Development and Test of a Model Linking Safety-Specific Transformational Leadership and Occupational Safety

Julian Barling¹
Queen's University
jbarling@business.queensu.ca

Catherine Loughlin²
University of Toronto

E. Kevin Kelloway³
Saint Mary's University

Abstract

The authors developed, tested, and replicated a model in which safety-specific transformational leadership predicted occupational injuries in 2 separate studies. Data from 174 restaurant workers (M age 26.75 years, range 15–64) were analyzed using structural equation modeling (LISREL 8; K. G. Jöreskog & D. Sörbom, 1993) and provided strong support for a model whereby safety-specific transformational leadership predicted occupational injuries through the effects of perceived safety climate, safety consciousness, and safety-related events. Study 2 replicated and extended this model with data from 164 young workers from diverse jobs (M age 19.54 years, range 14–24). Safety-specific transformational leadership and role overload were related to occupational injuries through the effects of perceived safety climate, safety consciousness, and safety-related events.

¹Julian Barling, School of Business, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada; ²Catherine Loughlin, Faculty of Management, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; ³E. Kevin Kelloway, Faculty of Management, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. A version of this article was presented at the conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 2000. We greatly acknowledge financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to Julian Barling, Catherine Loughlin, and E. Kevin Kelloway; from the School of Business, Queen's University to Julian Barling; and from the Connaught Foundation, University of Toronto to Catherine Loughlin. We also acknowledge the help provided by the Toronto Health and Safety Legal Clinic at various stages of this project. We express our appreciation to Stephanie Brady for her assistance throughout this study and to Nick Turner for constructive comments on versions of this article. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Julian Barling, School of Business, Canada.