

Comparisons of Depressive Symptoms and Cognitive Appraisals in Different Age Groups under Abusive Leadership

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Abstract : Background: By following to the maturity theory about age, the manifestation of depression in different age groups under occupational stressors still remains unclear. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the depression within four main symptoms clusters: cognition, affect, physical complaints and interpersonal difficulty among the different age groups. Additionally, this study also used the stress appraisal theory, through the examination of challenge and hindrance appraisals, the effects of cognitive factors were expected to give therapeutic indication for the future treatment of depression under abusive leadership. Methods (Participants and Procedure): The data were collected in two waves from employees of local companies in Taiwan. The participants (58 males and 167 females) were native Chinese speakers, ranging in age from 20 to 59 years ($M = 36.51$). Up to 80% educational level of participants were above senior high. The married population was approximately at 43%. Measures; 1. Abusive Leadership: To measure abusive leadership, we used 15-item scale of abusive supervision which anchored on a 7-point Likert-type scale. ($\alpha = .96$) 2. Depression: We used Taiwanese Depression Scale to measure the 4 clusters (cognition, affect, physical complaints and interpersonal difficulty) of symptoms. Participants responded for depression anchored on a 7-point Likert-type scale ($\alpha = .96$). 3. Stress Appraisal Scale: To measure challenge and hindrance types of appraisal, participants responded to 33-item measure anchored on a 7-point Likert-type scale. (Challenge appraisal; $\alpha = .90$; hindrance appraisal $\alpha = .87$). Results: The results of correlation showed that there was a significant and negative correlation between abusive leadership and age ($r = -.21, p < .01$). Abusive leadership was positive correlated significantly with hindrance appraisal ($r = .52, p < .01$) and depression ($r = .20, p < .01$). The results also showed that hindrance appraisal was correlated to depression positively ($r = .36, p < .01$). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of lower/middle/order age groups on each cluster of depressive symptoms. The results showed that the effect of age groups on cognition was significant $F(2, 157) = 3.66, P < .05$. Older age group ($M = 13.43$ $SD = 6.84$) reported less cognitive symptoms of depression than the middle ($M = 16.77$ $SD = 7.49$) and lower age ($M = 16.91$ $SD = 6.97$) groups. Besides, the effect of age groups on affect was also significant $F(2, 157) = 4.09, P < .05$. Older age group ($M = 18.68$ $SD = 8.98$) reported less affective symptoms of depression than the middle ($M = 22.01$ $SD = 7.96$) and lower age ($M = 23.56$ $SD = 7.67$) groups. Moreover, the main effect of hindrance appraisal was found $F(2, 157) = 3.81, P < .05$. Older age group ($M = 9.44$ $SD = 2.89$) reported fewer score on hindrance appraisals than the middle ($M = 11.06$ $SD = 4.02$) and lower age ($M = 9.62$ $SD = 3.17$) groups. To conclude, the severity of depression symptoms varies across different age groups. Maturity seems to be the protective factor to depression, accompanying with lower hindrance appraisals.

Keywords : abusive leadership, affective commitment, depression symptoms, psychological well-being

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