Adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms and passive leadership: The mediating role of daytime sleepiness

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Abstract

Passive leadership is attracting empirical interest with the detrimental effects of this type of leadership on a broad array of individual and organizational outcomes becoming apparent. However, just why leaders would engage in this type of nonleadership has received less research attention. We investigate whether and how leaders' attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is associated with passive leadership. Using a framework specifying how the physiology of sleepiness impacts the workplace, we hypothesize that leaders' ADHD is associated with passive leadership indirectly through daytime sleepiness. After controlling for leaders' age, gender, and preclinical symptoms of depression and anxiety, standard ordinary least squares regression procedures were implemented through Hayes' PROCESS models. Multisource data from 98 leader-follower groups (M number of followers per leader = 4.38, SD = 1.78) showed that the effects of leaders' ADHD symptoms on passive leadership were mediated by daytime sleepiness. Conceptual, methodological, and practical implications are discussed.