Overstressed and Understudied: 
An Examination of Stress and Workplace Leaders

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines leaders’ experiences of work stress, using distinct methods, perspectives, and groups of leaders. Guided by conservation of resources and stressor-strain theories, I focus on prevalent workplace stressors, the processes through which leaders are impacted, and ways organizations can mitigate negative outcomes for leaders. Study 1 examined effects of mistreatment on leaders in a Canadian manufacturing firm, among 86 leader-direct report dyads. Results from surveys collecting quantitative data and soliciting open-ended comments indicated that leaders’ experiences of workplace incivility are related to their own subsequent reports of disengagement, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intentions, as well as follower reports of the same outcomes, all through increased leader burnout.

Taking a follower perspective to enhance the understanding of employees’ perpetration of mistreatment directed at leaders, Study 2 examined the effects of COVID-19-related grief on leader-directed deviant behaviours among young workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results from Participant Group 1 (N = 98; 1st wave) suggested young adults experiencing COVID-19-related grief engaged in more leader- and organization-directed deviant behaviours, through the mediating effect of role overload. Results from Participant Group 2 (N = 760; 2nd wave) supported and extended the findings from Participant Group 1, by demonstrating that perceived organizational support moderated the negative effects of role overload on deviant behaviours.

Finally, Study 3 examined the effects of work-family conflict and COVID-19-related grief on 334 North American leaders. Mediation analyses suggested work-family conflict and COVID-19-related grief are negatively associated with work (i.e., laissez-faire behaviours and
turnover intentions) and personal (i.e., family cohesion and well-being) outcomes, through role overload and burnout. Organizational support of work-life balance moderated these effects.

Although employee outcomes have been widely studied in the leadership literature, leader outcomes have been largely excluded. Moreover, despite the habitually stressful nature of work for leaders, little research has focused on understanding work stress for this cohort of the workforce. This dissertation addresses these gaps in the literature. Taken together, results from these three studies indicate many ways in which work stressors influence leaders, and the important role of organizations in determining any negative outcomes.

*Keywords*: leadership, stress, conservation of resources, stressor-strain, incivility, mistreatment, COVID-19, work-family conflict, role overload
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“The leader is one who, out of the clutter, brings simplicity… out of discord, harmony…and out of difficulty, opportunity” (Einstein, as cited in Leadem, 2018). In research, practice, and popular media, organizational leaders are regarded as having the ability to significantly impact their followers and their organizations through their position of power. They have the ability to build, innovate, teach, and empower. In an effort to leverage their abilities, research has focused extensively on the impact of leaders’ behaviours on those around them, namely their followers (e.g., Brown & Treviño, 2006; Kelloway, Wiegand, McKee, & Das, 2013; Tepper, 2007). Research on leadership has evolved substantially over the last few decades, resulting in the development of many leadership styles, differentiated by leaders’ characteristics, including their level of authenticity, charisma, interpersonal relationships, and effort (e.g., Barling, 2014; Gardner, Karam, Alvesson, & Einola, 2021; Lord, Epitropaki, Foti, & Hansbrough, 2020; Lovelace, Neely, Allen, & Hunter, 2019). This research has resulted in a robust understanding of how individuals may develop into more successful and effective leaders, and the effects that both effective and destructive leaders may have on their followers and their organization.

Despite these significant empirical advances, research examining leaders as a group has been limited. Although this body of literature demonstrates that leaders affect their followers and organizations, there is little research that examines how leaders are affected by their own experiences and by those around them, including their followers. Of relevance to the current dissertation, while a multitude of research has examined the impact of stress on followers, there is minimal examination of the effect of stress on leaders, despite an acknowledgement of the inherently stressful nature of the role of a leader (e.g., Howe, Menges, & Monks, 2021).
Research focuses extensively on followers’ work and personal outcomes after experiences of stress – often incorporating an analysis of the role that leadership plays – to the vast exclusion of leaders’ own outcomes. As a result, we do not have a clear understanding of how leaders are affected by their experiences and by the people who surround them, particularly from the perspective of stress. While the literature may be teeming with research on the topic of leadership, research on leaders themselves pales in comparison.

The purpose of this dissertation was to extend the literature on leadership, by examining the ways in which leaders are influenced by workplace stressors. This dissertation contains three studies, each designed to better understand leaders’ experiences of work stressors, their work and personal outcomes associated with these stressors, and the mechanisms driving these outcomes. Study 1 examined the effects of workplace incivility, a form of mistreatment commonly experienced in the workplace, on leaders and their followers across time. Study 2 utilized a follower perspective to extend our understanding of mistreatment experiences for leaders by examining the effects of young adult employees’ experiences of working during the COVID-19 pandemic on their likelihood to engage in leader- and organization-directed deviant behaviours. Finally, Study 3 examined the effects of two prominent stressors leaders face, work-family conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, on leaders’ work and personal outcomes, among leaders from various backgrounds, industries, and across North America. Taken together, the studies included in this dissertation expand our understanding of the ways in which leaders are affected by stressors (i.e., workplace incivility, follower deviance behaviours, work-family conflict, COVID-19 pandemic) and the role of organizations in determining leaders’ outcomes. The following chapter reviews the available literature on leadership, stress, and the theories guiding this research.
Chapter 2: Background on Leadership and Stress

2.1 The Study of Leadership

The study of leadership has evolved substantially from the original theory of leadership, the Full Range Leadership model, described by Bass and Avolio (1997). The Full Range Leadership Model describes a continuum of leadership types or styles, ranging from effective (i.e., transformational leadership) to ineffective leadership (i.e., laissez-faire leadership). Although this model is still cited in current literature as the basis for new developments in leadership theory (e.g., Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2016; McCleskey, 2014), leadership theory has evolved to extend beyond ineffective leadership (now commonly referred to in the literature as passive leadership; e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017; Harold & Holtz, 2015). These extensions from the Full Range Leadership Model include destructive leadership styles (e.g., abusive supervision; Schyns & Schilling, 2013), and new variations of effective leadership styles, such as charismatic leadership (Conger, Kanungo, Menon, & Mathur, 1997), leader-member exchange (LMX; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1998), and ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). From this body of literature, researchers now understand the significant benefits associated with effective leaders, and the harmful consequences of destructive leaders, for both followers and organizations (e.g., Larrabee et al., 2003; Schilling, 2009; Tepper, 2000).

Interestingly, within this vast body of literature, a true definition of what it means to be a leader is often omitted. A dictionary definition of leader would define it as an individual who leads a group (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). From qualitative research asking executives for a definition of leadership, various themes emerged, including identifying leaders as those who set the organization’s vision, those who drive organizational success, or those who focus on
employee development through empathy (Morgan, 2020). Empirical study has included
definitions that center around leader character, which focuses on a leader’s personality, ethical
reasoning, and self-identity as a leader (Hannah & Avolio, 2011). Overall, while the definition of
a leader within the literature can still be refined, for the purpose of this dissertation and
consistent with previous literature, a leader is someone in a position who can influence their
followers and their organization, either in beneficial or harmful ways, depending on their
leadership behaviours. A summary of the existing literature on leadership styles is reviewed in
the following sections.

**Effective Leadership Styles**

Within the full range leadership model, leadership behaviours characterized as positive,
have come to be considered as effective styles of leadership (Blanch, Gil, Antino, & Rodriguez-
Muñoz, 2016). These effective styles of leadership include leaders with positive moral attitudes,
self-awareness, and positive interactions with their followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Of the
existing effective styles of leadership (e.g., charismatic, authentic, transformational, ethical),
transformational leadership (TFL) has become the most widely studied construct. To date, most
researchers have focused on transformational leadership due to the belief that it is the most
effective style of leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Carless, Wearing & Mann, 2000; Barling,
2014). While some studies have theoretically compared the differences between transformational
leadership and other effective leadership styles (e.g., Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gregory Stone,
Russell, & Patterson, 2004; Hunt & Conger, 1999), given the significant overlap between
effective leadership behaviours, the available literature does not yet distinguish which forms of
leadership are the most effective. Rather the literature suggests that effective leadership
behaviours, including those associated with transformational leadership, are associated with positive outcomes for followers.

Within this line of study, a considerable amount of research has examined the follower benefits associated with having an effective leader. For example, effective leadership behaviours have been associated with improved employee performance (e.g., Cummings et al., 2010; Larrabee et al., 2003), improved health and well-being (e.g., Laschinger & Fida, 2014; Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brennen, 2008; Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010), increased organizational commitment (e.g., Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May, 2004; Duffield, Roche, O’Brien-Pallas, Catling-Paull, & King, 2009), and reduced burnout (e.g., Laschinger & Fida, 2014). Further, research has shown that social support, particularly from leaders, can reduce the negative effects associated with follower stress at work (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), as well as the negative effects of family to work conflict for followers (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Frye & Breaugh, 2004; Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). These benefits have been supported through the bodies of research on the various effective leadership styles including transformational, charismatic, ethical, and authentic, among others (e.g., Brown & Treviño, 2006; Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Kelloway et al., 2013; Tombaugh, 2005).

While the available leadership literature has seen a proliferation of effective leadership styles, some with significant overlap between defining behaviours and outcomes for followers (e.g., Anderson & Sun, 2017; Barling, 2014), overall, researchers and practitioners have inferred that leaders who engage in effective leadership behaviours tend to have positive effects on both their followers and their organizations.

**Destructive Leadership Styles**
While research consistently supports the benefits for followers exposed to effective leadership behaviours, and in particular, those exposed to transformational leaders (e.g., Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012; Thibault, Gulseren, & Kelloway, 2019), research also consistently supports the notion that followers exposed to destructive leader behaviours report worse outcomes (see reviews by Schyns & Schilling, 2013, and Tepper, 2007). Unlike the ineffective leadership described in the full range leadership model, destructive leadership behaviours extend beyond ineffective leadership behaviours to also include damaging behaviours that are disapproved of and criticized by followers and organizations (Schilling, 2009). While there are various styles of destructive leadership behaviours defined in the literature (e.g., despotic, exploitative, unethical, laissez-faire; Schilling, 2009), the leadership style that has received the most attention, and is most consistently associated with negative follower outcomes is abusive supervision, characterized by non-physical hostile behaviours displayed by leaders towards their followers (Fischer, Tian, Lee, & Hughes, 2021; Tepper, 2000). Although research suggests followers experience negative outcomes as a result of any type of destructive leadership behaviours, abusive supervision in particular has been related to negative work (e.g., reduced job satisfaction, increased counterproductive work behaviours; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Tepper, 2007), health (e.g., reduced physical and mental health, increased burnout; Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012; Tepper, 2007), and family (e.g., increased work-family conflict, increased marital conflict; Carlson et al., 2012; Restubog, Scott, & Zagenczyk, 2011) outcomes for followers. In addition, research on family to work conflict suggests followers of abusive leaders tend to experience more conflict and worse work outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance (Harris, Kacmar, & Zivnuska, 2007; Tepper, 2000). Further, research suggests followers of abusive leaders tend to engage in more deviant acts in the workplace, such as
counterproductive work behaviours (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Wang, Mao, Wu, & Liu, 2012). However, like the available research on effective leadership styles, empirical studies have not addressed the significant overlap between destructive leadership styles, nor have they directly compared different destructive leadership styles (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Barling, 2014).

Regardless, the conclusion drawn by researchers and practitioners is that destructive leadership behaviours are associated with negative outcomes for followers and organizations (e.g., Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007).

An interesting development in the destructive leadership literature is that researchers now consistently support the characterization of passive leadership styles (e.g., laissez-faire, reward omission, punishment omission; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008) as destructive, rather than what Bass and Avolio described as non-leadership, or ineffective leadership, in their Full Range Leadership model (1997). While the term non-leadership or passive leadership may insinuate null effects on followers and organizations, the literature strongly suggests that these passive leadership styles are associated with negative outcomes similar to those experienced as a result of destructive leadership styles, including abusive supervision (Barling & Frone, 2017; Hetland, Sandal, & Johnsen, 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007). Overall, this line of research suggests the absence of leadership behaviours can be just as detrimental to followers and organizations as the presence of destructive leadership behaviours (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), supporting the notion that passive leadership, including laissez-faire leadership, should be included in a discussion on destructive leadership.

In considering the literature on effective and destructive leadership behaviours, empirical research strongly supports the notion that followers with leaders who engage in effective leadership styles experience more positive outcomes, whereas followers with leaders who engage
in destructive leadership styles experience worse outcomes. However, this line of research does not take into account leaders’ own experiences in the workplace, which may be contributing to their leadership behaviours.

From the available literature, we know that leaders affect their followers and their organizations (e.g., Hill, 2001; Khan, 2010; Zenger, Folkman, & Edinger, 2009). However, we don’t fully understand how leaders are affected by their own experiences in the workplace, particularly experiences of stress. Nor do we understand how organizations can better support their leaders, to ensure they are able to positively affect their followers and their organizations. The following sections discuss the available research on leaders’ exposure to stress and stressors, as well as leaders’ work and personal outcomes associated with stress.

2.2 Leader Stress

Although research has not examined exposure to stress among workplace leaders to a great extent, both researchers and practitioners have pointed to leaders playing a significant role in their followers’ and their organization’s success, through coaching, strategizing, and tracking financial and performance goals (Hill, 2001; Watkins, 2012). However, these added responsibilities that come with a leader title tend to be associated with more pressure and stress (Campbell, Innis Bates, Marin, & Meddings, 2007). With the pressures leaders face to achieve business outcomes in their positions, high profile cases have pointed to significant negative effects for leaders, including severe fatigue, and even suicide (Rook, Hellwig, & Florent-Treacy, 2015). In a self-report study, 88% of leaders felt that the most stressful area of their life was work (Campbell et al., 2007). Further, while a large amount of research has examined the efficacy of leadership development and training programs (e.g., Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Day, 2000; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014), leaders still feel they are not
provided adequate tools and supports to effectively manage their work stress (e.g., Campbell et al., 2007). Given the large investment organizations are making into developing their leaders, with some data pointing to as much as $170 Billion per year in North America alone (Training Industry, 2021), for these development programs to be effective, it is imperative that training programs adequately address leaders’ experiences of stress and include necessary tools and supports to help leaders manage their stress.

While the personal effects of stress on leaders is an important area of study needed to extend the literature on leadership, existing research supports the notion that leaders’ responses to stress can impact those around them. For example, leaders who are experiencing stress are less likely to engage in effective leadership behaviours and more likely to engage in destructive leadership behaviours (Byrne et al., 2014; Burton, Hoobler, & Scheuer, 2012; Mawritz, Folger, & Latham, 2014). Further, stress in leaders predicted increased burnout in their followers (Diebig, Poethke, & Rowold, 2017; ten Brummelhuis, Haar, & Roche, 2013). In turn, follower burnout has been linked to negative workplace and organizational outcomes, including reduced follower productivity and drops in share prices (e.g., Florent-Treacy & Manzoni, 2012; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Ochoa, 2018; Steinglass, 2012), supporting the notion that the effects of leader stress extend beyond personal and health impacts for their followers and include negative work and organizational outcomes. In addition, research has begun to point to a possible stress contagion, whereby leader stress may impact their followers, which in turn may impact follower family members (Michel, Pichler, & Newness, 2014; O’Neill et al., 2009).

Taken together, leaders’ experiences of stress have the potential to impact themselves, their followers, organizational outcomes, and beyond. With such widespread effects, organizations would significantly benefit from an improved understanding of leaders’
experiences of stress, as well as what they can do to better support their leaders in managing stress.

2.3 Workplace Stressors

While extensive research has focused on examining leadership behaviours and the effects of these behaviours on followers and organizations (e.g., Barling, Bluen, & Fein, 1987; Barling, Kelloway, & Frone, 2004), research has not yet sufficiently focused on leaders’ experiences of stressors and the effects on leaders themselves, including work and personal outcomes. Evolutionarily, while the experience of stress is characterized as an adaptive and necessary reaction (Selye, 1975), when stress is not resolved (i.e., it becomes excessive and continues over prolonged periods of time), stress becomes maladaptive and harmful (Sapolsky, 1994). In the workplace, research suggests that experiencing excess (i.e., more than an individual’s resources can effectively manage; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) stress at work has significant impacts on an individual’s health and well-being (e.g., Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996; Chandola, Brunner, & Marmot, 2006; Kivimäki et al., 2002), their work (e.g., performance, job dissatisfaction; Blase, 1986; Gershon, Barocas, Canton, Li, & Vlahov, 2009; Stewart & Barling, 1996), and their personal (e.g., intimate partner violence, interpersonal conflict, alcohol abuse; Gershon et al., 2009) outcomes. Stress itself has been defined in many ways, however it is often used to describe negative environmental conditions resulting in strain or the physical and psychological responses to straining conditions (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). Definitions specific to workplace stress tend to focus on emotional exhaustion as an indicator of resource depletion due to negative conditions, and reflects “feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one’s work” (Maslach, Jackson, Schaudeli, & Schwab, 1996, p. 4).
Key theoretical models that have guided the research on workplace stressors include the transactional model of stress and the conservation of resources theory. The transactional model of stress provides a theoretical model to explain the relationship between experiencing stress and in turn, outcomes in one’s life (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This theory posits that when individuals appraise a stressful experience as challenging, they are more likely to have a positive affective response, which will in turn influence how they cope with this challenge. However, in the case of excess stress, which tends to exceed an individual’s resources or continue over time, individuals are more likely to appraise these stressful experiences as threats to their resources, and thus are more likely to have a negative affective response. In turn, negative affective responses to stress negatively influences an individual’s ability to cope with this threat. This is further supported by the conservation of resources theory (COR; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Schumm, 2002), which posits that individuals work to acquire and maintain a balance in their resources across all areas of their lives, where resources have been defined as “objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual” (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 72). Subsequently, when individuals lose resources (i.e., experience stress) they will perceive a threat to their balance, which ultimately impacts their experiences (Hobfoll, 2001). As multiple domains compete for limited resources, conflict in many areas of an individual’s life may arise (Lawrence, Halbesleben, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2013). Aligning with concepts from the transactional model of stress, COR theory conceptualizes stress as a form of resource loss in response to experiencing a negative condition, and leader outcomes as a form of coping in response to resource depletion.

Taken together, our understanding of the theoretical models supporting the mechanisms driving followers’ experiences of stress indicate that similar experiences should apply to leaders
as well. Existing research on stress, and specifically workplace stressors as conditions that result in the loss of resources, highlight the significant deleterious effects of exposure to stressors, as conflict arises and inhibits an individual to maintain a balance of resources across multiple domains (e.g., Barling, Kelloway, & Frone, 2004; Chandola et al., 2006; Gershon et al., 2009). In line with COR, when an individual experiences stress, resources from other domains must be used to cope with this stressor, resulting in a reduction of resources to put towards other areas, such as leadership and health behaviours. However, the wealth of existing research on leadership has largely excluded leaders’ own experiences of stressors. Despite an acknowledgement of the intrinsically stressful nature of the role of a leader (e.g., Howe et al., 2021), as well as the significant impacts leaders have on their employees and overall organizational outcomes (e.g., Selart & Johansen, 2011; Skakon et al., 2010), much less research has focused on the implications of workplace stressors for leaders. Qualitative data suggests followers and organizations recognize their leaders cannot effectively lead when under stress (Life Meets Work, 2017), yet organizations are not putting in place practices to effectively support their leaders, including providing their leaders with additional resources to cope with stress or working to reduce instances of work stressors that would negate leaders’ need to utilize their personal resources.

With such widespread potential effects for leaders, their followers, and their organizations, it is critical that we better understand the impact of stress on leaders. While leaders are indisputably exposed to many stressors, the following sections explore salient and timely stressors that many leaders may be exposed to. These stressors – namely, workplace mistreatment, work-family conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic – are ones that have the
potential to influence leaders’ work and personal outcomes, as well as the leadership behaviours they exhibit.

*Mistreatment in the Workplace*

In the workplace, employees regularly interact with their coworkers, and in turn, are likely to influence one another (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Further, interactions from others outside of the workplace (e.g., clients, customers, contractors, vendors) may significantly impact employees (e.g., Groth & Grandey, 2012; Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016). Leaders in particular interact with many different individuals, and tend to interact with their followers on a regular basis; based on these interpersonal interactions, leaders will experience various outcomes. Unfortunately, not all workplace interpersonal interactions will be positive.

Within the literature, various forms of negative interpersonal interactions among employees have been addressed, including bullying, social undermining, and aggression (e.g., Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Rayner, 1997). These forms of interpersonal interactions have been included under the overarching construct of workplace mistreatment, defined as “a specific variety of organizational deviance, involving a situation in which at least one organizational member takes counter normative negative actions … against another member” (Cortina & Magley, 2003, p. 247). Much research has examined the effects of workplace mistreatment on employees (e.g., Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis & Barling, 2010; Hershcovis et al., 2007; Malik, Schat, Shahzad, Raziq, & Faiz, 2021). A meta-analysis on the effects of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace suggested that individuals who are subjected to mistreatment in the workplace experience reduced motivation, decreased performance, and increased negative attitudes towards work (Yang, Caughlin, Gazica, Truxillo, & Spector, 2014). Further, several longitudinal analyses support the long-term negative effects of
experiencing workplace mistreatment on employee engagement (Follmer & Follmer, 2021) and health and well-being (Asfaw, Chang, & Ray, 2014).

Examinations on the effects of workplace mistreatment on leaders in cases of leader-follower transgressions are less common (see review by Epitropaki, Radulovic, Ete, Thomas & Martin, 2020). We do know that occurrences of workplace mistreatment between leaders and followers tend to result in re-evaluations of their relationships, however much of the existing research has focused on repairing these relationships (Epitropaki et al., 2020). In a similar line of research, examinations of the effects of interpersonal conflict, a form of workplace mistreatment, have demonstrated adverse outcomes associated with negative interactions between leaders and followers. In a study comparing effects of co-worker conflict and leader-follower conflict, Frone (2000) supported differential outcomes based on those involved. In this study, when conflict occurred between leaders and followers, those involved tended to experience worse organizational psychological outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and increased turnover intentions, whereas when conflict occurred between coworkers, those involved tended to experience worse personal psychological outcomes, including reduced self-esteem, reduced well-being, and increased depressive symptoms (Frone, 2000).

Another area of research has found support for a trickle-down effect of destructive leadership behaviours (e.g., abusive supervision), whereby managers engage in destructive leadership behaviours with supervisors, who in turn, engage in these behaviours with their followers (e.g., Hon & Lu, 2016; Mawritz, Mayer, Hoobler, Wayne, & Marinova, 2012; Rice, Letwin, Taylor, & Wo, 2021). This line of research provides an interesting examination of mistreatment at work directed at leaders, however much of the existing research has focused on
leader traits and behaviours that disrupt or worsen this trickle-down effect (e.g., Hon & Lu, 2016; Taylor, Griffith, Vadera, Folger, & Letwin, 2019; Rice et al., 2021), largely excluding an examination of leader outcomes.

Taken together, while existing research points to potential negative effects for leaders experiencing mistreatment, empirical studies have not sufficiently examined leaders’ experiences of mistreatment in the workplace and their associated outcomes. Although existing research has been important in expanding our understanding of workplace mistreatment, the majority of this research has focused on outcomes for followers, resulting in a gap in our understanding of leader outcomes following experiences of workplace mistreatment. While certain forms of mistreatment are less common in the workplace (i.e., aggression and violence), particularly with leaders as the victim or target (Chang & Lyons, 2012), incivility, a form of workplace mistreatment, is much more common (Cortina, Magley, Williams & Langhout, 2001). A discussion on workplace incivility follows.

**Workplace Incivility.** Within the last 10 years, research has begun to examine a specific form of workplace mistreatment, incivility (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Magley, & Nelson, 2017). Incivility has been defined as a “low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 457). Although defined as low-intensity, research on experienced incivility consistently suggests targets experience a multitude of negative outcomes, including reduced performance outcomes, such as worse overall performance (Chen et al., 2013; Guimetti et al., 2013), creativity (Porath & Erez, 2007), and engagement (Chen et al., 2013), as well as increased turnover intentions (Griffin, 2010; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010); negative attitudinal outcomes, such as reduced organizational commitment (Lim & Teo, 2009), motivation (Sakurai & Jex, 2012), and job
satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2001; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010); and negative health and well-being outcomes, such as reduced mental and physical health (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008), and increased psychological distress (Cortina et al., 2001; Ferguson, 2012). Further, data from multiple sources suggest incivility is prevalent across multiple industries, and positions, with estimates ranging from as many as half to 98 percent of all employees reporting being the targets of uncivil behaviours (Pearson & Porath, 2005; Porath & Pearson, 2013). Overall, this line of research suggests the experience of incivility has the potential to negatively influence the target’s attitudes towards work, their behaviours, and their relationships with individuals around them (Cortina, Hirschcovic, & Clancy, 2021; Ferguson, 2012; Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez, 2016).

Current literature has examined the effects of incivility on employees guided by the stressor-strain theory (e.g., Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Gilin Oore et al., 2010; Welbourne, Miranda, & Gangadharan, 2020), where the effect of workplace incivility is hypothesized to have occurred via a stress-response mechanism. In this model, targets of workplace incivility experience a negative emotional reaction (e.g., anger, sadness, emotional exhaustion), which in turn results in various negative outcomes (e.g., reduced mental health, reduced physical health, enacted incivility; Gilin Oore et al., 2010; Repetti, 1989; Welbourne et al., 2020). Accordingly, research supports this theoretical model, whereby the relationship between target experiences of workplace incivility and psychological and physical well-being was found to be mediated by negative emotional reactions (i.e., unhappiness, anger, pessimism; Bunk & Magley, 2013; Lim et al., 2008). Overall, the literature on the mechanisms of workplace incivility suggests targets tend to experience a negative emotional reaction in response to workplace incivility, which in turn leads to negative outcomes at work.
Given the number of employees in an organization, when incivility occurs, it is likely that others will observe these behaviours. There exists research examining the vicarious effects of observing negative behaviours in the workplace, including sexual harassment, interpersonal deviance, and workplace aggression. Overall, the literature suggests that the consequences of vicariously experiencing negative workplace behaviours are similar to those of individuals who were the target of the behaviour (e.g., Dupré, Dawe, & Barling, 2014; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007; Reich & Hershcovis, 2015). Vicarious experiences of sexual harassment have been associated with reduced job satisfaction, worse psychological health, and increased organizational withdrawal (Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2007; Schneider, Swan, & Fitzgerald, 1997). Vicarious experiences of interpersonal deviance and workplace aggression have been associated with increased turnover intentions and reduced organizational commitment (Dupré et al., 2014; Porath & Erez, 2007). In addition, research on observed incivility suggests bystanders may experience reduced job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions, and reduced trust in their organization (Miner & Cortina, 2016).

Observing incivility within a work group may result in bystanders engaging in additional acts of incivility (Ferguson & Barry, 2011). This has been referred to as the incivility spiral (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), whereby instances of incivility result in additional, and at times more severe instances of incivility, either by the target or by those around the target. This process is best explained using social information processing theory, whereby employees use information about the group’s values, norms, and expectations to guide their own behaviours (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). With bystanders observing incivility within their group, they receive a message that engaging in incivility behaviours may be acceptable, resulting in an incivility-tolerant environment (Glomb & Liao, 2003). As behaviours of incivility continue without interference,
they are deemed acceptable and become part of social norms within the workplace (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001). While there is substantial research examining the direct (i.e., target) and indirect (i.e., bystander) effects of incivility on followers, research has not sufficiently examined the effects of leaders’ experiences of incivility.

Work-Life Interface

In addition to the stress resulting from workplace interactions, leaders may also experience stress stemming from other domains of their lives. All individuals must balance various aspects of their lives, and leaders are no exception. This interaction between work and life outside of work has been referred to as the work-life interface (Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983), and has been studied extensively over the last several decades. Several theoretical models have been used to guide our understanding of the cross-domain effects of stress, including the transactional model of stress (Lazarus, 1991). Specifically, an extension of the transactional model of stress, appraisal theory, suggests that when self-relevant roles are threatened, individuals are likely to appraise the cause of the threat negatively (Lazarus, 1991). For example, if individuals’ home lives are negatively influenced by workplace stressors, individuals are likely to appraise their work life negatively.

In addition, conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) posits that individuals experience stress when there is a loss of, or a threat to, resources in one domain, which in turn results in experiencing negative outcomes in another domain. Therefore, when an individual experiences stress at work, resources that would normally be reserved for other areas may be required to cope, which can ultimately lead to negative outcomes in these other areas. For example, an employee experiencing job stress, such as role overload, may need to give extra time and attention to their work, removing this attention from their home life, which may lead to
negative home life outcomes, such as marital conflict. In line with this theory, similar to their followers, leaders experiencing a significant stressor in the workplace, are likely to not only feel these outcomes in the work domain, but in other domains of their lives as well.

An extension of COR, spillover theory (Hill, Ferris, & Märtinson, 2003), suggests effects of employee experiences may spillover among different domains of life, whereby an event in one domain (e.g., work) alters an individual’s affective response, which in turn spills over into another domain (e.g., home). Research suggests spillover can occur in different ways and directions, including from work to home (e.g., Leiter & Durup, 1996; Moen, Fan, & Kelly, 2013; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013) and from home to work (e.g., Barnett, 1994; Crouter, 1984; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Spillover can also be both positive or negative, where positive experiences in the workplace have been shown to relate to positive experiences out of the workplace (e.g., Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Hill et al., 2003; Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts, & Pulkkinen, 2006). However, in the case of spillover due to stressful experiences, the effects are most often negative. Two ongoing and pervasive stressors that may spillover across domains are discussed in the following sections; work-family conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Work-Family Conflict**

A widely-studied line of research in the work-life interface domain is work-family conflict, defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually non-compatible” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 76). In other words, work-family conflict tends to occur when there is a mismatch between the needs of an individual’s work and family lives (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992). This mismatch can occur in either direction, where work conflict may disrupt family life, as in the case of work stress (e.g., role overload, mistreatment) negatively affecting family life (e.g., family cohesion), or where
personal/family conflict may disrupt work life, as in the case of family stress (e.g., spousal conflict) negatively affecting work life (e.g., job performance; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Specifically, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest that stressors in a certain domain may lead to preoccupation, negative attitudes, or fatigue from dealing with these stressors, limiting the ability to be present or successful in the other domain.

This line of research has highlighted a wide-range of negative effects from cross-domain stress, including personal (e.g., life satisfaction, health and well-being, depression, burnout), work (e.g., job satisfaction, job performance, turnover intentions), and relationship (e.g., marital satisfaction, marital conflict; e.g., Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009) outcomes.

Moreover, researchers argue that work to family conflict and family to work conflict are separate constructs, representing distinct directions of conflict, each with their own unique antecedents and outcomes (e.g., Frone et al., 1992; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). For example, a longitudinal study supported family to work conflict as a predictor of elevated levels of depression, poor physical health, and the development of hypertension, whereas work to family conflict predicted increased alcohol abuse (Frone et al., 1992). Further, despite considerable overlap between the predicted outcomes of work to family and family to work conflict, the results of a meta-analysis supported the notion that there is sufficient unique variance accounted for by each construct to consider them to be distinct (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Findings from additional meta-analyses support the notion that family-domain antecedents (e.g., family stress, marital conflict) tend to better predict family to work conflict, whereas work-domain antecedents (e.g., job conflict, role ambiguity) tend to better predict work to family conflict (Ford et al., 2007; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes,
2011), further suggesting that the predictors of conflict are domain specific. Overall, the results of these longitudinal and meta-analytic studies support the distinction between work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

**Leadership and Work-Family Conflict.** Existing research has begun to examine the distinction between work to family and family to work conflict among followers, however, much less research has examined the effects of cross-domain conflict on leaders. Some researchers have made the argument that a leader’s family domain significantly influences their ability to lead in the workplace (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). For example, a study on leader family to work conflict found that leaders experiencing conflict at home are likely to experience reduced well-being at work (i.e., burnout and engagement), and subsequently, their followers are also likely to experience reduced well-being (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2014). In addition, across all employees, family-work conflict has been associated with increased exhaustion and cynicism towards work, ultimately leading to increased burnout (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005).

While research findings have begun to support the notion that leaders, like followers, are negatively impacted by the experience of work-family conflict, our understanding of the impacts of stressors on leaders’ personal, family, and organizational outcomes is limited. Moreover, further examination of the stressors leaders experience is required, particularly stressors that cross their work and family domains. The recent emergence of the global coronavirus disease in 2019 (COVID-19) introduces a naturally occurring stressor experienced by all workplace leaders, and can be studied to improve our understanding of the effects of stress on leaders. A discussion of the COVID-19 pandemic follows.

**COVID-19 Pandemic**
As of March 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic due to the emergence of the COVID-19 virus. Researchers have been examining the impacts of this experience on citizens, employees, organizations, and beyond. This pandemic experience represents an important moment in our history that deserves significant attention. Despite being an incredibly challenging situation, the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to better understand how leaders and followers react to extreme working conditions. In addition to the widespread effects of the pandemic on the general population, burgeoning empirical evidence suggests that employee mental health and well-being has been significantly impacted by living through the pandemic (Bachelet, 2020; Collie, 2021). Further, employees are reporting heavier workloads (Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar, 2020; Nelson et al., 2020) and increases in social isolation (Toscano & Zappalà, 2020), in turn leading to reduced productivity and job satisfaction (e.g., Fischer, Reade, & Schmal, 2021). Although further research findings and implications will take time, overall the existing literature points to significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for all employees.

While research is only beginning to emerge on the experiences of leaders’ and their followers’ during the COVID-19 pandemic, we can look to existing literature on leaders’ experiences during other emergency situations. Research supports the notion that followers of leaders who are engaging in effective leadership behaviours (i.e., supportive, collaborative) during a crisis, will tend to have more positive outcomes (e.g., Demiroz & Kapucu, 2012; Uhr, 2017). However, research on notable crises, including the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York City and the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak, suggests leaders felt ill-equipped to support their followers through these crises (Douglas, Douglas, Harrigan, & Douglas, 2009; North et al., 2013). In addition, research on workplace disasters, such as hazardous material spills, suggests
leaders’ decision making may be impaired due to higher levels of stress (Weisæth, Knudsen, & Tønnesen, 2002). Taken together, we know that individuals in emergency situations report higher levels of stress (e.g., Halkos & Bousinakis, 2017; Wright-Reid, 2018), and that stress impacts a leaders’ ability to lead (Byrne et al., 2014; Burton et al., 2012; Mawritz et al., 2014; Weisæth et al., 2002), however, we do not yet understand how stress is related to leaders’ own work and personal outcomes in these situations. While existing research points to the likelihood that the experience of stress in a crisis situation may have negative effects for leaders, it is necessary to further examine these relationships.

In line with leadership literature, COVID-19 research has primarily focused on how leaders’ behaviours impact their followers during this pandemic. In a study on teachers, effective leadership behaviours were associated with improved teacher outcomes (i.e., buoyancy, a proxy for engagement), whereas destructive leadership behaviours were associated with worse teacher outcomes (i.e., emotional exhaustion; Collie, 2021). Similarly, in a study on nurses, effective leadership behaviours were associated with reduced distress (Zhao, Ahmed, & Faraz, 2020). While we expect additional research on the effects of work through the COVID-19 pandemic to emerge over time, this presently available research largely excludes the experience of leaders themselves. Articles from organizational consultants and popular media have highlighted the heightened stress leaders are currently experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Gaskell, 2020; Leading Effectively Staff, 2021; Segal, 2021) and the added responsibilities placed on leaders to support their followers through this trying time (e.g., Ahern & Low, 2020; Kerrissey & Edmondson, 2020; Mukherjee & Krish, 2021), but empirical studies have not yet examined the effects of COVID-19-related stress on leaders.

2.4 Current Research
The purpose of this dissertation was to contribute to the understanding of leaders’ experiences of stress. While the existing literature has examined leadership styles and their effects on followers and organizations, as well as the effects of stressors on followers, the literature has all but excluded an analysis of the effects of stressors on leaders. We know leaders experience stress in the workplace (Campbell et al., 2007). We also know that leaders have the potential to significantly influence both their followers and organizations (e.g., Dunst, Bruther, Hamby, Howse, & Wilkie, 2018; Florent-Treacy & Manzoni, 2012; Steinglass, 2012) through their behaviours, decisions, and words, and that because of this, organizations invest substantially in the development of their leaders (Training Industry, 2021) with the hope of improving organizational outcomes. However, we still do not fully understand how leaders are impacted by the stress they experience, resulting in a gap in the leadership literature. The transactional model of stress (Lazarus, 1991) proposes that individuals exposed to stress that exceeds their available coping resources tend to experience negative consequences as a result of this stress. Further, the conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) proposes that individuals who must utilize resources from other domains to compensate for stress experienced elsewhere, in turn experience negative consequences. This dissertation provides an important contribution to this gap in the leadership literature by extending our understanding of current stress theories to include the experience of leaders and the mechanisms driving leaders’ outcomes, as well as extending our understanding of leadership and the role organizations can play in supporting their leaders.

This dissertation includes three studies, each aimed at examining various stressors leaders’ experience, their related outcomes, and the mechanisms driving and mitigating these relationships. Study 1 focused on the effects of leaders’ experience of incivility in the workplace
over time. Although considerable research has been done to improve our understanding of workplace mistreatment, our understanding of the effects of incivility on leaders is more limited. While researchers theorize that followers play an important role in influencing leader perceptions and behaviours, and in turn, their interactions with their followers (Howell & Shamir, 2005), research has not sufficiently examined the effects of incivility on leaders. Therefore, using dyadic time-separated data from an organization’s annual employee survey, Study 1 examined the effects of incivility on leader burnout and in turn, leader and follower outcomes (i.e., engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions) one year later. Open-ended comments from both leaders and followers included in the annual employee survey were also used to enhance understanding of the quantitative findings.

While Study 1 examined the experience of incivility from a leader perspective, Study 2 took a follower perspective to examine antecedents of follower deviance behaviours directed towards their leader and organization, to further our understanding of the mechanisms surrounding leaders’ experiences of mistreatment in the workplace. Through the lens of young workers’ experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, Study 2 examined the effects of emotional reactions to the pandemic on followers’ likelihood of engaging in deviance behaviours directed towards their leaders in two separate young adult employee samples, taken during the 1st wave (Participant Group 1) and the 2nd wave (Participant Group 2) of the pandemic. Further, the mediating relationship of role overload, and the role organizations can play in reducing the likelihood of young adults engaging in leader- and organization-directed deviance behaviours, were examined among Participant Group 2.

Finally, Study 3 extended our understanding of the mechanism through which leader relevant stressors, namely work-family conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, may affect
leaders, as well as important factors that may mitigate or exacerbate the effects of these stressors. Guided by COR and stressor-strain theories (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Hobfoll, 1989), and theoretical contributions from the burnout literature (Glass, 1990; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), Study 3 examined the effects of work-family conflict and emotional reactions to the pandemic on leaders’ work (i.e., laissez-faire leadership behaviours, turnover intentions) and personal (i.e., health and well-being, family cohesion) outcomes, through the double mediating mechanism of role overload and burnout. Further, Study 3 examined the moderating role organizational support, specifically organizational support of work-life balance, in reducing the negative effects of workplace stress on leaders.

In its entirety, this dissertation strives to improve our understanding of how stress affects leaders’ workplace and personal outcomes, as well as what organizations can do to support their leaders. Leaders are continuously faced with significant stressors that influence their health, their personal life, their work life, their followers, and their leadership behaviours. The results of the studies included in this dissertation add to our understanding of how stress affects leaders, as well as highlighting organizational factors that may mitigate these negative effects. The following three chapters describe each study in greater detail, including the methodology, the results, and interpretations. The final chapter of this dissertation includes a general discussion, as well as implications for theory and practice, and suggestions for future research that should be undertaken to continue this line of research. With the level of influence given to leaders in their role, and the expectations that, with this influence, leaders will support the performance of their followers, as researchers, we must ensure leaders are given the attention and support they need to “….out of the clutter, [bring] simplicity… out of discord, harmony… and out of difficulty, opportunity” (Einstein, as cited in Leadem, 2018).
Chapter 3: Study 1 – Leadership and Workplace Incivility

3.1 Background and Theoretical Support

Utilizing the theoretical foundations of the stressor-strain theory (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), which posits that the experience of a stressor leads to negative outcomes for the individual, and the transactional model of stress (Lazarus, 1991), which posits that individuals exposed to stressors that exceed their coping resources experience negative outcomes, incivility in the workplace is consistently associated with negative effects for the individuals exposed to these negative interpersonal interactions (e.g., Mao, Chang, Johnson, & Sun, 2019; Welbourne et al., 2020; Welbourne & Sariol, 2017). Although existing research on incivility supports the notion that individuals exposed to uncivil behaviours experience negative outcomes (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010), for the most part, this research does not specifically focus on leaders. Based on existing leadership research, we know that leaders, and the behaviours they exhibit, significantly influence their followers’ work, personal, and family outcomes (e.g., Carlson et al., 2012; Tepper 2007), but we don’t fully understand how behaviours of others influence leaders’ outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative that research examining the effects of incivility in the workplace be extended to include an examination of these effects on leaders. Further, we know leadership behaviours influence a wide range of follower outcomes, extending beyond work outcomes to include personal outcomes (e.g., Che, Zhou, Kessler, & Spector, 2017; Dunst et al., 2018); however, we don’t fully understand how leaders’ experiences of stressors, like incivility, may impact their followers. Taken together, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of incivility in the workplace over time on leaders’ work outcomes, and on their followers’ work outcomes.

Incivility in the Workplace
As discussed in Chapter 2, much research has examined the impacts of incivility, a form of workplace mistreatment, on followers (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). While the effects of incivility on both targets and bystanders have been documented, including decreased organizational attachment and job satisfaction, decreased job performance, and reduced health and well-being (Dupré et al., 2014; Porath & Erez, 2007; Cortina et al., 2001; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010), we do not yet fully understand the effects of being exposed to incivility in the workplace on leaders. Estimates vary, but research suggests that the proportion of individuals who experience workplace incivility is high (e.g., 71%, 90%, Cortina et al., 2001; Cortina et al., 2017), with some studies indicating that as many as 98 or 99 percent of all respondents have seen incivility occur in their workplace (Porath & Pearson, 2010; 2013). With such a high proportion of individuals reporting instances of workplace incivility, it is reasonable to expect that leaders are being exposed as well.

Although research has not yet examined the effects of workplace incivility on leaders, theoretical models guiding the relationships between incivility and various work-related and personal outcomes apply to leaders as well. The transactional model of stress suggests that when individuals are faced with stressful experiences, such as experiences of incivility in the workplace, whether directly as targets or indirectly as bystanders, individuals are more likely to appraise these stressful experiences as threats to their resources. Those who perceive this stressor as a threat are more likely to have a negative affective response, which in turn negatively influences their ability to cope with this threat (Lazarus, 1991). Researchers propose that the experience of incivility can result in unpredictable and persistent threats to resources that accumulate with time, and create a harmful working environment for employees, including leaders (Lim & Tai, 2014). Further, stressor-strain theory suggests that these threats to an
individual’s resources, experienced as stress, will in turn be associated with negative work outcomes (Bolgor & Zuckerman, 1995). Therefore, similar to their followers’ experiences of incivility, it is likely that leaders who perceive their workplace to be uncivil, will also experience negative work outcomes, such as reduced engagement and job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions.

**Work Outcomes**

In line with previous research on stress, employees exposed to workplace stressors, such as incivility, are likely to experience negative work outcomes, including decreased engagement and job satisfaction (e.g., Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Halbesleben, 2010; Khamisa, Oldenburg, Peltzer, & Ilic, 2015), and increased turnover intentions (e.g., Sharma & Singh, 2016). The following sections review these work outcomes in greater detail.

**Engagement.** While several definitions of engagement exist (e.g., Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Kahn, 1990; Leiter & Maslach, 2017; Simpson, 2009), Schaufeli and colleagues’ definition and measurement of employee engagement tends to be consistently used in organizational psychology research (2002). According to Schaufeli and colleagues, engagement in the workplace is a positive and fulfilling experience of an individual’s work, characterized by vigor (i.e., high energy), absorption (i.e., being fully engrossed in your work), and dedication (i.e., being fully committed to your work; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Employees who report feeling engaged in their work have been found to be more productive, more satisfied, and healthier (e.g., Bailey, Madden, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2017; Burton, Chen, Li, & Schultz, 2017; Harter, Schmidt, & Killham, 2003).

To better understand predictors and outcomes associated with workplace engagement, the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) proposes that job resources...
(e.g., autonomy, support) predict increased engagement, whereas job demands (e.g., stress, emotional demands) predict decreased engagement. In this model, when employees experience increased stress in the workplace, they are in turn more likely to experience reduced employee engagement. While this model has not been supported among leaders who have experienced incivility in the workplace, based on research supporting the stressful nature of workplace incivility (e.g., Beattie & Griffin, 2014; Cortina & Magley, 2009), and in line with the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), it is likely that leaders experiencing incivility would in turn experience decreased engagement in their work.

**Job Satisfaction.** There exist several definitions of job satisfaction in the literature (e.g., Hoppock, 1935; Spector, 1997; Vroom, 1964), however a commonly used definition is that of Locke, who described job satisfaction as a positive emotional state due to positive appraisals of an individual’s job (1976). While some researchers consider job satisfaction as satisfaction with specific facets of one’s work (e.g., Wanous, Reichers, Hudy, 1997), others argue that job satisfaction should simply be considered on a bi-dimensional measure from satisfied to dissatisfied overall (e.g., Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979). Although there is much variation when it comes to the definition of job satisfaction, ample research has linked job satisfaction to positive outcomes for followers, including positive attitudes towards work, positive interactions with leaders, and job performance (e.g., Ellickson & Logsdon, 2002; Saari & Judge, 2004; Singh & Jain, 2013).

While research has focused on the positive implications for individuals who are satisfied in their jobs, research has also consistently demonstrated the link between stress and job dissatisfaction (e.g., Abas, Lin, Otto, Idris, & Ramayah, 2020; Dion, 2006; Sharma & Singh, 2016). Studies including samples of employees from different countries and industries suggest
individuals exposed to stress in the workplace report lower levels of job satisfaction (e.g., Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie, & Alam, 2009; Khamisa et al., 2015). In particular, studies examining the effects of incivility consistently highlight the detrimental effects of incivility on job satisfaction among restaurant employees (Sharma & Singh, 2016), nurses (Dion, 2006), and employees from academia (Abas et al., 2020), among others. While these relationships have not yet been examined in workplace leaders specifically, guided by stressor-strain theory (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), which suggests that individuals experiencing a stressor are more likely to experience negative work attitudes, it is likely that leaders who experience incivility in the workplace will in turn experience reduced job satisfaction.

**Turnover Intentions.** Turnover intentions are defined as the extent to which employees believe they may leave their current employer (Mobley, 1977; 1982). This probability is often linked to the steps an individual has or has not yet taken to find new employment, including seeking out alternative positions, applying for new positions, and preparing to quit, but does not include the act of turnover itself (Miller, Katerberg, & Hulin, 1979).

In line with research examining predictors of job satisfaction, discussed above, predictors of turnover intentions are consistently linked to negative experiences in the workplace, including stress and incivility. For example, research examining the effects of incivility on restaurant workers (Sharma & Singh, 2017), and nurses (Dion, 2006), both found similar negative associations with turnover intentions. In addition, stress has been one of the strongest predictors of voluntary turnover (Parasuraman, 1982). These relationships are supported by the stressor-strain theory (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), which suggests that individuals experiencing a stressor, such as incivility in the workplace, are in turn more likely to experience negative work attitudes and behaviours, such as turnover intentions.
Taken together, existing research and theory on work outcomes, such as engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, have linked these constructs to experiences of stress in the workplace through the theoretical stressor-strain mechanism (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). Although much of the existing research has not directly assessed these relationships in leaders, this study aimed to demonstrate the link between experiencing a workplace stressor, incivility in the workplace, and negative work outcomes among leaders, namely reduced engagement and job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions. Literature on stress theories (e.g., Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Maslach & Jackson, 1981) suggests a depletion in emotional resources may be driving this mechanism; as such, the potential role of burnout in mediating these relationships is discussed in the following section.

**Burnout**

While research supports the notion that stress is associated with negative work outcomes (e.g., Baker & Demerouti, 2006; Dion, 2006), theoretical stress models suggest the mechanism driving this relationship lies in the depletion of resources, resulting in burnout (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Maslach & Jackson, 1981), thereby suggesting burnout mediates the relationship between work stress and negative work outcomes. To date, researchers have examined this relationship using the theoretical stressor-strain model (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), where the effect of workplace incivility is hypothesized to have occurred via a stress-response mechanism. In this model, exposure to instances of workplace incivility is associated with a negative emotional reaction, which in turn results in various negative outcomes (Repetti, 1989). Accordingly, research supports this theoretical model, whereby the relationship between target experiences of workplace incivility and psychological and physical well-being were found to be
mediated by emotional reactions to the stressor (e.g., unhappiness, anger, pessimism; Bunk & Magley, 2013; Lim et al., 2008).

Maslach has defined burnout as a, “prolonged experience to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job” (Maslach, 1998, p. 68), and tends to be characterized across three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, detachment from work, and feelings of ineffectiveness at work (Maslach, 1982). Therefore, in line with the stressor-strain (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995) and burnout theories (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008), burnout may occur as a result of stressors in the workplace, such as incivility, which in turn, may lead to negative work outcomes. Research in frontline restaurant workers supports this mediating relationship, where restaurant workers exposed to customer incivility experienced higher turnover intentions, through their experience of burnout (Han et al., 2016).

Research examining direct relationships between burnout and negative work outcomes has consistently linked burnout to job dissatisfaction (e.g., Dolan, 1987; Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Tarcan, Tarcan, & Top, 2017) and turnover intentions (e.g., Zhang & Feng, 2011; Zhang et al., 2019). Interestingly, there has been disagreement in the literature on the nature of the relationship between burnout and engagement. Some researchers have argued that burnout and engagement are antithetical to one another, where engagement and burnout represent opposite ends of the same spectrum (e.g., Demerouti & Bakker, 2008). Others argue the relationship between burnout and engagement is more complex, whereby employees who show signs of burnout are still able to engage in their work and complete their work successfully, albeit to a lesser ability than those who are not burnt out (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Regardless of the full nature of this relationship, researchers agree that the relationship between burnout and engagement is negative, whereby employees who experience burnout are less likely to be
engaged in the workplace (e.g., Kahn, 2010; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Taken together, existing research and theory support the notion that burnout predicts negative work attitudes and behaviours, and in line with existing theory, that burnout should mediate the relationship between leaders’ stressful work experiences, such as incivility, and their negative work attitudes and behaviours.

Although research to date has not linked leader burnout to follower outcomes, research on leadership behaviours consistently demonstrate that leaders’ behaviours impact their follower’s work outcomes (e.g., Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007). Burnout behaviours tend to be characterized by avoidance and detachment from responsibilities (Maslach, 1982). Examining the research on passive leadership specifically, a form of destructive leadership characterized by detachment and avoidance of leadership responsibilities (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011), followers exposed to passive leadership behaviours experience worse workplace (e.g., Lundmark, Nielson, Hasson, von Thiele Schwarz, & Tafvelin, 2020; van Prooijen & de Vries, 2016) and well-being (e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017; Che et al., 2017) outcomes. Although passive leadership and burnout are different constructs, research suggests passive leadership behaviours and burnout are significantly related (Arnold, Connelly, Walsh, & Martin Ginis, 2015; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2010) and are both characterized by disengagement, avoidance, and detachment (DeRue et al., 2011; Maslach, 1982). Therefore, it is likely that followers working for burnt out leaders may experience similar negative outcomes as followers exposed to passive leadership behaviours. Further, crossover theory (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989) suggests that the negative effects of stressors on one individual (i.e., leader) can affect others who are close to and interact with this individual, including followers. Thus, leaders experiencing incivility in the workplace are likely to experience negative
outcomes, however, their followers may also experience similar negative outcomes through this crossover process. Based on the available literature and theory, this study aimed to extend the research on leader burnout and examine the effects of leader experiences of burnout to include effects on their followers as well.

**Study Controls**

Research consistently supports gender differences in experiences of incivility (e.g., Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen, & Sliter, 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016), whereby women are more likely to report being targets of incivility. In addition, research supports differences in work outcomes, including satisfaction and engagement, based on an employee’s tenure with an organization (e.g., Bretz & Judge, 1994; Dobrow Riza, Ganzach & Liu, 2018). Therefore, both gender and tenure with the organization were controlled for in this study.

### 3.2 Hypotheses

See Figure 1 for proposed time-separated relationships in leaders. See Figure 2 for proposed time-separated dyadic relationships in leaders and their followers. Based on research and theory presented above, it was hypothesized that:

**Hypothesis 1**: Leaders’ feelings of burnout at Time 2 will mediate the relationship between leader Time 1 perceptions of incivility in their workplace and leader Time 2 (a) engagement, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) turnover intentions, after controlling for leaders’ gender and tenure with the organization.

**Hypothesis 2**: Leaders’ feelings of burnout at Time 2 will mediate the relationship between leader Time 1 perceptions of incivility in their workplace and follower Time 2 (a) engagement, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) turnover intentions, after controlling for leaders’ gender and tenure with the organization.
3.3. Study 1 Method

Participants and Procedure

Data was collected at two time points, 12 months apart, using the September 2019 (i.e., Time 1) and September 2020 (i.e., Time 2) annual employee surveys in a Canadian manufacturing firm. The company developed their annual employee survey and chose each of
the items in the survey; a third-party marketing company was responsible for participant recruitment and data collection. The third-party company sent out electronic links to the survey through the company database to all employees with a company email address. These survey links included unique codes that were used to match leader responses across both annual employee surveys, as well as Time 2 follower responses, resulting in leader responses at two time points and matched follower responses at Time 2. Employees on construction sites without company email addresses were provided a paper copy of the survey and were not able to be matched across time or in leader-follower dyads. Therefore, only employees with company email addresses (i.e., management and administrative positions) were included in this study. Following leader time-separated and leader-follower dyadic matching, all identifiable information was deleted by the third-party company resulting in an anonymous data set containing 86 responses from leaders at Time 1 and Time 2 with matched follower responses at Time 2. Given the confidential nature of the survey, employees were compensated by area, where the area with the highest participation rate received $500 to be put towards a team activity. Following data analysis, employees received communications providing summary results directly from the third-party company including national results and regional results.

**Questionnaires**

All employees (i.e., both leaders and followers) were asked to respond to the annual employee survey. All employees responded to questions about job satisfaction, burnout, civility, turnover intentions, engagement, and demographic information, however gender and tenure with the organization were collected for leaders only to ensure anonymity of the leader-follower dyads (See Appendix A for the annual employee engagement survey).
Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using a single-item, “How would you rate your overall job satisfaction right now?”, on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 = Not at all satisfied to 5 = Very satisfied. Single-item measures of job satisfaction have been frequently used in both academic and organizational settings, particularly when survey length is an area of concern. In the current study, the survey length had to remain within 15 minutes, and therefore single-item measures were selected when possible. Previous research suggests single-item measures of job satisfaction are both valid and reliable, and are highly correlated with other popular multiple-item measures (Dolbier, Webster, McCalister, Mallon, & Steinhardt, 2005; Wanous et al., 1997).

Burnout. Burnout was assessed using a single-item measure. Participants responded to the question, “Overall, to what extent have you felt burnt out at work in the last 6 months?” Participants responded on a 6-point scale, ranging from 1 = Not at all to 6 = Completely. Although burnout is commonly assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997), previous research has supported the validity of a single-item measure of burnout (Dolan et al., 2015; Hansen & Pit, 2016; Rohland, Kruse, & Rohrer, 2004).

Incivility. Incivility was assessed using the Civility Norms Questionnaire-Brief (CNQ-B; Walsh et al., 2012). The CNQ-B is a 4-item measure assessing how acceptable uncivil behaviours are in the workplace. Given the organizational nature of this survey, the CNQ-B provided a more positively worded alternative to the widely-used Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001), which measures occurrences of incivility in the workplace. Items, which include “Rude behavior is not accepted by your coworkers” and “Respectful treatment is the norm in your team”, are assessed on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. Scores were then reverse coded to reflect incivility in the workplace. Validation research including five separate samples on the CNQ-B support its use in assessing
civility, and in turn incivility, in the workplace (Walsh et al., 2012). This scale was found to be reliable ($\alpha = .89$).

**Turnover Intentions.** Turnover intentions were assessed using a single item, “*How likely is it that you would choose to leave the company for another position in the next year?*” Participants were asked to rate this question on a 5-point scale, ranging from $1 = \text{Very unlikely}$ to $5 = \text{Very likely}$. Although turnover intentions are commonly assessed using the Turnover Intentions Scale (TIS-6; Bothma & Roodt, 2013), previous research has supported the use of a single item measure assessing turnover intentions (Conklin & Desselle, 2007; Johnsrud & Heck, 1994).

**Engagement.** Employee engagement was assessed using a modified version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale Short Form (UWES-9; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). The company edited the scale to reflect the name of the organization, as well as reduced the number of items to only those that reflected vigor and dedication. In addition, the company added an item to compare their organization to industry standards. This resulted in a 7-item scale that included items such as, “*I feel more satisfied with my job when I am challenged at work*”, “*My work with Company X is challenging*” and, the reverse coded item “*As an employee, I don’t find Company X significantly different from other employers in this sector*”. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from $1 = \text{Strongly Disagree}$ to $5 = \text{Strongly Agree}$. This scale was found to be reliable in both leaders ($\alpha = .86$) and followers ($\alpha = .87$).

**Demographics.** Both followers and leaders were asked for information on the area they primarily worked in, the sector and division of the company they primarily worked in, their current role, and their leadership status. To be included in the leadership group, leaders were required to have responded yes to the leadership status question, “*Do any other employees report*
to you?” In addition, leaders’ responses were collected on their gender and the length of time they have worked for the organization.

After responding to the scales in the annual employee survey, both leader and follower participants were provided an open-ended prompt inviting them to provide any additional comments. The open-ended question was “If you have any other comments, please include them in the box below”. Comments pertaining to the focal constructs from this study were identified via content analysis.

**Statistical Analysis**

The SPSS PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2016) was used to assess mediation relationships between study variables with bootstrapping and confidence intervals. See Figure 1 for the time-separated leader-only relationships analyzed and Figure 2 for the time-separated dyadic relationships analyzed. Qualitative comments were read for additional context.

**Coding**

There were 20 open-ended comments (12 from leaders and 8 from followers) submitted discussing various workplace issues. To assign meaning to the data, these comments were coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The construct definitions for the five focal variables (incivility, burnout, engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions) made up the codebook. Initial levels of inter-rater reliability for each code (Holsti’s coefficient range = 0.893–0.964, Scott’s $\pi$ range = 0.745–0.964), were substantial (Mao, 2017; Wombacher, 2017). All coding discrepancies were discussed, resulting in complete inter-coder agreement (Campbell et al., 2013).

### 3.4 Study 1 Results

**Participants**
Three-hundred and fifty employees completed the Time 1 survey, while 425 completed the Time 2 survey. Leaders (i.e., individuals with at least one follower) were matched with one follower who completed the survey at Time 2 only using a unique code assigned by the third-party company, to create a leader-follower dyad at Time 2. Once a matched leader-follower dyad was coded, any additional followers for that leader were coded as other and were not included in a matched dyad. Only matched dyads were included in the data set from the third-party company. After matching leader responses across time, and leader-follower dyads at Time 2, the resulting data set included 86 time-separated dyads, with leader responses at Time 1 and Time 2, and follower responses at Time 2. Most of the responses were from employees in Toronto (n=44) and from Major Projects (n=39), a group of employees focused on construction projects larger than $2 Million in budget. In addition, the majority of leaders were male (n=68) and had worked for the organization for more than 4 years (n=74; see Table 1 for Study 1 descriptive statistics).
Table 1

*Study 1 descriptive statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader’s Tenure at Company</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Preliminary Analyses*

Prior to completing analyses for the mediation study hypotheses, correlational analyses between study variables were completed (see Table 2). Leaders’ perceptions of incivility at Time 1 were not correlated with leader work outcomes at Time 2 (i.e., engagement, job satisfaction, turnover intentions). However, leader incivility at Time 1 was significantly correlated with leader burnout at Time 2. Further, leader burnout at Time 2 was significantly correlated with leader
outcomes at Time 2. In addition, leader burnout at Time 2 was also correlated with follower outcomes at Time 2. Neither leader gender nor leader tenure with the company were correlated with any study variables.
Table 2

*Correlations among Study 1 variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Incivility – Time 1 (L)</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Burnout – Time 2 (L)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Turnover Intentions – Time 2 (L)</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Engagement – Time 2 (L)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Job Satisfaction – Time 2 (L)</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Turnover Intentions – Time 2 (F)</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Engagement – Time 2 (F)</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Job Satisfaction – Time 2 (F)</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Tenure with Company – Time 2 (L)</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gender (L)</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Cronbach’s alphas denoting scale reliabilities are italicized along the diagonal. **p < .001, *p < .05.  L = Leader; F = Follower; Time 1 = September 2019; Time 2 = September 2020; Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female.
Leader Time-Separated Mediation Analyses

Hypothesis 1 was tested using SPSS PROCESS Macro mediation analyses (Model 4; Hayes, 2016). Results of the mediation analyses completely supported Hypothesis 1, where leaders’ burnout at Time 2 mediated the relationships between leaders’ perceptions of incivility in their workplace at Time 1 and all leader work outcomes (i.e., (a) engagement, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) turnover intentions) at Time 2. This indicated that leaders’ who perceived higher levels of incivility in their workplace at Time 1 reported increased burnout at Time 2, and in turn lower levels of engagement and job satisfaction, and more turnover intentions at Time 2, even after controlling for leader gender and leader tenure with the organization (see Table 3 for leader time-separated mediation results).
**Table 3**

*Leader time-separated mediation analyses in Study 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incivility – Time 1 → Burnout – Time 2</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.13, .35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout – Time 2 → Engagement – Time 2</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.42, -.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of incivility</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.11, .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of incivility through burnout</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03, .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout – Time 2 → Job Satisfaction – Time 2</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.59, -.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of incivility</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.14, .03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of incivility through burnout</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>.05, .16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout – Time 2 → Turnover Intentions – Time 2</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.10, .57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of incivility</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>-.11, .15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of incivility through burnout</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>.02, .15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Controlling for leader gender and leader tenure. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. Time 1 = September 2019; Time 2 = September 2020

**Dyadic Time-Separated Mediation Analyses**

Hypothesis 2 was also tested using SPSS PROCESS Macro mediation analyses (Model 4; Hayes, 2016). Results of the mediation analyses completely supported Hypothesis 2, where leaders’ burnout at Time 2 mediated the relationships between leader perceptions of workplace incivility at Time 1 and all follower work outcomes (i.e., (a) engagement, (b) job satisfaction, and (c) turnover intentions) at Time 2. This indicates that leaders’ who perceive higher levels of incivility in their workplace at Time 1 were more likely to experience burnout at Time 2, and in
turn, had followers who were more likely experience lower engagement and job satisfaction, and higher turnover intentions at Time 2 (see Table 4 for dyadic time-separated mediation results).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incivility – Time 1 (L) → Burnout – Time 2 (L)</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.13, 0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout – Time 2 (L) → Engagement – Time 2 (F)</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.52, -0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of incivility</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.13, 0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of incivility through burnout</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03, 0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout – Time 2 (L) → Job Satisfaction – Time 2 (F)</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.52, -0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of incivility</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.35, -0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of incivility through burnout</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.12, -0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout – Time 2 (L) → Turnover Intentions – Time 2 (F)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.14, 0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of incivility</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.07, 0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of incivility through burnout</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03, 0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Controlling for leader gender and leader tenure. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. L = Leader responses; F = Follower responses. Time 1 = September 2019; Time 2 = September 2020.

Content Analysis

Twenty individuals included comments in their surveys (12 leaders and 8 followers). Of the comments provided by leaders, 8 (67%) described an uncivil experience, 4 discussed feelings
of reduced engagement (33%), 3 alluded to feeling dissatisfied with their job (25%), and 2 mentioned turnover intentions (17%). Of the comments provided by followers, 5 (63%) described incivility, 2 discussed feelings of reduced engagement (25%), and 2 alluded to feeling dissatisfied with their job (25%). Upon examination of the comments, patterns emerged that provided additional support to the relationships between workplace incivility, burnout, engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

Some leaders who chose to leave a comment felt as though they were experiencing incivility from their own leaders.

“There is no room for any of us to move to a higher position UNLESS you are part of the ‘boys club’.”

“It's not what you know it's who you know. Feel like you can be the best worker but if you're not in the clique then it doesn't matter.”

Alternatively, other leaders alluded to an overall environment of incivility experiences in the workplace.

“Morale is very low; employees are not showing basic respect.”

“Morale in general at the office is low at best, and this isn’t changing. Some are clearly treated better than others...”

Some leaders spoke to possible turnover as a result of incivility experiences in the workplace.

“It's becoming more and more of an undesirable place to work, which is a shame because it felt like a second family in the early days...”

“Better communication and respect would keep hard working people.”

Leaders and followers who included comments alluding to a civil working environment also tended to comment on the link between this positive environment and their engagement or job satisfaction.

“In my career through trades to management I’ve never felt as included or valued as I do with COMPANY; we are different!”

“I love working for this company; it has a very positive working environment.”
3.5 Study 1 Discussion

The results of Study 1 supported both hypotheses. Although leader’s perceptions of incivility at Time 1 were not directly correlated to leaders’ engagement, job satisfaction or turnover intentions at Time 2, results of the mediation analysis supported leaders’ burnout at Time 2 mediating the relationships between leader incivility perceptions at Time 1 and leader outcomes at Time 2, as well as follower outcomes at Time 2. Therefore, the results of this study suggest working in an environment with higher levels of incivility has lasting effects for both leaders and their followers, through the impact of workplace incivility on leader burnout. This is in line with existing research examining incivility across time, whereby incivility over time only impacted employee outcomes through the mediating effects of burnout (Taylor, Bedeain, Cole, & Zhang, 2017), suggesting exposure to workplace stressors, such as incivility, leads to feelings of burnout. Adaptation theory (Hatfield & Lefley, 1993) suggests individuals should eventually cope with low-level stressors, however, research that has extended our understanding of adaptation theory supports the notion that previous experiences of stressors, such as experiences of workplace incivility, continue to affect employee outcomes through more recent responses to this stressor, including burnout (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). The open-ended comments further support this notion. There was evidence of continued exposure and adverse responses to negative interactions with their leaders (e.g., “Morale in general at the office is low at best, and this isn’t changing. Some are clearly treated better than others,” and “The recent changes at the BC office has brought a lot of team morale down”). These comments reinforce the notion that both leaders and their followers are negatively impacted by the effects of leaders’ exposure to incivility, and that these effects are felt over time.
Neither gender nor tenure with the organization were related to any of the study variables. Previous research supports differences in gender and tenure with an organization on incivility experiences, engagement, and job satisfaction (e.g., Bretz & Judge, 1994; Gabriel et al., 2018; Dobrow Riza et al., 2018; Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016), which do not align with the results of this study. Incivility experiences in particular have been shown to be more prevalent, or at least reported more prevalently, in women in STEM industries, including engineering/manufacturing (Saxena, Geiselman, & Zhang, 2019). Therefore, it was expected that there would be gender differences in perceptions of incivility in this sample. However, nearly 80% of the leaders included in this sample were male, which may have made it more difficult to detect any statistically significant differences. While the proportion of male leaders included in this study is in line with population statistics of gender distributions in manufacturing and engineering (Lewis & Shan, 2020), research suggests more women are entering this industry (Beletskaya & Zotova, 2020). If women are experiencing higher levels of incivility than their male counterparts, retention of female employees is likely to become a concern. Although no statistically significant differences were found for male versus female leaders in this sample, qualitative comments from a current female leader of this organization supports the notion that females may be experiencing more negative experiences than their male counterparts (i.e., “There is no room for any of us to move to a higher position UNLESS you are part of the ‘boys club’”). Future research should continue to address gender differences in experiences of workplace incivility in STEM industries.

The results of this study contribute significantly to the literature on incivility and leadership. Previous research on incivility has largely focused on effects for followers (e.g., Dupré et al., 2014; Porath & Erez, 2007), and when leadership has been incorporated, research
has primarily assessed the role of leaders in influencing incivility outcomes for followers (e.g., Lewis & Malecha, 2011; Offerman & Malmut, 2002). This study aimed to examine the effects of leading in an environment with workplace incivility on leaders, as well as their followers, and results demonstrated that, like their followers, leaders experience negative effects when exposed to incivility in the workplace. In addition, these effects extend to their followers, further highlighting the need to better understand the widespread effects of incivility on leaders, their followers, and their organizations.

Using a time-separated, leader-follower dyad sample, this study demonstrated the effects of workplace incivility on leaders and their followers over a 1-year time span. Organizations looking to improve civility norms within the workplace should focus on reducing the occurrence of incivility in the workplace, not only for followers, but for leaders as well. With such widespread effects that continue over time, organizations should implement policies and practices aimed at encouraging civil behaviours in the workplace, such as access to safe reporting mechanisms, and civility and workplace mistreatment training for leaders. In addition, to reduce long-term effects of incivility experiences for leaders and their followers, organizations should mitigate leader burnout related to incivility by getting involved as soon as possible and providing adequate resources to leaders to encourage them to intervene in instances of incivility within their working groups.

Although this study had many strengths, future research must replicate and extend these findings. Firstly, while this study was based on data from an organizational setting from leaders at two time points and their follower, the sample was relatively small, and only one follower was included at Time 2. Importantly, only the first follower to complete their responses at Time 2 were matched with their leaders. It is possible that the followers included were unique in some
way that may have influenced the results; these followers could be those who were most willing
to complete an annual employee survey or those who most wanted their opinions captured by
their organization. In addition, this sample was collected from a male dominated industry (i.e.,
manufacturing), where close to 80% of employees in STEM and construction industries are
typically male (Lewis & Shan, 2020). Therefore, future research should continue to examine
these relationships in larger samples, using all followers reporting to a leader, and from various
industries, including those with more even gender distributions and with representation of non-
binary gender groups.

Secondly, given this data was collected using an organization’s annual survey, I could not
influence the scales used to measure study variables, resulting in many single-item measures.
Although previous research supports the use of single-item measures for job satisfaction,
burnout, and turnover intentions (e.g., Conklin & Desselle, 2007; Dolan et al., 2015; Dolbier et
al., 2005), to ensure validity, these results should be replicated with measures that have
previously been found to be valid and reliable. In addition, the scale measuring incivility focused
on civility norms in an organization (i.e., how acceptable behaviours associated with incivility
are in the workplace), rather than actual experiences of incivility, either as targets or bystanders.
The civility norms questionnaire (CNQ-B; Walsh et al., 2012) is particularly useful in
organizations looking to identify areas for intervention, such as improved reporting and training
on incivility, and has been consistently linked to later reports of uncivil behaviours. However, to
fully assess the impact of incivility in the workplace on leaders, measures of experienced
incivility, both from target and bystander perspectives, should be included in future research.
Further, while leader and follower comments added context to the quantitative results, only 20
employees (12 leaders and 8 followers) provided written comments. Future research should continue to examine these relationships with additional qualitative data.

Finally, the timeline for this study began in 2019, prior to the pandemic. However, Time 2 was collected in September of 2020, 6 months after the WHO declared the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, experiences of the pandemic were not accounted for and may have influenced ratings of study variables. Research on experiences of incivility during the pandemic suggest that the prevalence of incivility may be higher (e.g., El Ghaziri, Johnson, Purpora, Simons, & Taylor, 2021; Shin, Hur, & Hwang, 2021; Urban, Smith, Wilson, & Cipher). Although content analyses of respondent comments did not highlight any COVID-19 related incivility comments, an understanding of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on leader-directed mistreatment behaviours, including leader-directed deviance, is necessary. Study 2 examined the impacts of COVID-19-related grief on followers’ likelihood of engaging in both leader- and organization-directed deviance behaviours, to better understand this relationship.

**Chapter 4: Study 2 – Leader-Directed Follower Deviance during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**4.1 Background and Theoretical Support**

With findings from Study 1 supporting the notion that both leaders and their followers are negatively affected by leaders’ exposure to incivility in the workplace, the focus of Study 2 was to examine mechanisms that may be driving followers to engage in mistreatment directed towards their leaders, using a follower perspective. In line with research on stress and incivility, employees exposed to significant stress may be more likely to engage in deviant interpersonal behaviours (e.g., Chiu, Yeh, & Huang, 2015; Penney & Spector, 2005), including gossiping about and being rude towards one’s leader (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), behaviours that are
consistent with enacted incivility. Therefore, follower deviance behaviours represent a form of incivility that may be directly targeted towards one’s leader. However, in line with research on follower retaliation, not all forms of follower deviance are directly targeted towards one’s leader (e.g., Eschelman, Bowling, Michel, & Burns, 2014; Martinko, Gundlach, & Douglas, 2002; Thau & Mitchell, 2010). Followers may engage in deviant organizational behaviours (Eschelman et al., 2014; Spector et al., 2006), including time wasting and speaking poorly about the organization, as a means of indirectly retaliating against one’s leader. Therefore, to better understand leaders’ experiences of mistreatment, particularly in cases perpetrated by followers, mechanisms driving follower deviance behaviours, including those directed towards leaders and towards organizations, represents an important area of study.

The recent emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic represents a ubiquitous workplace stressor (e.g., Collie, 2021; Restauri & Sheridan, 2020) that may influence the ways in which employees behave at work (Der Feltz-Cornelis, Maria, Varley, Allgar, & De Beurs, 2020; Wong, Kim, Kim, & Han, 2021). Although this is a novel stressor, it shares certain qualities with other widespread stressors that have the potential to affect people at work, providing researchers an opportunity to not only learn about this specific situation, but also to generalize to other situations of workplace stress. The purpose of this study was to better understand how a pervasive stressor – a health pandemic – may be related to followers’ likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviours directed towards their leaders.

**Follower Perspective**

While research on leadership, particularly on leadership styles and behaviours, and the effects of leadership behaviours on followers, has been studied extensively, research on the role followers play in leadership has received much less attention (Agho, 2009; Uhl-Bien, Riggio,
Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). However, to extend our understanding of leader experiences, researchers have been calling for an improved understanding of how followers’ behaviours affect their leaders (e.g., Agho, 2009; Barling & Cloutier, 2017; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Research suggests followers may be responsible for up to 80% of organizational success (Kelley, 1992) and that followers have the ability to influence their leaders’ behaviours and attitudes (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). When followers treat their leaders with respect, leaders in turn are more likely to engage in effective leadership behaviours, (e.g., transformational and authentic leadership behaviours; Avolio & Reichard, 2008; Khan, Abdullah, Busari, Mubushar, & Khan, 2019). On the other hand, followers who direct negativity towards their leaders increase the likelihood of their leaders engaging in destructive leadership behaviours (e.g., abusive supervision; Barelds, Wisse, Sanders, & Laurijssen, 2018; Braun, Kark, & Wisse, 2018). While this research begins to point to the notion that followers can affect their leaders’ behaviours, both in positive and negative ways, future research must continue to take a follower perspective in leadership research. In particular, to fully understand leaders’ experiences of mistreatment in the workplace, a workplace stressor that has negative ramifications for leaders themselves and for the followers they lead, research must focus on improving the understanding of why followers’ direct mistreatment towards their leaders.

Follower deviance behaviours cover a wide range of actions in line with workplace mistreatment that tend to be directed towards their leaders and organizations, and can be studied as a means to better understand low-level behaviours that leaders’ may perceive and experience as uncivil. The following section will review follower deviance behaviours in greater detail.

*Follower Deviance Behaviours*
Follower deviant behaviours have been defined as behaviours that violate organizational norms and threaten the well-being of the organization and its employees (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Deviant behaviours are typically described as either organizational, in the case of counterproductive workplace behaviours, which include time wasting and criticism about the organization, or interpersonal, in the case of leader-directed deviance behaviours, which include rude and harmful behaviours directed towards their leaders (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Both forms of deviant behaviours have been linked with negative organizational (e.g., performance and profit loss; Murphy & Zimmerman, 1993) and follower (e.g., performance and job satisfaction; Bennett & Robinson, 2000) outcomes. Although limited research has examined the impacts of follower deviant behaviours on leaders, the results of Study 1 suggest leader exposure to rude and uncivil behaviours in the workplace has detrimental effects for leaders’ engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, and in turn, has similar negative effects for their followers.

To better understand leaders’ experiences of mistreatment in the workplace, an examination of follower deviant behaviours must be included. While leader-directed deviance directly impacts an individual’s leader, through targeted rude behaviours (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), organization-directed deviance, through counterproductive workplace behaviours, also has negative effects on leaders and is thus important to include in any examination of follower-leader deviance. Although the majority of research examining counterproductive workplace behaviours and leadership have focused on the role of destructive leadership behaviours as an antecedent in predicting retaliatory follower counterproductive workplace behaviours (e.g., Sulea, Fine, Fischmann, Sava, & Dumitru, 2013; Martinko et al., 2002; Thau & Mitchell, 2020; Wei & Si, 2013), some research has demonstrated the detrimental
effects of counterproductive workplace behaviours to overall team performance, including the team leader (Qiu & Peschek, 2012). In addition, counterproductive workplace behaviours are operationalized as those enacted by followers to slow or halt performance (Bennet & Robinson, 2000), behaviours that would reduce a leaders’ ability to achieve organizational success measures. Therefore, by examining both leader-directed and organization-directed deviance behaviours, research can gain a more complete understanding of follower mistreatment directed towards their leaders.

To date, existing research on follower deviance behaviours has examined the role of destructive leadership behaviours in predicting follower deviant behaviours. For example, followers exposed to abusive supervision (e.g., Park et al., 2019; Thau & Mitchell, 2010) or laissez-faire leadership behaviours (e.g., Lee & Jensen, 2014; Puni, Agyemang, & Asamoah, 2016) are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours including counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed follower deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). However, research from the field of incivility lends support to the notion that followers may engage in negative interpersonal behaviours as a result of negative work experiences (e.g., Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008; Jin, Kim, & DiPietro, 2020; Rosen, Koopman, Gabriel, & Johnson, 2016). For example, research on workplace stress suggests work stress predicts increased follower incivility (Bowling & Eschelman, 2010; Yao, Fan, Guo, & Li, 2014). In addition, a study examining the effects of role overload found that followers experiencing role overload are more likely to engage in incivility behaviours (Saufi & Anuar, 2018). This research follows the theoretical incivility spiral, described in Chapter 3 (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), where followers exposed to incivility in the workplace are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours, including incivility and leader-directed deviance (Jin et al., 2020), due to receiving the message
that negative interpersonal behaviours are accepted within the social expectations of the workplace (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

Although limited research has examined leader-directed deviant behaviours from a follower perspective, conservation of resources (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) and spillover (Hill et al., 2003) theories support these relationships. COR theory posits individuals experience stress when there is a loss of, or a threat to, resources in one domain (e.g., stressors), and subsequently experience negative outcomes in another domain (e.g., negative work behaviours). In addition, spillover theory suggests individuals who are experiencing stressors in one domain will tend to experience negative effects that extend into other domains (Hill et al., 2003), whereby a follower facing a stressor unrelated to work, may in turn engage in negative work behaviours to cope with these stressors. Therefore, it is likely that the experience of stressors may impact follower behaviours, including deviance behaviours (e.g., counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance). A discussion of follower behaviours in response to experiences of grief related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a stressor currently impacting the general population and employees around the world, is discussed in the following section.

**Grief Related to COVID-19**

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, work and life has changed in many ways, with workers forced to adapt to a changing work environment, whether they are frontline workers adjusting to changing safety regulations (Voorhees, Fombelle, & Bone, 2020), or remote workers tasked with being productive from home (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). Overall, and among many other changes, employees are facing uncertain job security (Gasparro et al., 2020), burnout (Holmes, Rentrope, Korsch-Williams, & King, 2021), and a loss of social connection (Killgore, Cloonan, Taylor & Dailey, 2020), which is ultimately leaving employees with an overwhelming
sense of loss (Zhai & Du, 2020). This sense of loss has been operationalized as a form of grief related to the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. While experiences of grief are often associated with bereavement, of which COVID-19-related bereavement has been found to be especially detrimental (e.g., Eisma, Boelen, & Lenferink, 2020), research has also examined grief related to loss, including loss of job, loss of friendship or partner (e.g., divorce), and loss of health (e.g., Poole et al., 2016; Sbarra & Emery, 2013; van Eersel, Taris, & Boelen, 2020). Those experiencing loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., loss of normalcy, loss of connection) are also experiencing grief (Zhai & Du, 2020). Grief in response to a traumatic event has been used to assess an individual’s subjective experience of the event and has been characterized as a relevant and salient stressor (e.g., Hall et al., 2014; Maschi, Viola, Morgan, & Koskinen, 2013). Therefore, in line with stressor-strain theory (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), grief associated with the COVID-19 pandemic represents an individual’s subjective experience of a relevant and traumatic stressor, the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, research on the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant impacts for followers, including reduced mental health (e.g., Hamouche, 2020), increased burnout (e.g., Khosravi, 2021) and reduced productivity (e.g., Bloom, Bunn, Mizen, Smietanka, & Thwaites, 2020; Farooq & Sultana, 2021), among others. Of interest, research during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the experience of working during the pandemic may contribute to followers engaging in deviant behaviours. For example, followers who do not feel that their organization responded effectively to COVID-19 are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their organizations (Phillips, Roumpi, Magrizos, & Moraes, 2021), and followers who were not happy with their work during the COVID-19 pandemic were more likely to engage in deviant behaviours (Roy & Mandal, 2020). Further, disruption associated with the
pandemic has been found to predict increased organizational and interpersonal deviant behaviours, through the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion (Liu, Zhang, & Zhao, 2020), and these deviant behaviours have been found to extend beyond the workplace to include increased intimate partner violence (e.g., Agüero, 2021; Barbara et al., 2020). Although research has not yet included an examination of followers’ leader- and organization-directed deviant behaviours in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, negative feelings related to feelings of loss associated with the pandemic have been consistently linked to increased follower deviant behaviours. Further, we know leaders are experiencing immense stress due to the pandemic (Ahern & Low, 2020; Gaskell, 2020; Kerrissey & Edmondson, 2020; Segal, 2021), possibly made worse through increased exposure to follower deviance behaviours.

**Role Overload**

Within the conservation of resources theory, Hobfoll (1989) posits that employees exposed to a stressor in one domain (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic) are likely to experience negative perceptions or attitudes in another domain (e.g., negative perceptions about their work), which ultimately may result in negative behaviours in that domain (e.g., follower deviant behaviours). Further, work behavioural outcomes (e.g., follower deviant behaviours) may be produced by excessive demands (e.g., COVID-19-related grief) through reduced personal resources (e.g., role overload).

A reduced personal resource that followers may experience in the workplace is role overload. Role overload has been defined by Kahn and colleagues as a specific type of role conflict that often results in stress at work (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Although at times confused with role conflict and role ambiguity, role overload is a separate construct from other role stressors. Role overload is experienced when an individual believes that
they cannot fulfill the work demands placed on them within their available time (Kahn et al., 1964). Role overload in followers is consistently associated with negative outcomes, including reduced health and well-being (e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Skogstad et al., 2007), reduced job performance (e.g., Jha, Balaji, Yavas, & Babakus, 2017; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018) and negative work behaviours (e.g., job satisfaction organizational citizenship behaviours; Montani & Dagenais-Desmarais, 2018; Pienaar, Sieberhagen, Mostert, 2007; Singh, Singh, Kumar, & Gupta, 2015).

Research on antecedents of role overload support the notion that role overload tends to be predicted by potent stressors (e.g., competing demands, family-work conflict; Duxbury, Higgins, & Halinski, 2015; Vatharkar & Aggarwal-Gupta, 2020). Emerging research on the COVID-19 pandemic has supported the link between negative feelings associated with the pandemic and role overload in employees (e.g., Kumar, Kumar, Aggarwal, & Yeap, 2021; Prasad & Vaidya, 2020), however further research is required to more definitively claim such an association.

In line with the conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989), whereby leaders exposed to a significant stressor in one domain are likely to experience negative outcomes in another due to incompatible demands, existing research suggests role overload predicts significant negative outcomes in the workplace, including negative follower behaviours (Montani & Dagenais-Desmarais, 2018; Pienaar et al., 2007; Singh et al., 2015). For example, a study in nurses and hospital administrative staff found that those experiencing higher levels of role overload engaged in significantly more deviant behaviours (Pooladi Kharasha & Esmaeili Shad, 2019). In addition, research on workplace mistreatment found that over time, experiences of role overload and mistreatment continue to predict one another, whereby individuals exposed to chronic role overload at work are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours in their
workplace (Matthews & Ritter, 2019). Taken together, existing theory and research supports the notion that role overload may mediate the relationship between a stressor (e.g., grief-related to COVID-19) and follower deviance behaviours.

**Moderating Factors**

The conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) posits that additional resources (e.g., perceived organizational support) may mitigate the negative effects of experiencing excessive demands across domains, whereas additional or conflicting demands (e.g., exposure to destructive leadership) may exacerbate these relationships. This is further supported by the buffer hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), which suggests that social support, a non-personal and non-stable resource, can buffer, or mitigate the negative effects of stressors. However, research on the presence of negative resources (e.g., exposure to destructive leadership) suggests certain factors can exacerbate the negative effects of stress (Mayberry, Egede, Wagner & Osborn, 2015).

Taken together, existing theory and research supports the possibility of both protective and damaging factors for followers experiencing the cross-domain effects of stressors on work outcomes. An improved understanding of the role of factors that both mitigate and exacerbate the likelihood of followers engaging in leader- and organization-directed deviance can provide organizations the opportunity to better support their leaders, who may be on the receiving end of followers’ deviant behaviours, as well as followers, who may benefit from additional support as they cope with stressors. Both perceived organizational support (i.e., protective factor) and exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours (i.e., damaging factor) as moderating factors are discussed below.

**Perceived Organizational Support.** Research consistently finds that perceived support mitigates the negative effects of exposure to stressors (e.g., role overload, work-family conflict;
Adams, King, & King, 1996; Jin, Xu, & Wang, 2014). Support can come from various sources, including family, friends, leaders, and organizations. The theoretical match hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985) suggests that when an individual feels the form of support they are receiving matches their needs, they are more likely to experience positive outcomes. To date, much of the existing research has suggested that domain specific support tends to be effective, whereby family or friend delivered support tends to improve health and well-being outcomes (Bookwala, Marshall, & Manning, 2014; Ryan, Wan, & Smith, 2014), and leader or co-worker support tends to improve work-related outcomes (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015; Sakurai & Jex, 2012). A study examining support from both a general perspective and a domain specific perspective found that effects were stronger for domain specific support (Olstad, Sexton, & Søgaard, 2001). Further, a meta-analysis examining the buffer effect found only weak validation for generalized support, citing inconsistent measurement of support as a possible issue (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). Overall, this line of research suggests domain specific support may be likely to moderate relationships between stress and work outcomes.

Perceived organizational support, a form a domain-specific work support, has been described as an employee’s belief that their organization values their contribution and their overall well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Research examining the effects of perceived organizational support have shown positive effects for followers’ job satisfaction, commitment, turnover intentions, and performance, among others (e.g., Albalawi, Naughton, Elayan, & Sleimi, 2019; Aquino & Griffeth, 1999; Decker & Barling, 1995; Ladd, 1997; Witt & Nye, 1992). In line with the buffer hypothesis (Cohen & Willis, 1985), research examining the effects of perceived organizational support on the relationship between stress and work outcomes, support the notion that perceived organizational support mitigates the negative effects of stress. For example,
perceived organizational support has been found to moderate the effects of family to work conflict on organizational commitment (Casper, Martin, Buffardi, & Erdwins, 2002). Additional research found that perceived organizational support mitigated the negative effects of incivility from coworkers (Scott, Zagenczyk, Schippers, Purvis, & Cruz, 2014) and from customers (Han et al., 2016) on follower outcomes including turnover intentions and performance. Further, research guided by the buffer hypothesis found that perceived organizational support moderated the negative effects of job stress on follower outcomes (Xu & Yang, 2021). Taken together, it is likely that perceived organizational support would moderate the negative effects of domain specific stressors, including role overload, on negative follower behaviours, by mitigating the negative effects of role overload on follower deviance behaviours.

**Laissez-Faire Leadership.** As discussed in Chapter 2, the existing literature has demonstrated the significant destructive effects of passive leadership behaviours, including laissez-faire leadership behaviours, on followers (e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017; Hetland et al., 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Much of the existing research on follower exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours has focused on its role in predicting follower outcomes. In line with this approach, research examining antecedents of role overload has focused on destructive leader behaviours as a stressor predicting role overload. For example, emerging research on laissez-faire leadership behaviours has suggested that followers of laissez-faire leaders may experience role overload (in addition to role ambiguity and role conflict) due to the avoidant behaviours associated with this passive leadership style (e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017). However, results have been inconsistent (Vullinghs, De Hoogh, Den Hartog, & Boon, 2020), suggesting the effects of laissez-faire leadership behaviours may be more complex.
Although much of the existing research has not examined laissez-faire leadership as a moderator of stress-strain relationships, several newer studies have found support for the moderating role of laissez-faire leadership behaviours specifically when related to various forms of workplace mistreatment. For example, a study on workplace bullying, a form of workplace mistreatment, found that exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours acted as a moderator in the relationship between employee experiences of bullying and job insecurity, where exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours exacerbated the negative effects of workplace bullying (Glambek, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2018). A similar study found that laissez-faire leadership behaviours exacerbated the effects of co-worker conflicts on future bullying in the workplace (Ågotnes, Einarsen, Heltand, & Skogstad, 2018). A recent study found that exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours moderated the negative effects of followers’ work stress on their likelihood of engaging in mistreatment behaviours in the workplace (Ågotnes et al., 2021).

These relationships are supported by the work environment hypothesis, which proposes that a lack of conflict management from leaders allows stress to escalate into mistreatment behaviours in the workplace (Leyman, 1996). Research supporting this theory has shown that groups with leaders who engage in passive conflict resolution (e.g., avoidance) have significantly worse outcomes for their followers, including psychological strain and exhaustion (Dijkstra, De Dreu, Evers, & van Dierendonck, 2009). Taken together, existing research and theory on the moderating effects of laissez-faire leadership behaviours suggests follower exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours may increase the likelihood of followers engaging in deviance behaviours in the workplace following exposure to workplace stressors.

Young Adult Employees
While understanding the employment experiences of all employees is important, it may be especially important to focus on what young people are learning about the world of work throughout this stressful pandemic period. As compared to their adult counterparts, young adults tend to be employed in more precarious positions (e.g., Chesters & Cuervo, 2019). Moreover, young adults in the workforce are highly impressionable and susceptible to attitudinal and belief changes, that may last into their careers (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989); these individuals may be particularly influenced by adverse workplace experiences, such as those associated with working during a stressful time. In fact, young adults appear to be particularly impacted by negative feelings during the COVID-19 pandemic, with young adults reporting significantly higher increases in mental distress compared to adults (Twenge & Joiner, 2020). Importantly, the attitudes and beliefs regarding work formed during adolescence and young adulthood are likely to continue into adulthood. Developmental researchers argue that young adults may be particularly sensitive to early experiences that may influence their behaviour, personality, and their skills, which in turn, may ultimately influence their long-term adult outcomes (Avolio & Vogelgesang, 2012; Bornstein, 1989).

Therefore, learning how young adult employees in particular are reacting to stressful workplace experiences, such as those experienced while working through the COVID-19 pandemic, is especially important given what they may be learning about how to manage long-term in the world of work, and what this may mean for the future world of work that will be comprised by many of them.

**Study Controls**

A meta-analysis on aggression in the workplace demonstrated that men tend to engage in more aggression and mistreatment behaviours in the workplace, including deviant behaviours
These same findings have been found in young adult samples, whereby young adult males are significantly more likely to engage in workplace deviance behaviours than young adult females (Huiras, Uggen, & McMorris, 2000). In addition, research suggests essential workers report significant differences in attitudes towards COVID-19 (Nelson et al., 2020), as well as health and occupational outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Gaitens, Condon, Fernandes, & McDiarmid, 2021; van Zoonen & Ter Hoeven, 2021), due to essential workers facing greater risks to their health in their working environments (Ashinyo et al., 2020). Further essential workers are reporting higher levels of stress associated with the pandemic than non-essential workers (Mrklas et al., 2020). Therefore, both gender and essential worker status were controlled for in this study.

**Study Strategy**

Two participant groups were utilized in this study. Participant Group 1 was collected from May 2020-August 2020, during the 1st wave of the pandemic and Participant Group 2 was collected from September 2020-December 2020, during the 2nd wave of the pandemic. Two cohorts were used to examine and replicate findings on the effects of a workplace stressor, grief associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, on young adult follower behaviours, at two different time points.

**4.2 Hypotheses**

See Figure 3 for proposed relationships. Based on research and theory presented above, it was hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1: Role overload will mediate the relationship between grief associated with COVID-19 and follower deviance behaviours (i.e., counterproductive workplace behaviours and*
leader-directed deviance) in young adults working during the COVID-19 pandemic, after controlling for gender and essential worker status.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between role overload and follower deviance behaviours (i.e., counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance) will be moderated by perceived organizational support (POS), where POS will mitigate the negative effects of role overload on counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance, after controlling for gender and essential worker status.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between role overload and follower deviance behaviours (i.e., counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance) will be moderated by exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours, where the effects of role overload on counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance will be strengthened in employees with a laissez-faire leader, after controlling for gender and essential worker status.
4.3 Study 2 Method

Participants and Procedure

Data was collected using an online university student participant pool at a North American university during two separate semesters to create two participant groups; Participant group 1 (N=98) was collected during Summer 2020 (i.e., May – August, during the 1st wave of the COVID-19 pandemic) and Participant Group 2 (N=760) was collected during Fall 2020 (i.e.,...
September – December, during the 2\textsuperscript{nd} wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the small sample size and limited power (Jones, Carley, & Harrison, 2003), moderation analyses were only conducted using Participant Group 2. Students who were interested in participating in online studies for course credit found studies to participate in through the online student participant survey platform. All participants were compensated with 0.25\% course credit. The survey was hosted on Qualtrics, an online survey platform.

Students who were interested in participating in online research were able to log in to the university’s online study participant platform and read about this study. Participants were asked to read and agree to an informed consent before being sent to the online questionnaire. Participants were then asked to respond to a series of questions on their reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced leadership, their workplace behaviours, and demographic information. After completing the online survey, or withdrawing from the study, participants were sent to an online debriefing form (See Appendix B for all Study 2 materials).

Participant Group 1, collected during the Summer 2020 semester and during the 1\textsuperscript{st} wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, included data from 98 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.67; 79.6\%$ female). Fifty-five percent of the Summer 2020 participants were considered essential workers (see Table 5 for descriptive statistics for Participant Group 1).
Table 5

*Study 2 descriptive statistics for Participant Group 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time working with current leader</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Less than 1 month – more than 1 year</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Worker Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant Group 2, collected during the Fall 2020 semester and during the 2nd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, included data from 760 participants (M_{age} = 19.31; 76.4% female). Fifty-nine percent of the Fall 2020 participants were considered essential workers (see Table 6 for descriptive statistics for Participant Group 2).
Table 6

*Study 2 descriptive statistics for Participant Group 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>19.31</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time working with current leader</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>Less than 1 month –</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1.42</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more than 1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Worker Status</td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaire**

**COVID-19-related Grief.** COVID-19-related Grief was measured using the Inventory of Complicated Grief (Prigerson et al., 1995), adapted to reflect an individual’s experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two items were removed from the original scale that were not adaptable to grief associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., “I hear the voice of the person who died speaking to me,” and “I see the person who died stand before me”), resulting in a 17-item measure assessed on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 = Never to 4 = Always. Items included, “I cannot accept the experience during this pandemic” and, “I can’t help feeling angry about this pandemic”. Previous studies support the validity and reliability of this scale (Prigerson et al., 1995). Although this measure has yet to be used in the measurement of COVID-19-related grief,
research supports the experience of complicated grief following the pandemic (Gesi et al., 2020). In the current study, this scale was found to be reliable (Participant Group 1 $\alpha = .94$; Participant Group 2 $\alpha = .91$).

**Role Overload.** Role Overload was measured using a 6-item scale (Thiagarajan, Chakrabarty, & Taylor, 2006; adapted from Reilly, 1982) on a 7-point scale ($1 = never, 7 = always$). Items included, “I cannot ever seem to catch up” and, “I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me”. In the current study, this scale was found to be reliable (Participant Group 1 $\alpha = .91$; Participant Group 2 $\alpha = .91$).

**Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours.** Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours (CWB) were assessed using a 6-item scale developed by Dalal, Lam, Weiss, Welch, & Hulin (2009) based on existing work by Bennett and Robinson (2000) and Sackett and DeVore (2001). Items included, “I have worked slower than necessary”, and “I spent time on tasks unrelated to work”, and were assessed on 5-point Likert scale from $1 = Strongly Disagree$ to $5 = Strongly Agree$. In the current study, this scale was found to be reliable (Participant Group 1 $\alpha = .84$; Participant Group 2 $\alpha = .78$).

**Leader-Directed Deviance.** Leader-Directed Deviance (also called Supervisor-Directed Deviance) was assessed using a 10-item scale (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; adapted from scales developed by Bennett & Robinson, 2000 and Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999) on a 5-point Likert scale from $1 = I never behave in this way$ to $5 = I always behave in this way$. Items included, “I have acted rudely towards my supervisor” and, “I have made negative remarks against my supervisor”. In the current study, this scale was found to be reliable (Participant Group 1 $\alpha = .97$; Participant Group 2 $\alpha = .92$).
**Perceived Organizational Support.** Perceived Organizational Support (POS) was assessed using a 4-item scale developed by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch (1997; adapted from Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Items (i.e., *My Organization really cares about my well-being; My Organization cares about my opinion*) were assessed on a 7-point scale from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 6 = *Strongly Agree*. In the current study, this scale was found to be reliable (Participant Group 2 α = .82).

**Laissez-Faire Leadership.** Laissez-faire leadership was assessed using a 10-item measure developed by Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008), measuring two components of laissez-faire leadership behaviours, reward omission and punishment omission. Items included, “*My manager often gives no feedback when I perform well*” and, “*When I perform poorly, my manager does nothing*”, and are assessed on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*. Hinkin and Schriesheim’s reward omission and punishment omission subscales have been found to accurately measure laissez-faire leadership (2008). In addition, previous research strongly supports combining the two subscales to form one laissez-faire leadership behaviour scale (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; 2015). In the current study, this scale was found to be reliable (Participant Group 2 α = .90).

**Demographics.** Young adult workers were asked for information on their personal demographics (i.e., age, gender, education) and work demographics (i.e., time at the organization, time spent with their leader, essential worker status).

**Statistical Analysis**

The SPSS PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2016) was used to assess mediation and moderated mediation relationships between study variables with bootstrapping and confidence intervals. Analyses were completed for two separate samples; Participant Group 1 included students who
responded during the Summer 2020 semester, and examined the mediation relationships in Hypothesis 1 only. Participant Group 2 included students who responded during the Fall 2020 semester and was used to confirm the mediation relationships in Hypothesis 1, and further, to examine the moderated mediation relationships in Hypotheses 2 and 3 (see Figure 3 for proposed relationships).

4.4 Study 2 Results

Preliminary Analyses

Prior to completing analyses for the primary study hypotheses, correlational analyses among study variables and control variables were completed for both participant groups (see Tables 8 and 9, respectively). In Participant Group 1, all study variables were correlated in expected directions, where COVID-19-related grief was positively correlated with all work outcomes (i.e., role overload, leader-directed deviance, counterproductive workplace behaviours). In addition, results of the correlational analyses in Participant Group 1 suggest male employees are more likely to engage in counter-productive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance (see Table 7 for correlations for Participant Group 1).
Table 7

*Correlations among Study 2 variables for Participant Group 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. COVID-19 Grief</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Role Overload</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CWB</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deviance</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gender</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.29**</td>
<td>-0.22*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Essential Worker Status</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Cronbach’s alphas denoting scale reliabilities are italicized along the diagonal. CWB = Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours. Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female.*

**p < .001, * p < .01

In Participant Group 2, all study variables were correlated in expected directions, where COVID-19-related grief was positively correlated with all work outcomes (i.e., role overload, leader-directed deviance, counterproductive workplace behaviours, exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours) and negatively correlated with perceived organizational support. In addition, results of the correlational analyses in Participant Group 2 suggest female employees are more likely to experience COVID-19-related grief, whereas male employees are more likely to experience role overload and to engage in leader-directed deviance. Finally, essential workers are more likely to feel supported by their organization, whereas non-essential workers are more likely to experience laissez-faire leadership behaviours (see Table 8 for correlations in Participant Group 2).
Table 8

Correlations between Study 2 variables for Participant Group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. COVID-19 Grief</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Role Overload</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CWB</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deviance</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. POS</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.44**</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gender</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Essential Worker Status</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Cronbach’s alphas denoting scale reliabilities are italicized along the diagonal. CWB = Counterproductive Workplace Behaviours. POS = Perceived Organizational Support. Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female.*

**p < .001, *p < .05
Mediation Analyses

Hypothesis 1 was tested using SPSS PROCESS Macro mediation analyses (Model 4; Hayes, 2016). Results of the mediation analyses from Participant Group 1 fully supported Hypothesis 1, where role overload mediated the relationships between COVID-19-related grief and follower deviance behaviours (i.e., both counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance; see Table 9 for mediation results in Participant Group 1).

Table 9

Mediation analyses in Study 2 for Participant Group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Grief → Role Overload</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.70, 1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → CWB</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01, .36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.05, .70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>.02, .41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Deviance</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02, .27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.22, .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional indirect effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td>.05, .28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Controlling for gender and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. CWB = Counterproductive workplace behaviours
Results of the mediation analyses from Participant Group 2 also fully supported Hypothesis 1, where role overload mediated the relationships between COVID-19-related grief and follower deviance behaviours (i.e., both counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance; see Table 10 for mediation results in Participant Group 2).

Table 10

Mediation analyses in Study 2 for Participant Group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Grief → Role Overload</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.41, .68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → CWB</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.14, .24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</strong></td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.11, .31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional indirect effect of COVID-19 grief through role overload</strong></td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07, .14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Deviance</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04, .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</strong></td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.04, .15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional indirect effect of COVID-19 grief through role overload</strong></td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02, .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Controlling for gender and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. CWB = Counterproductive workplace behaviours
**Moderation Analyses**

Hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested with Participant Group 2 using SPSS PROCESS Macro moderated mediation analyses (Model 14; Hayes, 2016). Hypothesis 2 examined the role of perceived organizational support (POS) in mitigating the negative effects of role overload on follower deviance behaviours. Hypothesis 2 was only partially supported, where the interaction between POS and role overload significantly affected leader-directed deviance, but did not significantly affect counterproductive workplace behaviours (see Table 11 for POS moderation results in Participant Group 2). A graphical representation was used to better understand the interaction between role overload and POS on leader-directed deviance (see Figure 4). Upon further examination, this significant interaction suggests that although perceived organizational support was associated with reduced leader-directed deviance overall, perceived organizational support is only effective in reducing leader-directed deviance at low levels of role overload.
Table 11

*Moderation analyses of perceived organizational support in Study 2 for Participant Group 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → CWB</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>-.07, .21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS → CWB</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.36, -.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload x POS</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.01, .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</em></td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.11, .30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Index of moderated mediation</em></td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.01, .03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Deviance</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.04, .13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS → Deviance</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.24, -.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload x POS</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.001, .04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</em></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.03, .15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Index of moderated mediation</em></td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001, .02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Controlling for gender and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. CWB = Counterproductive workplace behaviours; POS = Perceived Organizational Support.
Figure 4

*Interaction between role overload and perceived organizational support on leader-directed deviance in Study 2 for Participant Group 2*

Note: POS = Perceived Organizational Support; High POS = 1 SD above the mean of POS; Low POS = 1 SD below the mean of POS

Hypothesis 3 proposed that follower exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours will exacerbate the negative effects of role overload on follower deviance behaviours. Hypothesis 3 was not supported (see Table 12 for laissez-faire leader moderation results in Participant Group 2).
Table 12

*Moderation analyses of laissez-faire leadership in Study 2 for Participant Group 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → CWB</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.12, .36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire → CWB</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.15, .54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload x Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.08, .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.10, .29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of moderated mediation</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.05, .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Deviance</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01, .15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire → Deviance</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.06, .29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload x Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.04, .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.03, .14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of moderated mediation</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.02, .01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Controlling for gender and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. CWB = Counterproductive workplace behaviours

### 4.5 Study 2 Discussion

The results of Study 2 partially supported the proposed hypotheses. Across both participant groups, all mediation hypotheses were supported, whereby followers experiencing higher levels of grief associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were more likely to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their organization (i.e., counterproductive workplace behaviours) and towards their leader (i.e., leader-directed deviance), through the mediating effects of role overload. These results extend the follower deviance and mistreatment literatures
by illustrating a mechanism by which followers may engage in deviance behaviours directed towards their leaders. The results of these analyses also extend our current understanding of existing stress theories. Based on results from Study 1, we know that leaders are experiencing mistreatment, specifically incivility, in the workplace, and the results of Study 2 provide one explanation as to why. In line with the transactional theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), followers experiencing a stressor that they feel they do not have adequate resources to cope with, due to a primary appraisal of a significant health threat (i.e., in the case of the current study, grief-related to COVID-19) and a secondary appraisal of increased demands (i.e., role overload), are more likely to engage in negative workplace behaviours. The results of this study demonstrate that followers experiencing stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic may respond to this stress by engaging in deviance behaviours directed towards their leaders and organizations.

Understanding the mechanism driving follower deviance behaviours towards their leaders and organizations is necessary to fully comprehend the leader experience of mistreatment in the workplace. However, it is beneficial to researchers and practitioners alike to have a better understanding of factors within the workplace that may exacerbate or mitigate these relationships, so that organizations can develop policies and procedures aimed at improving work outcomes for both leaders and their followers. The moderation hypotheses examined in this study aimed to highlight two key workplace factors that could alter these relationships, perceived organizational support and exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours. Unfortunately, the moderation hypotheses tested in Participant Group 2 were only partially supported. In line with existing theory and research on support, perceived organizational support moderated the relationship between role overload and leader-directed deviance only, whereby overall higher
levels of perceived organizational support were associated with fewer leader-directed deviant behaviours in followers. However, perceived organizational support was only effective at mitigating the negative effects of role overload on leader-directed deviance behaviours in followers when role overload was low. The interaction between role overload and perceived organizational support on counterproductive workplace behaviours was not significant. However, perceived organizational support was negatively correlated with counterproductive workplace behaviours, suggesting that, similar to leader-directed deviant behaviours, followers who perceive their organization as supportive are less likely to engage in counterproductive workplace behaviours. While it is encouraging to know that perceived organizational support reduces a follower’s likelihood of engaging in leader-directed deviant behaviours, the results of this study suggest that when role overload is high, perceived organizational support is no longer sufficient. Therefore, it is necessary that organizations do more for followers to reduce the occurrence of role overload, including offering flexible working arrangements, encouraging effective work-life balance, and ensuring there is adequate staffing to meet business requirements (Alfes, Shantz, & Ritz, 2018; Yip, Rowlinson, & Siu, 2008).

Unlike perceived organizational support, exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours was not a significant moderator on the relationships between role overload and follower deviant behaviours, thus not supporting Hypothesis 3. This goes against current research and theory on follower exposure to avoidant leadership behaviours. The work environment hypothesis proposes that a lack of conflict management from leaders allows stress to escalate into negative mistreatment behaviours in the workplace (Leymann, 1996). However, additional research has found mixed results on the effects of laissez-faire leadership on deviant follower behaviours (Vullinghs et al., 2020). Thus, it is possible that the work environment hypothesis does not
account for instances of stress not related to interpersonal conflict, as in the case of role overload in response to COVID-19-related grief. In addition, this sample was comprised of young adults, who – in comparison to their adult counterparts – are just entering the workplace. It is possible that results would be different in an adult sample.

Interestingly, exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours was significantly positively correlated with role overload, counterproductive workplace behaviours and leader-directed deviance, suggesting followers who have laissez-faire leaders are more likely to experience role overload and are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours, even though it does not exacerbate the negative effects of role overload on follower deviant behaviours. While it is helpful for organizations to know that laissez-faire leaders may not necessarily make the experience of role overload worse, exposure to laissez-faire leadership behaviours is still associated with significant negative outcomes in followers. Therefore, leadership development and training programs that encourage effective leadership behaviours should remain a priority for organizations, especially in young adult workers who may be particularly affected by destructive leadership behaviours (Tews & Stafford, 2020), and who are highly susceptible to attitudinal changes based on experiences in the workplace (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989).

Overall, the results of this study significantly extend the literature on leader experiences of mistreatment and follower deviance behaviours, organizational factors to mitigate negative effects of follower stress, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on young adult workers. However, for a number of reasons, research must strive to replicate and extend these findings. Firstly, this study was completed with two samples of young adult workers only. This is an important group to examine given their unique experiences in the workplace; young adults tend to work in more precarious positions, turnover from their organizations more frequently, and
tend to experience more distress in the workplace, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chesters & Cuervo, 2019; Lazear & McCue, 2018; Wilkie, 2020). In addition, given that this group is more susceptible to attitudinal and behavioural changes based on experiences in the workplace (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989), they may be particularly vulnerable to engaging in deviant and mistreatment-related behaviours, which could continue into their adult working lives. In line with social learning theory (Bandura, 1978), individuals are likely to learn how to behave in the workplace from others modeling workplace behaviours. Therefore, when young workers are seeing their colleagues engage in deviant behaviours in the workplace, they may be more likely to engage in these behaviours themselves, and may be more likely to engage in these behaviours as a response to work stress over time. Although young workers are particularly susceptible to these attitudinal and behavioural changes, it remains important to examine whether adult workers may respond to work stress by engaging in deviant behaviours directed towards their leaders as well, to fully understand leaders’ experiences of follower deviance.

Secondly, there is a risk of common-method bias in this study. Although data was collected from young adult workers using self-report measures, steps were taken during the data collection process and data analysis process to mitigate this concern of common-method bias. For example, two separate samples were collected at different time points to replicate findings. Participant Group 1 analyzed the proposed mediation analyses. Participant Group 2 replicated findings from Participant Group 1, and extended findings to include moderation analyses examining mitigating and exacerbating variables in this process. In addition, survey questions were worded both positively and negatively and participant anonymity was assured. Correlations among all study variables were examined during data analyses and no correlations were higher than expected. However, future studies should aim to collect data using objective measures, such
as reported incidents of follower deviant behaviours, rather than relying solely on self-report scales. Moreover, future research should replicate findings using dyadic data with leaders and followers.

Finally, the variables examined in this study include just a sample of possible follower behaviours and moderating variables. To fully understand the mechanism driving followers to engage in leader-directed mistreatment behaviours, research examining additional follower mistreatment behaviours (e.g., social undermining, workplace bullying) would be beneficial, as well as alternative mediating variables, such as job-related stress (e.g., role overload). In addition, assessing alternative moderating factors including other leadership behaviours (e.g., transformational leadership as a protective factor), other forms of support (e.g., from friends), or the presence of organizational protective factors (e.g., organizational support for work-life balance), would be beneficial to organizations looking to reduce the negative effects of COVID-19 on their workers, as well as the occurrence of follower deviant behaviours.

Overall, the results of this study extended the literature in two key ways. Firstly, the results of this study extend our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic influences the behaviour of young adult workers currently learning about the world of work. While the COVID-19 pandemic represents a novel stressor, workers’ experiences during the pandemic generalize to future workplace stressors and informs research on how young adults react to stress in the workplace. Secondly, the results of this study illustrate how stressors can affect followers in such a way that they are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their leaders and their organizations, and highlights mechanisms driving these behaviours. Leader-directed deviance behaviours represent an important stressor leaders face in their roles. From the results of Study 1, we know that leaders experience incivility in the workplace. In turn, the
results of Study 2 highlight mechanisms driving followers to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their leaders, furthering our understanding of leaders experiences of mistreatment in the workplace. While exposure to mistreatment represents an important stressor that leaders are exposed to in the workplace, to further extend our understanding of the effects of stressors on leaders, an examination of the impacts of other leader stressors is required. Therefore, Study 3 examined the effects of additional prominent stressors on leaders’ work and personal outcomes, including the COVID-19 pandemic and work-family conflict.

Chapter 5: Study 3 – Leading through the COVID-19 Pandemic and Work-Family Conflict

5.1 Background and Theoretical Support

Current research supports the notion that employees are likely to experience adverse outcomes when experiencing stress (e.g., Chandola et al., 2006; Gershon et al., 2009). Further, existing stress theories support the notion that stressors negatively influence individuals when they are unable to effectively cope (i.e., stressor-strain theory; Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995) and that multiple areas of an individuals’ life can be affected (i.e., COR; Hobfoll, 1989). These relationships have consistently been supported through empirical research on employees in general (e.g., Ford et al., 2014; Rathert, Mittler, Porter, & Williams, 2018; Wang, Burns, & Zhang, 2021; Wright & Hobfoll, 2004), however, the effects of stressors on leaders have not yet been sufficiently assessed. Therefore, guided by the stressor-strain and COR theories (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Hobfoll, 1989), Study 3 examined the effects of two prominent stressors that leaders may experience (i.e., work-family conflict and leaders’ grief responses to the COVID-19 pandemic) on role overload, burnout, and in turn, on leaders’ work and personal outcomes.
Study 1 highlighted the negative effects of incivility on leaders, while the results of Study 2 suggest followers experiencing a significant stressor, COVID-19 grief, are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours, and that organizations play a role in mitigating these effects. Overall, despite less research focus, research shows that leaders, like their followers, are likely to experience various detrimental outcomes when exposed to stressors (Byrne et al., 2014; Burton et al., 2012; Diebig et al., 2017; ten Brummelhuis et al., 2014). Therefore, it is imperative that we understand the effects of a wide range of stressors that leaders may experience, and the ways in which organizations can support their leaders and reduce these negative effects. The purpose of this study was to better understand how two prominent stressors leaders may experience (i.e., work-family conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic) may affect their work and personal outcomes, the mechanism linking the experience of these stressors to these outcomes (i.e., through leaders’ experiences of role overload and burnout), as well as how organizations might mitigate these effects (i.e., organizational support of work-life balance).

**Stressors in Leaders**

We know that leaders experience significant stress within their role (Campbell et al., 2007). We also know that stressors can have significant impacts on an individual’s work and personal outcomes (e.g., Collie, 2021; Ford et al., 2007; Michel et al, 2009). As previously noted, while leader exposure to stressors have been found to negatively impact both leaders (e.g., Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) and their followers (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2014), we do not fully understand how leaders are affected by stressors, nor do organizations understand their role in supporting their leaders. Therefore, it is essential that we extend the current research on stress in leaders in an effort to better understand the widespread implications for leaders, followers, and
organizations. The experience of work-family conflict and the novel COVID-19 pandemic represent prominent stressors leaders are currently experiencing that deserve further attention.

**Work-Family Conflict in Leaders.** As discussed in Chapter 2, work-family conflict has been described as the incompatibility of work and family demands (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). While research in employees in general has begun to examine specific directions of work to family conflict or family to work conflict, where the demands of one domain specifically disrupt needs in the other domain (Ford et al., 2007; Michel et al., 2011), research on work-family conflict in leaders has been less extensive. Existing research has linked the experience of work-family conflict to negative outcomes in leaders, including engaging in destructive leadership behaviours (Michel et al., 2014; Ruderman et al., 2002), increased burnout and decreased engagement (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2014), however, apart from the study by ten Brummelhuis and colleagues (2014), these studies did not specify a direction for work-family conflict. A recent study examining leaders who were working mothers found a significant relationship between work to family conflict on burnout, not family to work conflict (Machín-Rincón, Cifre, Dominguez-Castillo, & Segovia- Pérez, 2020), supporting the notion described in the work-life interface literature that work-family conflict may be domain specific (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). In line with COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), leaders experiencing work-family conflict may in turn experience negative work and personal outcomes, as a result of an inability to balance resources across both domains. Although work-family conflict in leaders has not been sufficiently examined in empirical study, with the significant stress leaders experience in their work (Campbell et al., 2007), work-family conflict is likely to influence leader outcomes, and thus deserves further examination.
COVID-19 and Leaders. While COVID-19 has put a strain on followers (e.g., Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar, 2020; Nelson et al., 2020), the same can be said for leaders. Many leaders are leading their teams in virtual environments for the first time, leading leaner teams due to layoffs and furloughed employees, or are entering an in-person environment that is deemed unsafe (Gaskell, 2020; Leading Effectively Staff, 2021; Segal, 2021). Research suggests leaders are taking on larger roles and more responsibilities to ensure their followers’ success, safety, and satisfaction (Pollock, 2020). With the pressure of ensuring not only their own safety and well-being, but that of their followers as well, leaders are likely experiencing immense stress as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, little research to date has examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on leaders themselves. Emerging research has demonstrated the adverse experiences of employees in general during the pandemic (e.g., Collie, 2021; Son et al., 2020; Toscano & Zappalà, 2020) and has highlighted what leaders can do to protect their followers (e.g., Bartsch, Weber, Büttgen, & Huber, 2020; Greenberg & Tracy, 2020), but we have not yet considered who is protecting leaders during this challenging time. In line with stressor-strain and COR theories (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Hobfoll, 1989), it is likely that leaders, like their followers, experience negative outcomes as a result of significant stressors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Gold, Goldberg, McNary, Dixon, & Lehman, 2002; Hamouche, 2020; Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, with the emergence of this novel stressor, it is important to examine how leaders are affected to gain a better understanding of how this type of stressor influences workplace leaders.

Role Overload and Burnout in Leaders

From the leader’s perspective, research has examined role overload as an antecedent to certain leadership behaviours, including abusive supervision (Eissa & Lester, 2017) and fewer
LEADING THROUGH STRESS

positive interactions with followers (Ding & Yu, 2021). However, this line of research remains limited. Although research on leaders’ own experiences of role overload is lacking, we know from research focusing on employees in general that role overload is consistently associated with negative work and personal outcomes (e.g., reduced health and well-being, worse performance, increased turnover; e.g., Barling & Frone, 2017; Jha et al., 2017; Mittal & Bhakar, 2018; Pienaar et al., 2007; Skogstad et al., 2007). Although role overload tends to be predicted by a wide range of stressors (e.g., excessive job demands, negative workplace experiences, work-family conflict; Duxbury, Higgins, & Halinski, 2015; Vatharkar & Aggarwal-Gupta, 2020), this has not been confirmed in research focusing specifically on leaders. Drawing from COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Schumm, 2002), leaders are likely to experience role overload in response to significant time-based stressors, including the current COVID-19 pandemic that has significantly altered the way leaders can work and manage their time. Further, COR theory suggests that work stress (e.g., role overload, burnout) may be produced by demands from other domains (e.g., grief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and work-family conflict; Hobfoll, 1989). Empirical study is required to support these theoretical mechanisms.

Similar to the literature on role overload, leadership variables have generally been included as predictors of follower burnout, whereby followers exposed to effective leadership behaviours tend to experience less burnout (e.g., Hildenbrand, Sacramento, & Binnewies, 2018; Tafvelin, Nielsen, von Thiele Schwarz, & Stenling, 2019) and followers exposed to destructive leadership behaviours tend to experience increased burnout (e.g., Leary & Miller, 2021; Powell, 2020). Research examining burnout in leaders themselves has been limited. A study focusing on orthopedic leaders found that experiencing excessive job demands predicted increased burnout in leaders (Saleh, Quick, Sime, Novicoff, & Einhorn, 2009). Further, another study found that
leaders’ extrinsically motivated aspirations (i.e., salary or power) were associated with increased burnout (Roche & Haar, 2013). Given the limited focus of burnout in leaders, it is imperative that this body of research is extended to include the implications of burnout in leaders.

As discussed in Chapter 3, burnout has been described as a psychological reaction involving cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and reduced efficacy (Maslach, 1982). Research consistently supports the relationships between stressors and burnout, and burnout and negative work and personal well-being outcomes (e.g., Burke et al., 1996; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Pan, 2017; Tarcan et al., 2017; Wright & Bonnett, 1997). These relationships were also supported in Study 1, whereby leaders’ experiences of incivility were related to their own negative outcomes and that of their followers, through the mediating role of burnout. However, original formations of the concept of burnout suggest a direct relationship between work demands and burnout, of which role overload has been the most widely studied (Glass, 1990; Maslach & Jackson, 1984). Therefore, to fully understand the mechanism driving leaders’ experiences of stressors, research and theory would suggest that experiences of stress, such as the negative emotional reactions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic or the experience of work-family conflict, are likely linked to increased burnout through increased experiences of role overload, which ultimately result in negative outcomes in leaders.

Results from Studies 1 and 2 have lent support to the notion that experiences of stress in leaders is associated with increased burnout (i.e., Study 1), and experiences of role overload in followers is associated with increased negative work behaviours (i.e., Study 2). However, existing theory on the relationship between role overload and burnout (Glass, 1990; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), as well as the mechanism linking the experience of stressors and negative work and personal outcomes (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Hobfoll, 1989), would suggest that these
relationships are driven by a double-mediation mechanism, through role overload and in turn through burnout. Therefore, to fully understand the mechanism driving these stressor-strain relationships in leaders, it is imperative that the mediating relationships of both role overload and burnout be considered.

**Outcomes of Burnout**

Burnout in employees has been linked to extensive workplace (e.g., job satisfaction, performance, commitment, turnover intentions; Kim, Ra, Park, & Kwon, 2017; Santoso, Sitompul, & Budiatmanto, 2018; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010), and personal (e.g., mental health, physical health; Abraham, Zheng, & Poghosyan, 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Khamisa, Peltzer, & Oldenburg, 2013) outcomes. However, to date, burnout in leaders has not been a substantial area of focus. The results of Study 1 suggest leader burnout is associated with reduced engagement and job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. However, further research is required to examine the extensive outcomes associated with burnout in leaders, including engaging in destructive leadership behaviours and detrimental personal outcomes.

**Laissez-Faire Leadership.** In line with research on leadership styles and behaviours, destructive leadership behaviours are more common in individuals who are experiencing stress (Ng, Zhang, Chen, 2021; Schilling, 2009). However, limited research has examined antecedents specific to laissez-faire leadership behaviours. Existing research has largely focused on individual characteristics, such as personality traits, whereby leaders who are lower in extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability are more likely to engage in passive leadership behaviours (DeRue et al., 2011). However, research and theory suggest contextual factors may be important in predicting laissez-faire behaviours as well. For example, the transactional model of stress suggests that those who believe their ability to cope with a stressor
is insufficient are more likely to exhibit avoidance behaviours (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In addition, research supports the notion that contextual workplace factors, including job stress and negative interactions with others, may influence leaders’ behaviours (Schilling, 2009). Therefore, leaders experiencing workplace stressors, such as role overload and, in turn, burnout may be more likely to engage in avoidant leadership behaviours, including laissez-faire leadership behaviours.

While significant research has linked the experience of laissez-faire leadership behaviours to burnout in followers (e.g., Kelly & Hearld, 2020; Leary & Miller, 2021; Usman et al., 2020), much less research has examined the effect of burnout in leaders on their own behaviours. A meta-analysis on leaders’ behaviours and their own well-being demonstrated a negative association between leaders’ engaging in laissez-faire leadership behaviours and their health and well-being (Kaluza, Boer, Buengeler, & van Dick, 2020), however leaders’ burnout was not included. Among followers, the link between burnout and engaging in avoidant work behaviours has been demonstrated. For example, followers experiencing burnout are more likely to engage in counterproductive workplace behaviours (e.g., Lubbadeh, 2021; Makhdoom, Atta, & Malik, 2019; Ugwu, Enwereuzor, Fimber, & Ugwu, 2017) and presenteeism (e.g., Ferreira, da Costa Ferreira, Cooper & Oliveira, 2019; Pei, Lin, Li, Zhu, & Xi, 2020), two forms of work avoidance behaviours, but this link has not yet been determined among leaders. Although research has not yet directly examined the effect of burnout on leaders laissez-faire behaviours, existing research and theory lend support to this hypothesis.

**Turnover Intentions.** As discussed in Chapter 3, experiences of burnout have been consistently linked to turnover intentions in followers (e.g., Zhang & Feng, 2011; Zhang et al., 2019), and Study 1 provided initial support for this relationship. However, much less research
has examined this relationship in leaders. A handful of studies have focused on specific leadership groups, including a study on coaches (Lee & Chelladurai, 2018) and one on school principals (DeMatthews, Carrola, Reyes, & Knight, 2021) that both supported the significant positive relationship between burnout and turnover intentions. However, a full examination of the impact of stressors on leaders’ turnover intentions, through the mediating effects of role overload and burnout have not been examined, nor have direct relationships between burnout and turnover intentions been examined in a general leader population.

Although these relationships have not been supported through empirical study, apart from the results in Study 1, the stressor-strain theory provides support to the notion that leaders experiencing burnout, as a result of a prominent stressor, are more likely to experience negative attitudes and behaviours, including turnover intentions (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). Further, guided by the stressor-strain theory, research supports the notion that followers experiencing job-related stress report higher turnover intentions, through the mediating effect of burnout (e.g., Califf & Brooks, 2020; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). Although there are differences between leaders and followers (Agashae & Bratton, 2001), given that both groups are impacted by prominent stressors and work stress, it is likely that leaders, like their followers, will report higher levels of turnover intentions as a result of experiencing significant stressors, through the mediating effects of job-related stress (i.e., role overload) and burnout.

**Health and Well-Being.** In addition to being linked to work outcomes, burnout has been consistently associated with negative health and well-being outcomes (e.g., mental health, physical health, depression and anxiety symptoms; e.g., Ahola, 2007; Kaviani & Khaghanizade, 2007; Milfont, Denny, Ameratunga, Robinson, & Merry, 2008). However, research has not examined this relationship in leaders, even with many arguing that a healthy organization must
include healthy leaders, and researchers’ calls to action to focus on leader health (Barling & Cloutier, 2017; Quick, Macik-Frey, & Cooper, 2007).

The theoretical Job-Demands Resources Model of Burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) suggests that high job demands, (e.g., emotional exhaustion facet of burnout) and low job resources (e.g., the disengagement facet of burnout) predict reduced health and well-being in employees (Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001). In addition, the transactional model of stress applied to burnout (Cox, Griffiths & Rial-Gonzalez, 2000), suggests job stressors, operationalized as a disparity between job demands and resources (e.g., role overload), leads to a feeling of strain, such as feelings of emotional exhaustion, and in turn, negative coping mechanisms, such as changes in behaviours that support health and well-being (e.g., sleep, nutrition, exercise). Taken together, existing theory supports the notion that burnout in leaders may be negatively associated with health and well-being.

**Family Cohesion.** Research and theory on the work-family interface, described in Chapter 2, suggests experiences from one domain (e.g., work) can influence other domains (e.g., home; Kopelman et al., 1983). In line with spillover theory (Bolger et al., 1989), which suggests that individual’s experiences may result in effects in other domains, stressful events experienced at work can impact an individuals’ home life. Research on spillover theory consistently supports these inter-domain effects, where stressors from the workplace, including role overload and other role stressors negatively affect home-level outcomes, such as family cohesion (e.g., Frone et al., 1992; Grzywacz & Marks, 20001).

Family cohesion has been defined as the strength of an emotional bond family members feel for one another (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983), and has been linked with improved long-term outcomes for family members (Leidy, Guerra, & Toro, 2010). Unfortunately, when
families experience stressors, family cohesion is likely to decrease. For example, in families with children with developmental disabilities, or when parental stress or marital dissatisfaction are high, family cohesion has been shown to decrease (Mitchell, Szczerepa, & Hauser-Cram, 2016). Research examining workplace stressors have found significant negative effects of work experiences including hours worked, flexibility, and job satisfaction, on family cohesion (Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2006).

Research examining the link between burnout and family cohesion has established a strong connection across multiple domains and samples. For example, students experiencing academic burnout report significantly lower family cohesion (Amani et al., 2018). In a sample of employees from various backgrounds, burnout was significantly negatively correlated with various family coping styles, including cohesion (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2008). Finally, a study with a sample of policewomen supported the strong negative relationship between role stressors, such as role overload, and family cohesion, through the mediating effect of burnout (Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2005), supporting the theoretical relationships described in Cox and colleagues' theoretical transactional model of stress applied to burnout (2000). Taken together, leaders’ experiences of stress in the workplace are likely to spillover to their home lives and influence family-level outcomes, including family cohesion.

**Organizational Support of Work-Life Balance**

In line with research and theory described in Chapter 4, organizational support has been found to buffer the negative effects of stressors on follower outcomes (e.g., Albalawi et al., 2019; Aquino & Griffeth, 1999; Cohen & Willis, 1985; Decker & Barling, 1995). While perceived organizational support was found to partially moderate the relationship between role overload and follower deviance behaviours in Study 2, interesting research has begun to emerge on the
role of organizations’ support of, and the policies and procedures they put in place to support their employees’ work-life balance.

Organizational support of work-life balance has been defined as the measures put in place by an organization and the behaviours encouraged by organizations to support employee work-life balance (Nitzche, Jung, Kowalski, & Pfaff, 2014). The purpose of this construct is to understand employee perceptions of their organization’s support for work-life balance. Research examining organizational support of work-life balance has shown that it negatively relates to employee burnout (Nitzsche, Pfaff, Jung, & Driller, 2013). Interestingly, research on organizational policies and role overload have found that putting policies in place may not be sufficient (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1990), as supported in Study 2, where perceived organizational support could not mitigate against high levels of role overload. An organization that both has policies in place and ensures their employees’ behaviours align with these policies appears to have a larger impact on mitigating negative effects of work stressors, including role overload (Duxbury et al., 2015). In addition, an organization that supports work-life balance has been found to reduce the effects of burnout caused by work-life imbalance (Lingard & Francis, 2005). In line with the buffer hypothesis (Cohen & Willis, 1985), which posits that received support can mitigate the effects of negative experiences, and the limited research on organizational support of work-life balance, it is likely that an organization that leaders perceive to be supportive of work-life balance will mitigate the negative impacts of role overload on burnout in leaders.

Study Controls

Research has demonstrated significant impacts of COVID-19-related grief for older adults, whereby older adults are more susceptible to long-term impacts of COVID-19-related grief.
(Goveas & Shear, 2020). Further, research suggests work-family conflict varies by age, where middle aged employees tended to report the most work-family conflict, compared to younger workers (i.e., less than 30) and older workers (i.e., older than 50; Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). Research has also supported the notion that essential worker status may impact workplace attitudes and work and personal outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby essential workers report higher levels of stress (Gaitens et al., 2021; van Zoonen & Ter Hoeven, 2021), and higher levels of employee burnout and cynicism towards work (Li et al., 2021). Therefore, age and essential worker status were controlled for in this study.

5.2 Hypotheses

See Figure 5 for proposed relationships. Based on research and theory presented above, it was hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 1: Grief associated with COVID-19 will be associated with role overload, which in turn will be associated with burnout, and finally leaders’ work (i.e., laissez-faire leadership behaviours and turnover intentions) and personal (i.e., family cohesion and well-being) outcomes, after controlling for age and essential worker status.*

*Hypothesis 2: Work-family conflict will be associated with role overload, which in turn will be associated with burnout, and finally leaders’ work (i.e., laissez-faire leadership behaviours and turnover intentions) and personal (i.e., family cohesion and well-being) outcomes, after controlling for age and essential worker status.*

*Hypothesis 3: Organizational support of work-life balance will moderate the relationship between role overload and burnout, where leaders who perceive their organization as more supportive of work-life balance will experience reduced burnout due to role overload, after controlling for age and essential worker status.*
5.3 Study 3 Method

*Participants and Procedure*

Data was collected using the online survey and participant recruitment tool, Qualtrics. Qualtrics is an online service that assists researchers in collecting their desired number of pre-screened participants. Data was collected from 334 leaders, (i.e., employees with at least one follower; M_{age} = 39.99; 61.7% male) currently working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fifty-five percent of participants were essential workers and 70% had children (M_{children} = 1.82; see Table 13 for descriptive statistics for Study 3).
Table 13

Study 3 descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>206</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders who were interested in participating in this online research were able to log in to the Qualtrics platform and read about this study. Participants were asked to read and agree to an informed consent before choosing to be sent to the online questionnaire. Participants who elected to participate in the study were then asked to respond to a series of questions on their reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, their health and well-being, their experiences at home, their behaviours and experiences at work, and demographic information. After completing the online survey, or withdrawing from the study, participants were sent to an online debriefing form (See Appendix C for all Study 3 materials). Participants were compensated using a Qualtrics specific points system, where participants received points for participating in online surveys, which can
be cashed in for gift cards or various products. Participants received the equivalent of $4USD in Qualtrics points.

**Questionnaire**

**COVID-19-related Grief.** COVID-19-related Grief was measured using the Inventory of Complicated Grief (Prigerson et al., 1995), adapted to reflect an individual’s experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two items were removed from the original scale that were not adaptable to grief associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., “I hear the voice of the person who died speaking to me,” and “I see the person who died stand before me”), resulting in a 17-item measure assessed on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 = *Never* to 4 = *Always*. Items included, “I cannot accept the experience during this pandemic” and, “I can’t help feeling angry about this pandemic”. This scale was found to be reliable in the current study (α = .95).

**Work-Family Conflict.** Work-family conflict was measured using the Work-Family Conflict Scale (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996), a 5-item measure assessed on a 7-point scale from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*. Items include, “The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life”, and “The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities”. This scale was found to be reliable (α = .94).

**Role Overload.** Role Overload was measured using a 6-item measure assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *always*; Thiagarajan et al., 2006; adapted from Reilly, 1982). This scale was found to be reliable (α = .92).

**Laissez-Faire Leadership.** Laissez-faire leadership behaviours were assessed using the 10-item measure developed by Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008). Items were assessed on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*. This scale was found to be reliable (α = .95).
Turnover Intentions. Turnover intentions were assessed using a 4-item measure (Jensen, Patel, & Messersmith, 2013; derived from Tett & Meyer, 1993). Items included, “I often think of quitting this job,” and “It is likely that I will look for another job during the next year”, and were assessed on a 7-point scale from $I = \text{Strongly Disagree}$ to $7 = \text{Strongly Agree}$. This scale was found to be reliable ($\alpha = .93$).

Family Cohesion. Family cohesion was measured using the 9-item Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974). Items include, “My family members really help and support one another”, and “There is really a feeling of togetherness in our family”. Participants were asked to rate how accurate each statement was in describing their family on a scale from $I = \text{Very unlike my family}$ to $4 = \text{Very like my family}$. Previous research supports the validity and reliability of this measure (e.g., Moos, 1974; Moos & Moos, 1981), however data collected from this study did not achieve a high level of reliability for this measure ($\alpha = .70$).

Personal Health and Well-being. To assess personal health and well-being, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ; Ware, Krosinski, & Keller, 1996) was used. The GHQ was originally developed as a screening tool for sub-clinical levels of depression, however researchers have since adapted this survey to measure overall health and well-being (Goldberg et al., 1997). The final scale includes 11-items and is assessed on a 7-point scale from $I = \text{Not at all}$ to $7 = \text{All the time}$. Participants are asked to rate the frequency they have felt certain ways since the beginning of COVID-19, including “Since COVID-19 have you felt capable of making decisions about things?”, and “Since COVID-19, have you been able to enjoy your day-to-day activities?” This scale was found to be reliable ($\alpha = .79$).

Organizational Support of Work-Life Balance. The extent to which an organization supports work-family balance was measured using the Work-Life Balance Culture Scale
(WLBC; Nitzsche et al., 2014). The WLBC is a 5-item measure assessed on an 11-point scale from 0 = Strongly Disagree to 10 = Strongly Agree. Items include, “My company supports employees in balancing their professional and private lives”, and “At my company, employees are informed about programs promoting work-life balance”. This scale was found to be reliable (α = .93).

**Demographics.** Leaders were asked for information on their personal demographics (i.e., age, gender, education), work demographics (i.e., time at the organization, essential worker status), and family demographics (i.e., number of children, time spent with their families).

**Statistical Analysis**

The SPSS PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2016) was used to assess moderated mediation relationships between study variables with bootstrapping and confidence intervals. See Figure 5 for the relationships analyzed.

**5.4 Study 3 Results**

**Preliminary Analyses.**

Prior to completing analyses for the primary study hypotheses, correlational analyses among study variables and control variables were completed (see Table 14). All study variables were correlated in expected directions, apart from organizational support of work-life balance, which was positively correlated with COVID-19-related grief (r = .13, p < .05), burnout (r = .34, p < .001) and laissez-faire leadership behaviours (r = .13, p < .05). In addition, results of the correlational analyses suggest that younger leaders are more likely to experience grief associated with COVID-19, work-family conflict, role overload, and report higher turnover intentions, whereas older leaders are more likely to engage in laissez-faire leadership behaviours and to report better well-being and family cohesion. Finally, essential workers are more likely to
experience negative work (i.e., role overload, burnout, turnover intentions, laissez-faire leadership behaviours) and personal (i.e., work-life conflict, COVID-19 grief, reduced family cohesion) outcomes.
Table 14

*Correlations among Study 3 variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. COVID-19 Grief</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. WFC</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Role Overload</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>.79**</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Burnout</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.66*</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Family Cohesion</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-.41**</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Well-being</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-.63**</td>
<td>-.59**</td>
<td>-.56**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>-.53**</td>
<td>-.61**</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Support of WLB</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Age</td>
<td>39.99</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Essential Worker Status</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.14**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Cronbach’s alphas denoting scale reliabilities are italicized along the diagonal. WFC = Work-Family Conflict; Support of WLB = Organizational support of work-life balance. ** p < .001, * p < .05
Mediation Analyses

Hypothesis 1 was tested using SPSS PROCESS Macro mediation analyses (Model 6; Hayes, 2016). Results of the mediation analyses supported Hypothesis 1, where role overload mediated the relationship between COVID-19-related grief and burnout, which in turn mediated the relationship between role overload and negative work (increased laissez-faire behaviours, increased turnover intentions) and personal (decreased well-being, reduced family cohesion; see Table 15 for COVID-19 Grief mediation results) outcomes.
Table 15

Mediation analyses for COVID-19-related grief pathways in Study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Grief → Role Overload</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.85, 1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Burnout</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04, .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.22, .69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.37, .64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.28, .97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.45, .85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Grief → Role Overload</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.85, 1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Burnout</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04, .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Family Cohesion</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.32, -.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.28, -.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Well-being</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.57, -.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>-.48</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.59, -.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Controlling for leader age and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals.

Hypothesis 2 was also tested using SPSS PROCESS Macro mediation analyses (Model 6; Hayes, 2016). Results of the mediation analyses supported Hypothesis 2, where role overload mediated the relationship between work-family conflict and burnout, which in turn mediated the relationship between role overload and negative work (increased laissez-faire behaviours,
increased turnover intentions) and personal (decreased well-being, reduced family cohesion; see Table 16 for work-family conflict mediation results) outcomes.

Table 16

*Mediation analyses for work-family conflict pathways in Study 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Conflict → Role Overload</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.38, .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Burnout</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04, .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.48, .80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.21, .40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.57, 1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.42, .69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Conflict → Role Overload</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.38, .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Burnout</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04, .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Family Cohesion</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.28, -.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.14, -.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout → Well-being</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.69, -.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional direct effect of COVID-19 grief</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.30, -.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Controlling for leader age and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals.
Moderation Analyses

Hypothesis 3 was tested using SPSS PROCESS Macro moderated mediation analyses (Model 84; Hayes, 2016). The interaction between role overload and organizational support of work-life balance on burnout was significant (see Table 17 for Study 3 moderated mediation results). To better understand the interaction, a graphical representation was used. Graphical results suggest that high levels of organizational support of work-life balance mitigate the effects of role overload on burnout, when levels of role overload are low. When role overload is high, organizational support of work-life balance does not mitigate the effects of role overload on burnout (see Figure 6 for graphical results of the interaction between role overload and organizational support of work-life balance).

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI Lower, Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload → Burnout</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.02, .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of WLB → Burnout</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.09, .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload x Support of WLB</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.01, .05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index of Moderated Mediation: .01 .01 .001, .02

Note: Controlling for leader age and essential worker status. 5,000 bootstrap resamples used to generate 95% confidence intervals. Support of WLB = Organizational support of Work-Life Balance
5.5 Study 3 Discussion

The results of Study 3 partially supported study hypotheses proposed in Figure 5. Both Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported, whereby leader exposure to stressors, namely work-family conflict and grief-related to the COVID-19 pandemic, predicted negative work (i.e., laissez-faire leadership behaviours and turnover intentions) and personal (i.e., health and well-being, family cohesion) outcomes, through the double mediating effects of role overload and burnout. Therefore, the results of these analyses suggest experiencing a stressor, like work-family conflict
and COVID-19-related grief, results in increased feelings of role overload, which in turn results in increased feelings of burnout, and finally results in worse leader work (i.e., increased laissez-faire leadership behaviours and turnover intentions), and personal (i.e., decreased health and well-being and family cohesion) outcomes.

These results are consistent with existing theory on the mediating effects of burnout between role based stressors and negative work outcomes. The Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908) suggests that role stressors could have either positive effects on work outcomes, in the case of eustress, or negative effects on work outcomes, in the case of distress. This has lead researchers to question the link between role-based stressors (e.g., role overload) and work outcomes (Fogarty, Singh, Rhoads, & Moore, 2000). However, when burnout acts as a mediator, the effects of burnout on work outcomes has been found to be explicitly negative, thus better supporting the link between role overload and negative work outcomes. In addition, extensions to existing stress theories that incorporate the role of burnout, such as conservation of resources theory (COR: Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008) and stressor-strain theory (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995) support the notion that the stress response mechanism linking stressors to negative work and personal outcomes, occurs through an individual’s depletion of resources, resulting in employee burnout. Thereby, in line with existing theories, experiences of role overload are likely linked to negative work and personal outcomes through the experience of burnout, as was supported by the results of this study. While these individual relationships have been supported in employees in general, research has not fully supported the double mediating mechanism of role overload and burnout in the relationship between stressors and negative work and personal outcomes, nor had these relationships been sufficiently examined in leaders, prior to this study.
The results of this study extend existing theories and research on these stress mechanisms by demonstrating a double mediation mechanism from stressors (i.e., work-family conflict and COVID-19-related Grief), to experiences of role overload, in turn to experiences of burnout, and finally to increased negative work and personal outcomes. This research brings together existing research and theory on the work-family interface as well as the impact of prominent stressors on workplace leaders. Work-life interface theories have long suggested that what happens at home can cross over to the workplace and vice versa (e.g., Hill et al., 2003; Hobfoll, 1989), but the mechanism driving this exchange was largely unknown, especially when it comes to leaders. While the mechanism examined in this study is but one possibility, understanding how stress can cross from a leader’s personal life into their work is necessary for organizations and practitioners to better support leaders experiencing stress. For example, while organizations may have less influence on what happens in a leader’s life, putting supports and practices in place that reduce the occurrence of role overload or burnout (e.g., effective work planning processes, adequate resourcing, flexible working arrangements; e.g., Duxbury & Halinski, 2014; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989) may disrupt this mechanism, ultimately reducing the negative effects leaders experience in the workplace due to their exposure to stressors. Although future research should continue to examine additional potential mechanisms, including other role-based stressors, such as role ambiguity or role conflict, or specific aspects of burnout, such as emotional exhaustion or cynicism, this research was a necessary first step in illustrating how leaders experience stress and its widespread effects.

In addition to the double mediation hypotheses examined, Study 3 aimed to highlight a possible organizational resource for leaders that could mitigate the negative effects of role overload on burnout, namely, organizational support of work-life balance. The results of this
analysis partially supported the moderating effects of organizational support of work-life balance on the relationship between role overload and burnout, whereby higher levels of organizational support of work-life balance in an organization mitigated the negative effects of role overload on burnout, however only when role overload is low. When leaders are experiencing high levels of role overload, there is no longer a difference between high levels of organizational support of work-life balance and low levels, thus not supporting the hypothesized direction of the moderated mediation hypothesis. Similar to results in Study 2, whereby perceived organizational support only benefited employees when role overload was low, organizations that tell their employees they value work-life balance, but in turn allow their employees to feel role overload, are not effectively supporting their leaders. Organizations must then ensure their actions, such as implementing policies and procedures related to work-life balance, align with employee experiences. It is more important for organizations to pre-emptively work to reduce experiences of role overload, through effective resource planning, flexibility policies and procedures, and leadership training, than simply verbalizing a general support for work-life balance.

Taken together, the results of this study significantly extend existing research and theory on the experiences of stressors for leaders, and the implications for both workplace and personal outcomes, as well as begin to highlight what organizations can do to better support their leaders. Although this study had many strengths, it was not without its limitations. Firstly, this study was correlational in nature and therefore causation cannot be inferred. This study also utilized self-report data only. While the use of moderated mediation analyses reduces the risk of mono-method bias given participants are likely unaware of the complex relationships being analyzed, future research would greatly benefit from collecting dyadic data (i.e., between leaders’ and family members to better capture the cross-domain relationships), longitudinal data (i.e., to infer
causation), and utilize more objective measures (e.g., leader performance reviews, objective health measures). However, this study significantly extended our understanding of the mechanisms driving leaders’ experiences of stress and remains a significant contribution to the literature, for which future research can build from.

Secondly, this study examined only a selection of possible stressors (i.e., work-family conflict and COVID-19-related grief), as well as possible outcomes associated with these stressors (i.e., laissez-faire leadership behaviours, turnover intentions, general health and well-being, family cohesion). While the role overload and burnout mechanism driving these outcomes represents a significant contribution to the literature, it is important for future research to examine additional stressors leaders may face, such as marital conflict, financial difficulties, and job insecurity, as well as additional outcomes for leaders, such as job performance, additional leadership behaviours, parenting behaviours, and life satisfaction, to fully understand the impact of stress on leaders. In addition, it is possible that additional role-based stressors, such as role ambiguity and role conflict, could function similarly to role overload in this double mediation mechanism. This should be considered in future research.

Finally, while work-family conflict was operationalized in the current study as conflict leaders experience in their family/home life due to high demands in the workplace, research supports the notion that work to family and family to work conflict may be unique constructs with unique outcomes (e.g., Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). This study significantly contributes to our understanding of the effects of work to family conflict in leaders. However, future research should examine whether leaders experience differing outcomes based on the direction of conflict (i.e., work to family conflict, family to work conflict) to extend our understanding of the work-life interface literature in leaders.
Overall, the results of this study significantly extend our understanding of the stressors leaders experience, as well as the mechanisms driving these effects. The COVID-19 pandemic represents a unique experience that all leaders and their followers are currently facing, yet that most leaders have never had to lead through. Improving our understanding of this novel stressor better prepares organizations for unforeseen stressors their leaders may face in the future. In addition, work-family conflict represents a prominent stressor that many employees have faced and will continue to face, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic; a focus on the effects of work-family conflict in leaders is important. With an improved understanding of the impacts of prevalent stressors, organizations can begin to ensure adequate resources and supports are in place to effectively support their leaders.

Chapter 6: General Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, the purpose of this dissertation was to extend our understanding of how leaders are affected by stressors, as well as to improve our understanding of what organizations can do to better support their leaders. Study 1 found that leaders are experiencing incivility in the workplace and that the effects of these experiences may be long lasting for both themselves and their followers, through leaders’ feelings of burnout. Study 2 found that followers experiencing a prominent stressor (i.e., COVID-19-related grief) are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their leaders and their organizations, through their experience of role overload. Study 2 also partially supported the notion that organizations can play a role in mitigating these outcomes for leaders by offering support to their employees, but only when role overload was a low, suggesting organizations must work to reduce followers’ experiences of role overload. Study 3 found that leaders experiencing stressors (i.e., work-family conflict and COVID-19-related grief) experience many negative work and personal outcomes, through their
increased levels of role overload and burnout. Study 3 also found some support for the notion that organizations can play a role in mitigating these outcomes for leaders by being supportive of their work-life balance, but only when role overload is low, thus further highlighting the need to mitigate leader experiences of role overload.

Across all three studies, I examined mechanisms that mediate the relationships between experiences of stressors and negative outcomes for leaders. Study 1 supported the role of burnout in mediating the relationship between experiencing a workplace stressor (i.e., incivility) and reduced engagement and job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions for leaders. Taking a follower perspective, Study 2 then supported the mediating mechanism of role overload in the relationship between experiencing a stressor (i.e., COVID-19-related grief) and negative leader- and organization-directed deviance. Finally, Study 3 brought together both mediating mechanisms examined in Studies 1 and 2 to demonstrate how leader exposure to stressors (i.e., COVID-19-related grief, work-family conflict) relates to negative work (i.e., laissez-faire behaviours, turnover intentions) and personal (i.e., health and well-being, family cohesion) outcomes, through the double mediation of role overload and burnout.

Taken together, this dissertation explored experiences of prominent stressors that leaders face using three studies, across multiple samples (i.e., leaders, followers), various industries (i.e., specific to manufacturing and more broadly), multiple age groups (i.e., young adults, career-aged adults), and using multiple techniques (i.e., time-separated dyadic data collected through an organization with qualitative comments, multiple cohorts collected from a university student participant pool at two time points, online panel selection). The results across all three studies provide support for the often alluded to, but relatively understudied, notion that leaders are faced with stressors that have a negative impact on their work, their personal lives, and their ability to
lead. The results of these studies also point to an important potential role organizations have in lessening the effects of these stressors, through offering support and reducing role overload. Given the considerable attention leadership has received in the literature, and the level of importance researchers and organizations place on leaders engaging in effective leadership behaviours, this new knowledge is critical to the field, and will be an impetus for future research in the area. The theoretical and practical implications of this research are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

Overall, the three studies in this dissertation supported existing theoretical stress models identifying both role overload and burnout as mechanisms linking stressors to negative work and personal outcomes in leaders, an area that had not been adequately examined in empirical study. The transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) specifically identifies role overload as a theoretical mechanism linking experiences of chronic stressors to negative employee outcomes through an overloaded secondary appraisal in the workplace in the form of role overload. An extension of the transactional model of stress due to burnout extends the theory to propose that burnout mediates the negative effects of job stressors, such as role overload, on negative work outcomes, through a depletion of resources (Cox et al., 2000), which is supported by the results of Study 2. Study 3 then examined these two important mediating mechanisms together. The results of Study 3 fully supported this theoretical mechanism thus extending the current available literature on the mechanism driving the negative effects associated with experiences of stressors in leaders.

In addition, Study 3 supported existing work-life interface theories, such as conservation of resources (Hobfoll, 1989) and spillover theories (Hill et al., 2003), which posit that
experiences from one domain can influence outcomes in other domains, through threats to an individual’s resources. The results from Studies 2 and 3 suggest that stressors (i.e., COVID-19 and work-family conflict) can negatively impact an individual’s work life (i.e., role overload, burnout), and that these experiences can in turn negatively impact an individual’s home and personal life (i.e., health and well-being, family cohesion).

Furthermore, existing research and theory on mistreatment has largely excluded experiences of leaders and mechanisms that may drive followers to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their leader. Overall, research on the effects of being exposed to mistreatment in the workplace has been driven by the stressor-strain theory (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), whereby those experiencing workplace mistreatment, experience a negative emotional reaction, such as emotional exhaustion, and in turn experience strain outcomes in the workplace, including reduced engagement and satisfaction. The results of Study 1 lend support to this theory among leaders experiencing incivility, a form of mistreatment. The results further extend existing theory and research to demonstrate that the negative effects of incivility for leaders extend to include negative effects for their followers, and these effects persist over time. In addition, the incivility spiral theory (Andersson & Pearson, 1999) describing reciprocal targeting of rude behaviours, lends support to the notion that those who experience behaviours they deem unacceptable, are more likely to engage in further unacceptable behaviours directed towards others. The results of Study 2 offer support to this theory, whereby followers who experience role overload, a negative workplace experience, are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours directed towards their leaders and their organizations. Although this theory conceptualizes experiences of incivility as the trigger for further mistreatment, followers may also respond to perceived organizational mistreatment by engaging in deviant behaviours as a retribution. Existing research on employee
retaliation and displaced aggression supports this concept (e.g., Hoobler & Brass, 2006; Thau & Mitchell, 2010), whereby followers experiencing leadership behaviours they deem unacceptable (e.g., abusive supervision behaviours) are more likely to retaliate through other negative behaviours (e.g., mistreatment of others, counterproductive workplace behaviours). The results of Study 2 present a possible mechanism whereby employees may feel inclined to engage in negative leader- and organization-directed behaviours through their own response to job stress. However, future research should continue to examine the reciprocal relationships between experiences of job stress and follower deviant behaviours. Overall, the results of Studies 1 and 2 highlight mechanisms driving experiences of, and behaviours related to, mistreatment in both leaders and followers.

Finally, existing research on leadership styles and behaviours strongly support the notion that leaders’ behaviours impact their followers’ behaviours, attitudes, and well-being, where follower exposure to effective leadership behaviours (e.g., transformational, ethical) tends to be associated with positive experiences (e.g., Brown & Treviño, 2006; Gardner et al., 2011; Kelloway et al., 2013), while follower exposure to destructive leadership behaviours (e.g., laissez-faire leadership, abusive supervision) tends to be associated with negative experiences (e.g., Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007). Unfortunately, existing research rarely examines what may drive leaders to engage in some of these behaviours we know to be detrimental to their followers. The results from Study 3 highlight a mechanism, based on experiences of stressors, that may compel a leader to engage in a known destructive leadership style, laissez-faire leadership.

Overall, the results of this dissertation significantly add to existing theory and research on stress and leadership, using a range of samples, methods, stressors, and outcomes. The
theoretical models utilized in this dissertation have been heavily supported in general employee samples (e.g., Chandola et al., 2006; Lawrence et al., 2013; Skogstad et al., 2007), however the studies in this dissertation lend support to these models in leader samples as well, suggesting that, like their followers, leaders are significantly affected by the stressors they experience, which in turn can have substantial impacts on themselves (both personally and from a work perspective), their ability to lead, and on their followers’ experiences. Future researchers can utilize the results of these studies to build on and develop future studies in this area.

For researchers to fully understand the effects leaders have on their followers and their organizations, it is imperative that we understand the experiences of leaders, both the mechanisms driving leader outcomes, as well as the impacts of these experiences on those around them. The results of the studies in this dissertation extended this limited line of research, however future research is still required. For example, while we know employees in general are influenced by important individuals in their lives, including their romantic partners and their children (e.g., Anderson et al., 2002; Jiang & Wrzesniewski, 2021), it is likely that leaders are similarly effected and these interactions may impact their work outcomes. Some research has begun to examine the health and well-being of leaders as predictors of leadership behaviours (e.g., Barling & Cloutier, 2017; Byrne et al., 2014), and this dissertation contributes to this small body of literature, but a continued focus on leaders’ experiences is required. Further, while the studies in this dissertation examined several prominent stressors that leaders may experience, such as workplace mistreatment, the COVID-19 pandemic, and work-family conflict, many other stressors exist that may have important outcomes for leaders, including experiences of personal health issues or family health issues, marital conflict or divorce, and violence and harassment in the workplace, among others. In addition, practitioners and researchers alike recognize the
additional expectations placed upon leaders, due to the nature of their role in an organization. Leaders are often faced with a contradiction in that they must convey strength, even at times when they are exposed to heightened stress and may feel less strong. Therefore, it is likely that leaders’ experiences of stressors may be unique. This possibility must be examined in future study through quantitative study on additional stressors, as well as qualitative study on leaders’ unique experiences of stressors within their positions.

Finally, the studies in this dissertation examined ways in which organizations can support their leaders and mitigate the effects of stressors that leaders may face. In line with the buffer hypothesis (Cohen & Willis, 1985), perceived organizational support and organizational support of work-life balance were found to improve outcomes for leaders and their followers, but only when role overload was low, thus extending our understanding of buffering mechanisms. While support to leaders and their followers can be effective in reducing negative outcomes associated with stress, in line with the match hypothesis (Cohen & Willis, 1985), perceived support must align with the recipient’s needs and expectations. Future research should continue to examine mitigating factors. From an organizational level, research should examine moderating factors that may be more successful in reducing the negative effects of role overload, including fostering a cooperative climate (e.g., Fisher, 2014), providing access to organizational support groups and team building (e.g., Yip et al., 2008), and access to flexible working arrangements and paid time off (e.g., Duxbury & Halinski, 2014; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989). From an individual-level, research should examine the role of protective factors that leaders and their followers could utilize to mitigate the negative effects of stressors they experience, including effective coping mechanisms such as seeking social support (e.g., Stevens & Higgins, 2002), developing mastery (e.g., Havlovic & Keenan, 1991; Jacobsson, Pousette, & Thylefors, 2001), taking time
off, and engaging in positive health behaviours (e.g., Trenberth & Dewe, 2002). Taken together, while the relationships examined in this research greatly contributed to our theoretical understanding of stress and workplace leaders, research must continue this line of study to further examine how stress affects leaders.

6.2 Practical Implications

While extending existing theory and research in organizational psychology was a primary goal of this dissertation, gaining a better understanding of what organizations can do to support their leaders through experiences of stress was critical. Therefore, this dissertation included an examination of the role organizations could play to support their leaders, and in turn their followers. Across all three studies, results support the notion that organizations have a role to play in leaders’ experiences of stress. Study 1 demonstrated that experiences of incivility negatively affects leaders, and in turn, their followers, ultimately negatively affecting the organization through increased turnover and decreased engagement. Studies 2 and 3 demonstrated that support from organizations played an important role in mitigating negative effects in leaders experiencing stress. The results of these studies suggest organizations are impacted by their leaders’ experiences of stressors, through increased negative leader work outcomes (i.e., disengagement, turnover intentions, laissez-faire leadership behaviours), and must therefore strive to reduce the stress of their leaders by providing leaders and their followers access to adequate support and resources.

Nevertheless, in both Studies 2 and 3, when followers and leaders were experiencing role overload, support from their organization was no longer effective. Therefore, based on the findings of these studies, organizations should move beyond simply creating policies and procedures to support their employees, and put practices in place to ensure their employees truly
perceive that support is available. This may include offering access to resources (i.e., accessible employee benefit platforms), accessible leader training (i.e., using learning platforms) and effective resource planning aimed at reducing role overload. Specifically, Study 2 focused on perceived organizational support for employees. When role overload was high, this support was no longer effective at reducing the likelihood of employees engaging in leader- and organization-directed deviant behaviours. Further, Study 3 focused on organizational support of work-life balance, operationalized as the measures and behaviours endorsed in an organization that promote work-life balance. However, similar to Study 2, when role overload was high, the presence of organizational support of work-life balance no longer mitigated the negative effects of role overload on burnout in leaders. Taken together, these results support the notion that organizations must do more for their employees, both their leaders and their followers. Support that matches the needs of employees may be more beneficial than generalized forms of support.

Support from organizations once leaders and followers are already experiencing role overload is not sufficient, nor is the promise of an organization that values work-life balance but in turn does not support leaders’ balance of work. Organizations should take a multi-level approach to reducing the negative effects of workplace stressors, and related job stress. In line with research from the public health literature (e.g., Bowman, Gregg, Williams, Engelgau, & Jack, 2003; Simeonsson, 1991), primary interventions aimed at reducing the overall occurrence of work stress, through improving civility norms in the workplace and effectively responding to crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, are important. However, even with effective organizational policies in place, it is likely that leaders and followers will experience workplace stress. Therefore, it is necessary to implement secondary interventions, aimed at reducing the severity of the stressor, and tertiary interventions, aimed at reducing the negative effects
associated with experiencing a stressor. Secondary interventions could include ensuring leaders have adequate personnel resources to balance workloads (e.g., Bacharach et al., 1990; Solberg & Wong, 2016) and access to flexible working arrangements and paid time off (e.g., Duxbury & Halinski, 2014; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989) to reduce the effects of stress on role overload and burnout. Tertiary interventions could include senior leader support and support of work-life balance, however, the results of Studies 2 and 3 suggest these interventions may be the least effective. Taken together, organizations must limit the extent to which their leaders experience stressors in the first place, and in the case when stressors occur, organizations must limit experiences of role overload to reduce negative outcomes for their leaders, using multiple levels of support interventions.

Finally, while organizations should actively work to reduce leader job stress (i.e., role overload) and provide support aimed at mitigating the negative effects of stressors, it is also necessary for researchers to take a leading role in translating research into actionable steps that organizations can take. For example, actionable steps organizations can take to reduce role overload include encouraging flexible working arrangements to support work-life balance (e.g., Duxbury & Halinski, 2014; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989), clearly identifying employee and leader priorities through cascading organizational goals (e.g., Yukl, 2008), and supporting priority and time management through effective planning and access to training (e.g., Lincoln, Adamson, & Covic, 2004). Researchers must continue to empirically study the efficacy of organizational interventions and supports aimed at reducing leader stress, so that organizations can implement evidence-based programs and initiatives that effectively reduce employees’ experiences of role overload. While the current study supports the notion that organizational support aimed at reducing role overload and increasing work-life balance may be effective for
leaders experiencing stress, further study is required. In particular, research should incorporate an examination of employees’ needs related to support to provide better direction to organizations looking to implement support mechanisms for their leaders and followers, rather than encouraging a general approach to offering support.

6.3 Conclusion

In summary, through the three studies included in this dissertation, I have contributed to, and extended our understanding of existing research and theory on leader stress by examining the effects of stressors on leaders’ work and personal outcomes, as well as the role followers and organizations play in leaders’ experiences of stress. Leaders play a crucial role in organizations; they build, they innovate, they teach, and they empower, all of which are necessary for the continued success of their followers, and their organizations. Therefore, an understanding of the effects of significant stressors on leaders was a necessary extension of the literature. In addition, I examined the role an organization can play in mitigating the negative effects of these stressful experiences. Namely, organizations must put measures and practices in place to support leaders before they become overloaded in their work; suggestions for the measures organizations can take to protect their leaders have been made. Finally, I have provided future directions that researchers should continue to examine to further extend this line of research. Overall, the results of this dissertation demonstrate that leaders, like their followers, are significantly affected by their experiences of stressors, and the negative effects of these stressors extend to both their work and personal lives.
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Appendices

Appendix A

A.1 Study 1 Materials

**Company Employee Engagement Survey**

This survey is an opportunity for everyone at Company to share their thoughts and experiences with the management team.

The surveys are being handled by external consultants and your responses are **completely confidential**. Only aggregate data will be presented to the management team.

Please take the time to respond this year as well – your input makes all the difference.

1. **How long have you worked at Company?**
   - □ Less than one year
   - □ 1 or 3 years
   - □ 4 to 6 years
   - □ 7 to 9 years
   - □ More than 10 years
   - □ Not sure

2. **In what area do you primarily work?**
   - □ British Columbia
   - □ Alberta
   - □ Toronto
   - □ Ottawa
   - □ Other: ______
   - □ Not sure / Not applicable

3. **In which Division do you primarily work?**
   - □ Major Projects
   - □ Special Projects
   - □ Services/Controls
   - □ Executive/Management

4. **What gender do you identify with?**
   - □ Male
   - □ Female
   - □ Prefer not to specify
   - □ Other: ______

5. **Do any other employees report to you?**
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   - □ Not sure
6. **If yes, how many?** [online version will have branching based on response to previous question with drop down list to select number of followers]

7. **On a 7-point scale from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (Circle your response)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rude behavior is not accepted by your coworkers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry outbursts are not tolerated by your team.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful treatment is the norm in your team.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your coworkers make sure everyone in your team is treated with respect.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **How would you rate your overall job satisfaction right now?**

   - [ ] Very satisfied
   - [ ] Somewhat satisfied
   - [ ] Not very satisfied
   - [ ] Not at all satisfied
   - [ ] Not sure

9. **How likely is it that you would choose to leave the company for another position in the next couple of years?**

   - [ ] Very likely
   - [ ] Somewhat likely
   - [ ] Somewhat unlikely
   - [ ] Very Unlikely

   - [ ] Not sure

10. **Overall, to what extent have you felt "burnt out" at work in the last 6 months?**

    - [ ] Not at all
    - [ ] A little
    - [ ] Somewhat
    - [ ] Mostly
    - [ ] Completely

11. **Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work? (Circle your response)**
On most days, my work with Company makes me feel energized. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure |
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
On most days, I am excited to get up and go to work at Company. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure |
I feel more satisfied with my job when I am challenged at work. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure |
I am enthusiastic about working at Company. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure |
I am proud to work at Company. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure |
My work with Company is challenging. | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree | Not sure |

12. If you have any other comments, suggestions or concerns please share them with us by writing in the box below.

Thank you taking the time to complete the Company Annual Engagement Survey.
Appendix B – Study 2 Materials

B.1 Recruitment Notice

**Study Name:** Experiences of Young Adult Employees During COVID-19

**Description:** This study focuses on how young adult employees are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Participants should be 1) between the ages of 18-25, and 2) currently working (either part-time or full-time).

**Duration and Locale:** This online study will be conducted through the Qualtrics website. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

**Compensation:** Participants will receive .25% course credit for the participation in this study.

**Researchers:**

**Principal Investigator:**
Dr. Kathryne Dupré, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail: Kathryne.Dupre@carleton.ca, Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 6026)

**Co-Investigator:**
Amanda McEvoy, Ph.D. Candidate (Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

This study has been cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (CUREB-B Clearance #113191).
B.2 Informed Consent

The informed consent is necessary to ensure that you understand what is expected of you during the study and why we are interested in researching this particular area. The informed consent form should provide you with enough information to allow you to decide if you wish to participate in this study.

Research project: Experiences of Young Adult Employees During COVID-19

Research personnel: The following people are involved in this study, and may be contacted at any time if you have any questions or concerns:

Researchers:

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Kathryne Dupré, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail: Kathryne.Dupre@carleton.ca, Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 6026)

Co-Investigator:
Amanda McEvoy, Ph.D. Candidate (Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

Contact in Case of Ethical concerns: If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 4085 or via email at ethics@carleton.ca).

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of young adult employees and interactions with their leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eligibility Criteria: Participants should be 1) between the ages of 18-25, and 2) currently working part-time or full-time.

Task Requirements: You will be asked to respond to questions regarding your experiences at work, your interactions with your leader, your personal and workplace outcomes, and demographic information.

Duration and locale: This study will be conducted online. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Remuneration: Participants will receive .25% course credit for the participation in this study.

Potential risk/discomfort: Research does not suggest that responding to questions such as these will lead to feelings of discomfort or any negative side effects. However, in the case you do feel feelings of discomfort, at the end of this study, contact information is provided that you can use...
if you feel this way and would like to discuss your feelings further, or if you are interested in accessing more information about workplace or home life issues.

**Anonymity/confidentiality:** No information that could be used to identify you will be connected with your survey responses, so your answers will be anonymous. The information you provide will be used only for research purposes. Your email address will be collected in order to provide your course credit however it will not be linked to your survey responses in any way.

We collect data through the software Qualtrics, which uses servers with multiple layers of security to protect the privacy of the data (e.g., encrypted websites and pass-word protected storage). Your data will be stored and protected by Qualtrics in either Canada or the United States, but may be disclosed via a court order or data breach. All data will be deleted from the Qualtrics server upon completion of the study and will be retained only on secure, password-protected computers. Anonymous electronic data files will be retained on secure, password-protected computers. We are committed to protecting your privacy and will treat the data we collect as completely confidential. In potential publications of this research, only aggregated data (means and correlations) will be reported. Anonymous data might be shared with trusted colleagues (in line with guidelines 8.14 by the American Psychological Association) or posted on online free data depositories.

**Right to withdraw:** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. At any point during the study, you have the right to not complete certain questions, or to withdraw without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, please skip to the end of the survey to see the debriefing form.

**External funding:** There is no external funding for this research.

This study has been cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (CUREB-B Clearance #113191).

*Click “I Agree” to indicate that you understand the information above and would like to participate in this study or “I Disagree” if you do not want to do the survey.*

I agree _____ I disagree _____
B.3 Online Questionnaire

**Are you between the age of 18-25?** Yes or No
* Participants who respond no will be taken to the end of the survey.

**Are you currently working either part-time or full-time?** Yes or No
* Participants who respond no will be taken to the end of the survey.

**Please consider your time during the COVID-19 pandemic while responding to the following questions.**
* This will be written at the top of each page on Qualtrics.

**Laissez-Faire Scale**

Please answer the following questions in reference to your manager’s leadership, on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

1. My manager often doesn’t give feedback to their employees when their employees perform well.
2. My manager often does nothing when their employees perform well.
3. My manager often doesn’t respond to their employees good performance.
4. My manager often doesn’t praise their employees when they perform well.
5. My manager often doesn’t respond to their employee’s good performance.
6. My manager seldom criticizes their employees when they perform poorly.
7. My manager gives their employees no feedback when they perform poorly.
8. Employees’ poor performance often goes unacknowledged by my manager.
9. When their employees perform poorly, my manager does nothing.
10. My manager doesn’t respond to their employees poor performance.

**Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger, et al., 1997)**

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by selecting the value from the following scale that best represents your point of view about your organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Slightly Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>Slightly Agree</td>
<td>Moderately Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My organization really cares about my well-being.
2. My organization strongly considers my goals and values.
3. My organization cares about my opinions.
4. My organization shows very little concern for me. (R)

---

1 Please note that scale names will NOT be included in final online survey.
Turnover Intentions Scale (4-item scale)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements as it applies to your current situation (1=Strongly Disagree  2 3 4 5 6 7= Strongly Agree)

1. I often think of quitting this job,
2. I am always on the look out for a better job
3. It is likely that I will look for another job during the next year
4. There isn’t much to be gained by staying in this job.

Counterproductive work behavior-organization toward organization (6-item Dala et al., 2009)

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements as it applies to your work during the COVID-19 pandemic. (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

1. . . I worked slower than necessary.
2. . . I spent time on tasks unrelated to work.
3. . . I have not worked to the best of my ability.
4. . . I criticized my organization’s policies.
5. . . I have taken unnecessary breaks.
6. . . I have spoken poorly about the organization to others.

Supervisor-Directed Deviance (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007)

Please rate each item on a 5 point scale from 1 (I never behave this way) to 5 (I always behave this way). Please consider your behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic when responding to these items.

1. I have made fun of my supervisor at work.
2. I have played a mean prank on my supervisor.
3. I have made an obscene comment or gesture toward my supervisor.
4. I have acted rudely toward my supervisor.
5. I have gossiped about my supervisor.
6. I have made negative remarks against my supervisor.
7. I have tried to publicly embarrass my supervisor.
8. I swore at my supervisor.
9. I refused to talk to my supervisor.
10. I have said something hurtful to my supervisor at work.

Role Overload (Thiagarajan et al., 2006 – adapted from Reilly, 1982)

On a scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always), indicate how often you feel each of the following:

1. I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for.
2. I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me.
3. I cannot ever seem to catch up.
4. I do not ever seem to have any time for myself.
5. There are times when I cannot meet everyone’s expectations.
6. I seem to have more commitments to overcome than other leaders I know.

**Inventory of Complicated Grief (Prigerson et al., 1995) – Adapted (2 items removed)**

Please answer the following questions on a scale from 0 (never) to 4 (always)

1. I think about time before this pandemic so much that it’s hard for me to do the things I normally do
2. Memories of the time before the pandemic upset me
3. I cannot accept the experience during this pandemic
4. I feel myself longing for the time before this pandemic
5. I feel drawn to places and things associated with time before the pandemic
6. I can’t help feeling angry about this pandemic
7. I feel disbelief over what is happening
8. I feel stunned or dazed over what is happening
9. Ever since this pandemic began, it is hard for me to trust people
10. Ever since this pandemic began, I feel like I have lost the ability to care about other people or I feel distant from people I care about
11. I experience symptoms similar to those suffering from Covid-19
12. I go out of my way to avoid reminders of the pandemic
13. I feel that life is empty during this pandemic
14. I feel that it is unfair that certain people are getting sick
15. I feel bitter about this pandemic
16. I feel envious of others who are not affected by this pandemic
17. I feel lonely a great deal of the time since the beginning of this pandemic

**Demographics:**

What is your age in years (drop down menu; 18-25)

Please indicate your gender: □ male □ female □ transgender □ non-binary □ prefer not to specify

What is the highest level of education you have received? (Some High School, High School, College, Bachelor, Masters, PhD)

What is your ethnicity? (drop down menu; Caucasian, Black, Middle Eastern, Asian, Hispanic, Indigenous, Other)

What state, province or territory do you live in? (drop down menu with provinces, territories and states)

Are you currently working from home? □ Yes (if yes, full-time or part-time) □ No
If you are working from home, is this percentage of time different from pre-COVID-19? (more, less or the same)

Has your job been designated as an essential service during COVID-19? □ Yes □ No

What industry do you work in? (Agriculture, forestry, fishing, Retail trades, Construction, Services, Manufacturing, Public administration, Other/Nonclassifiable)

On average, how many hours per week did you work in your position BEFORE COVID-19 began? (Please check one ☑)

□ 0 hours □ 1-5 hours □ 5-10 hours □ 10-15 hours □ 15-20 hours □ 20-30 hours □ 30-40 hours □ More than 40 hours

On average, how many hours per week do you work in your position SINCE COVID-19 began? (Please check one ☑)

□ 0 hours □ 1-5 hours □ 5-10 hours □ 10-15 hours □ 15-20 hours □ 20-30 hours □ 30-40 hours □ More than 40 hours

How long have you been working with your current manager?

□ Less than 1 month □ More than 12 months □ 1-4 months □ 4-8 months □ 8-12 months

On average, on how many days each week did you interact with your manager BEFORE COVID-19?

□ 1 days □ 2 days □ 3 days □ 4 days □ 5+ days

On average, on how many days each week do you interact with your manager SINCE COVID-19?

□ 1 days □ 2 days □ 3 days □ 4 days □ 5+ days

What is your relationship status? (Married, Common-Law, Divorced, Widowed, Single)

Do you live with another individual? □ Yes □ No

If so, who do you live with? (Roommate, Parents, Romantic Partner, Other:_____)
B.4 Debriefing Form

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between experienced leadership and personal and workplace outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing specifically on young workers.

Hypotheses, predictions and possible implications
We are predicting that negative or positive leadership experiences will influence young adult workplace and personal outcomes. In addition, we are predicting that experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic may exacerbate these relationships.

The following websites provide further information on mental health and social resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Mental Health Commission of Canada: https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19
- Canadian Mental Health Association: https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health
- For one-on-one counselling: https://eMentalHealth.ca
- Occupational Health Psychology Data Centre: https://www.ohpdata.com/for-employees

If you are interested in researching or finding out more about this area of research, here are a few references:


Who can I contact to learn more from this study or to voice my concerns?

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Kathryne Dupré, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail: Kathryne.Dupre@carleton.ca, Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 6026)

Co-Investigator:
Amanda McEvoy, Ph.D. Candidate (Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca).

If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 4085 or via email at ethics@carleton.ca).

If you are raising issues or concerns, please use the study’s ethics approval number (provided by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B; CUREB-B Clearance # 113191).

Thank you for taking part in this research.
Appendix C – Study 3 Materials

C.1 Recruitment Notice for Leaders

Study Name: Leading During COVID-19

Description: This study focuses on the personal and work experiences of workplace leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications of this for their psychological and job-related well-being.

Eligibility Requirements: Participants should be (1) working as a leader (i.e., have at least one follower).

Duration and Locale: This online study will be conducted through the Qualtrics website. It is recommended that you complete this survey in private. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated with Qualtrics points that can be used towards various prizes and gift cards. Each participant will receive a total of $6 USD that can be used for various gift cards and prizes.

Researchers:

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Kathryne Dupré, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail: Kathryne.Dupre@carleton.ca, Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 6026)

Co-Investigator:
PhD Psychology student Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

This study has been cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (CUREB-B Clearance # 112985).
C.2 Informed Consent for Leaders

The informed consent is necessary to ensure that you understand what is expected of you during the study and why we are interested in researching this particular area. The informed consent form should provide you with enough information to allow you to decide if you wish to participate in this study.

**Research project:** Leading During COVID-19

**Research personnel:** The following people are involved in this study, and may be contacted at any time if you have any questions or concerns:

**Researchers:**

**Principal Investigator:**
Dr. Kathryne Dupré, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail: Kathryne.Dupre@carleton.ca, Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 6026)

**Co-Investigator:**
PhD Psychology student Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

**Contact in Case of Ethical concerns:** If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 4085 or via email at ethics@carleton.ca).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to better understand the experience of leaders working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of this research have the potential to extend our understanding of the work-life interface, by focusing on how personal experiences affect work, and vice-versa.

**Eligibility Criteria:** Participants should be (1) working as a leader (i.e., have at least one follower).

**Task Requirements:** You will be asked to respond to questions regarding your work, work-related well-being, your general health and well-being, and demographic information.

**Duration and locale:** This study will be conducted online. The questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

**Remuneration:** Participants will be compensated with Qualtrics points that can be traded in for various gift cards and prizes. The Qualtrics points are equivalent to $6 USD.

**Potential risk/discomfort:** Research does not suggest that responding to questions such as these will lead to feelings of discomfort or any negative side effects. However, in the case you do feel...
feelings of discomfort, at the end of this study, contact information is provided that you can use if you feel this way and would like to discuss your feelings further, or if you are interested in accessing more information about workplace or home life issues.

**Anonymity/confidentiality:** No information that could be used to identify you will be connected with your survey responses, so your answers will be anonymous. The information you provide will be used only for research purposes.

We collect data through the software Qualtrics, which uses servers with multiple layers of security to protect the privacy of the data (e.g., encrypted websites and pass-word protected storage). Your data will be stored and protected by Qualtrics in Toronto, Canada, but may be disclosed via a court order or data breach. All data will be deleted from the Qualtrics server upon completion of the study and will be retained only on secure, password-protected computers. Anonymous electronic data files will be retained on secure, password-protected computers. We are committed to protecting your privacy and will treat the data we collect as completely confidential. In potential publications of this research, only aggregated data (means and correlations) will be reported. Anonymous data might be shared with trusted colleagues (in line with guidelines 8.14 by the American Psychological Association) or posted on online free data depositories.

**Right to withdraw:** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. At any point during the study, you have the right to not complete certain questions, or to withdraw without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, please skip to the end of the survey to see the debriefing form. Please note that because surveys are anonymous (and therefore it is not possible to link a particular name to a survey) after surveys are submitted, withdrawal from the study is not possible.

**External funding:** There is no external funding for this research.

This study has been cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (CUREB-B Clearance # 112985).

*Click “I Agree” to indicate that you understand the information above and would like to participate in this study or “I Disagree” if you do not want to do the survey.*

I agree ____ I disagree ____
C.3 Online Questionnaire

Eligibility Questions

Do you have at least 1 employee who directly reports to you? (yes, no)

The following questions will help us to understand your current work and life experiences. Please answer these questions as they apply to you during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Laissez-Faire Scale

Please answer the following questions in reference to your own leadership on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11. I often give no feedback to my employees when my employees perform well.  
12. I often do nothing when my employees perform well.  
13. I often don’t respond to my employees good performance.  
14. I often don’t praise my employees when they perform well.  
15. I often don’t respond to my employee’s good performance  
16. I seldom criticize my employees when they perform poorly.  
17. I give my employees no feedback when they perform poorly.  
18. My employee’s poor performance often goes unacknowledged by me.  
19. When my employees perform poorly, I do nothing.  
20. I don’t respond to my employees poor performance.

Oldenburg Burnout Inventory - Exhaustion Sub-scale (Demerouti et al., 2010)

Instruction: Below you find a series of statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale, please indicate the degree of your agreement by selecting the number that corresponds with each statement.

Response options: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

1. There are days when I feel tired before I start work.  
2. After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.  
3. I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well.  
4. During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.  
5. After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.  
6. After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.  
7. Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well.  
8. When I work, I usually feel energized.

2 Please note that scale names were not included in final online survey.
Turnover Intentions Scale (4-item scale)
INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements as it applies to your current situation (1=Strongly Disagree 2 3 4 5 6 7= Strongly Agree)

5. I often think of quitting this job,
6. I am always on the look out for a better job
7. It is likely that I will look for another job during the next year
8. There isn’t much to be gained by staying in this job.

Work-Life Balance Culture Scale (WLBCS; Nitzsche, Jung, Kowalski, & Pfaff, 2014)
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following.
Response options: 0 = Strongly disagree to 10 = Strongly agree

1. My company values measures to promote employee work-life balance.
2. My company supports employees in balancing their professional and private lives.
3. My company’s management sets a good example of work-life balance.
4. My company’s management is trained to promote the work-life balance of employees.
5. At my company, employees are informed about programs promoting work-life balance

Family Cohesion (Moos, 1974)
Using the scale 1 (very unlike my family) to 4 (very like my family), please respond to the following items.

1. My family members really help and support one another.
2. We often seem to be just killing time at home. - R
3. We put a lot of energy into what we do at home.
4. There is a feeling of togetherness in our family.
5. Members of our family rarely volunteer when something has to be done at home. - R
6. Family members really back each other up.
7. There is very little group spirit in our family. - R
8. We really get along well with each other.
9. There is plenty of time and attention for each member of our family.

Work-Family Conflict Scale (Netemeyer et al., 1996)
Please answer the following questions using the scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.
3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.

Role Overload (Thiagarajan et al., 2006 – adapted from Reilly, 1982)
On a scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always), indicate how often you feel each of the following:
7. I have to do things that I do not really have the time and energy for.
8. I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me.
9. I cannot ever seem to catch up.
10. I do not ever seem to have any time for myself.
11. There are times when I cannot meet everyone’s expectations.
12. I seem to have more commitments to overcome than other leaders I know.

The General Health Questionnaire Short Form (GHQ-a) (Ware et al., 1996).
Response options: 1=Not At All, 2=Rarely, 3=Once In A While, 4=Some of the Time, 5=Fairly often, 6=Often, 7 = All of the Time

The following statements ask about your personal well-being and your health in general. For the following questions please select the answer that best describes you. Since COVID-19, have you?

1. Been able to concentrate on whatever you’re doing?
2. Lost much sleep from worry - R
3. Felt that you’re playing a useful part in things?
4. Felt capable of making decisions about things?
5. Felt constantly under strain? - R
6. Felt that you couldn’t overcome your difficulties? - R
7. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?
8. Been feeling unhappy and/or depressed? - R
9. Been able to face up to your problems?
10. Been losing confidence in yourself - R
11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person? - R

Inventory of Complicated Grief (Prigerson et al., 1995) – Adapted (2 items removed)
Please answer the following questions on a scale from 0 (never) to 4 (always)

1 I think about time before this pandemic so much that it’s hard for me to do the things I normally do
2 Memories of the time before the pandemic upset me
3 I cannot accept the experience during this pandemic
4 I feel myself longing for the time before this pandemic
5 I feel drawn to places and things associated with time before the pandemic
6 I can’t help feeling angry about this pandemic
7 I feel disbelief over what is happening
8 I feel stunned or dazed over what is happening
9 Ever since this pandemic began, it is hard for me to trust people
10 Ever since this pandemic began, I feel like I have lost the ability to care about other people or I feel distant from people I care about
11 I experience symptoms similar to those suffering from Covid-19
12 I go out of my way to avoid reminders of the pandemic
13 I feel that life is empty during this pandemic
14 I feel that it is unfair that certain people are getting sick
15 I feel bitter about this pandemic
16 I feel envious of others who are not affected by this pandemic
17 I feel lonely a great deal of the time since the beginning of this pandemic

**Demographics:**

What is your age in years (drop down menu; 18-65+)

Please indicate your gender: □ male □ female □ transgender □ non-binary □ prefer not to specify

What is the highest level of education you have received? (Some High School, High School, College, Bachelor, Masters, PhD)

What is your household income? □ less than $30,000 □ $30,000-$49,999 □ $50,000-$74,999 □ $75,000-$99,999 □ $100,000-$124,999 □ more than $125,000

What is your ethnicity? (drop down menu; Caucasian, African-American, Middle Eastern, Asian, Hispanic, Aboriginal, Other)

What country do you live in? □ USA □ Canada

What state, province or territory do you live in? (drop down menu with provinces, territories and states)

Are you currently working from home? □ Yes (if yes, full-time or part-time) □ No

If you are working from home, is this percentage of time different from pre-COVID-19? (more, less or the same)

Has your job been designated as an essential service during COVID-19? □ Yes □ No

What industry do you work in? (Agriculture, forestry, fishing, Retail trades, Construction, Services, Manufacturing, Public administration, Other/Nonclassifiable)

On average, how many hours per week did you work in your position BEFORE COVID-19 began? (Please check one ☑)

□ 0 hours □ 1-5 hours □ 5-10 hours □ 10-15 hours □ 15-20 hours □ 20-30 hours □ 30-40 hours □ More than 40 hours

On average, how many hours per week do you work in your position SINCE COVID-19 began? (Please check one ☑)

□ 0 hours □ 1-5 hours
LEADING THROUGH STRESS

☐ 5-10 hours ☐ 20-30 hours
☐ 10-15 hours ☐ 30-40 hours
☐ 15-20 hours ☐ More than 40 hours

Number of followers: drop down list from 1-25+

How long have you been working with your current followers?
☐ Less than 1 month ☐ More than 12 months
☐ 1-4 months
☐ 4-8 months
☐ 8-12 months

On average, on how many days each week did you interact with your followers BEFORE COVID-19?
☐ 1 days ☐ 4 days
☐ 2 days ☐ 5+ days
☐ 3 days

On average, on how many days each week did you interact with your followers SINCE COVID-19?
☐ 1 days ☐ 4 days
☐ 2 days ☐ 5+ days
☐ 3 days

What is your relationship status? (Married, Common-Law, Divorced, Widowed, Single)

Please indicate your romantic partner’s gender:
☐ male ☐ female ☐ transgender ☐ non-binary ☐ prefer not to specify

How long have you been in a relationship with your romantic partner? (less than 6 months, 6 months – 1 year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, 20-30 years, 30+ years)

How long have you been living with your romantic partner? (less than 6 months, 6 months – 1 year, 1-3 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, 20-30 years 30+ years)

Do you have any children? ☐ yes ☐ no

How many children do you have? (drop down menu; 0-10)

How old are your children? (drop down menu with ages for each child)

Do you live with your children? ☐ yes, full-time ☐ yes, part-time ☐ no

Are you currently homeschooling your children? ☐ yes, full-time ☐ yes, part-time ☐ no
What percentage of time each day do you spend taking care of your children? (0%-100% sliding scale)

How many hours per day do you interact with your family members? (0 hours, 1-3 hours, 3-6 hours, 6-10 hours, more than 10 hours)

*Thank you for your participation in this study.*
C.4 Written Debriefing for Leaders

Purpose of the study

This study focuses on learning more about the experiences of leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research suggests that work and life interact and influence one another in various ways. The researchers are interested in learning about leaders’ work experiences, as well as their work-related and personal well-being, at this time. The findings from this survey will be used to contribute to improving policies and practices to best support leaders during times of crisis in the future.

The following websites provide further information on mental health and social resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Mental Health Commission of Canada: https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/covid19
- Canadian Mental Health Association: https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health
- Mental Health America: https://mhanational.org/covid19
- For one-on-one counselling: https://eMentalHealth.ca
- Occupational Health Psychology Data Centre: https://www.ohpdata.com/for-employees

If you are interested in researching or finding out more about this area of research, here are a few references:


Who can I contact to learn more from this study or to voice my concerns?

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Dr. Kathryne Dupré, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Carleton University; E-mail: Kathryne.Dupre@carleton.ca, Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 6026)

Co-Investigator:
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If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Amanda McEvoy (amanda.mcevoy@carleton.ca)

If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B (by phone at 613-520-2600 ext. 4085 or via email at ethics@carleton.ca).

If you are raising issues or concerns, please use the study’s ethics approval number (provided by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-B; CUREB-B Clearance # 112985).

Thank you for taking part in this research.