ‘doctors’ and ‘administration’) (developed by NEXT research group; Hasselhorn et al., 2003). A 5-point response scale was used, ranging from 1 (‘hostile and intense’) to 5 (‘friendly and relaxed’).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2b threat of punishment</td>
<td>4-item ‘influence at work’ scale (Theorell et al., 1988). An example item was:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘I have a say in what type of task I am asked to fulfil’). A 5-point response</td>
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<td></td>
<td>scale was used, ranging from 1 (‘totally inaccurate’) to 5 (‘totally accurate’).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3a prevented from withdrawing</td>
<td>11-item ‘reward’ scale (Siegrist et al., 2004). An example item was: ‘my job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b prevented from commenting</td>
<td>security is poor’. A 4-category response scale was used, ranging from 1 (‘no</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>distress at all’) to 4 (‘very much distress’).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 long lasting</td>
<td>Tenure within current organization, categorized in two groups: (1) 1-5 yrs; and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2) &gt; 5 yrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5&amp;6 Negative employee outcomes</td>
<td>10-item ‘negative affectivity’ scale (Watson, Clark, &amp; Tellegen, 1988). An</td>
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<td></td>
<td>example item was: ‘to what extent do you in general feel distressed’. A 5-point</td>
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<td></td>
<td>response scale was used, ranging from 1 (‘very slightly or not at all’) to 5 (‘extremely’).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-item ‘personal burn-out’ scale (Borritz &amp; Kristensen, 2001). An example item</td>
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<td></td>
<td>was: ‘how often do you feel emotionally exhausted’. A 5-point response scale</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was used, ranging from 1 (‘never/almost never’) to 5 (‘almost every day’).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach’s Alpha, in bold) and Correlations (Pearson’s r) (N = 3,998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1a</th>
<th>1b</th>
<th>2a</th>
<th>2b</th>
<th>3a</th>
<th>3b</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a overcomm.</td>
<td>11.88</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1b qual.lead.</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2a uncert.treat.</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2b qual.ip.rel.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3a reward</td>
<td>50.23</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.74</td>
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<td>3b infl.work</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 neg.aff.</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 burnout</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Table 3 Regression Analyses’ Outcomes for Double Bind Characteristics and Employee Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Double bind var./scale</th>
<th>Negative affectivity</th>
<th>Personal burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1a overcomm.</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1b qual.lead.</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>2a uncert.treat.</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2b qual.ip.rel.</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3a reward</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b infl.work</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj R²</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3,295</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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