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UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

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Occupational well-being of International Business Travelers:

**Examining the challenging and hindrance demands of
international business trips, and the importance of the
LMX as a resource**

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Background

- Changing work environment challenges employees' well-being
- International business travelers (IBTs) are an increasingly important resource for organizations
- Leader-member exchange (LMX) has proved to have an influence on occupational well-being



The aim of the study

The present study examines

- the direct and moderating effect of LMX on the relationship between international business travel intensity (travel days during past 12 months) and the well-being of IBTs
- Indicators of IBTs' well-being
 - Exhaustion (as a core indicator of burnout) and international business travel related exhaustion
 - Vigour and and international business travel related vigour
- JD-R model as a theoretical framework
 - Demands: challenging / hindrancing?

Methodology, data



- The research was conducted in one multinational company in 2015. The data (N=570) consists of employees working in jobs requiring international business travel
- Both men and women, different ages, nationalities and different social statuses along with relative hierarchical level were examined
- Travel days varied from 1 to 300, as mean was 27.57, median 16 and standard deviation 32.09

Methodology, measures, analyses



- LMX, eight items, scale 1-5
- Exhaustion; BBI-15, scale 1-6
- International business travel related exhaustion (developed for this study, items based on BBI)
- Vigour 3 items, scale 0-7
- Travel days

- Moderated hierarchical regression analysis was used to study the relationships of the variables
 - All statistical analyses were conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics 24

Findings

- Our data analysis shows that
 - low LMX had direct link to general exhaustion
 - high travel intensity and low LMX had direct links to international business travel related exhaustion
 - high travel intensity and high LMX had direct links to vigour
 - high travel intensity and high LMX had direct links to international business travel related vigour



Findings (direct relationships)



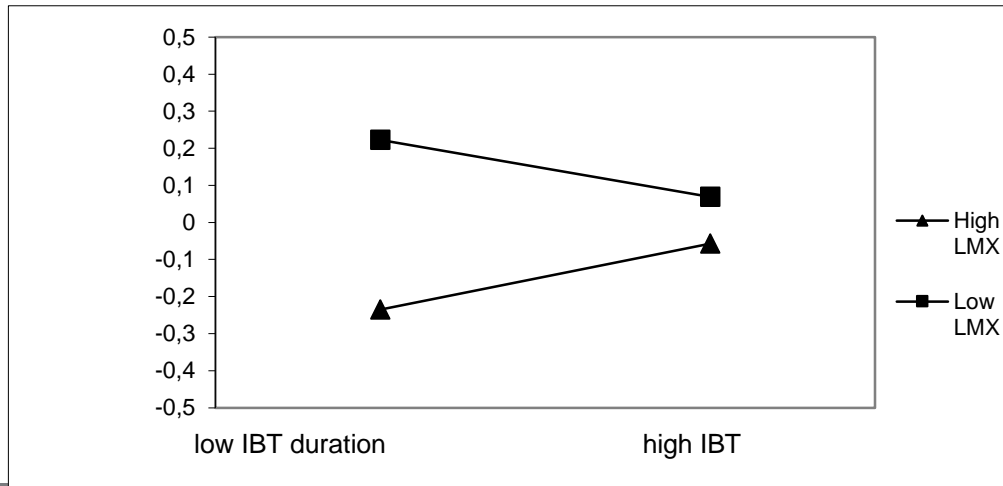
Independent variables	IBT related exhaustion (n = 534)			Exhaustion (n = 543)		
	β	ΔR^2	R^2	β	ΔR^2	R^2
Step 1: Controls		.16***	.16***		.31***	.31***
Gender (men/women)	-.05			-.02		
Age (in years)	.01*			.04		
General job demands	.37**			.54***		
Domestic business travel days	.00*			.05		
Step 2: International business travel		.03***	.18***		.00	.31
IBT days past 12 months	.17***			-.06		
Step 3: Leadership		.01*	.19*		.01*	.32*
LMX	-.11*			-.12**		
Step 4: Interactions		.01*	.19*		.00	.32
LMX × IBT days	-.15*			.03		

Findings (direct relationships)

	IBT related vigour (n = 498)			Vigour (n = 506)		
	β	ΔR^2	R^2	β	ΔR^2	R^2
Independent variables						
Step 1: Controls		.13	.13		.03***	.03*
Gender (men/women)	-.07			-.07		
Age (in years)	-.07			.06		
General job demands	.02			.09*		
Domestic business travel days	.04			.07		
Step 2: International business travel		.03***	.04***		.01*	.04*
IBT days past 12 months	.18***			.11*		
Step 3: Leadership		.02*	.06*		.07***	.11***
LMX	.05**			.26***		

Findings

- significant interaction effect was found : for those who had low quality LMX relationship, increase in IBT days decreased their international business travel related exhaustion and the situation was opposite for those who had high quality LMX relationship



Conclusions

- Findings may indicate that if the dyadic relationship with immediate supervisor is not good in quality, employees may feel better when they have a possibility to take physical distance from the supervisor for longer periods
 - However, if they do not have that many IBT days, they feel very exhausted also during international business trips
 - On the contrary, employees who have good quality LMX relationship get more exhausted during their international business trips if they need to be apart from their supervisor for longer periods

Conclusions

- Positive effect of travel days was interesting
 - disruption routines, enrichment of job, enrichment of work to personal life
- Challenging demand or job resource?
- Importance to acknowledge role leadership and LMX





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Thank you!

Questions, comments and ideas
for further development are
welcome!