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DEVELOPING AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE REPRESENTATIONAL PREDICAMENTS AT WORK

ABSTRACT

Employees with representational predicaments believe that authorities' impressions of their workplace contributions or circumstances are unfavourably incomplete or inaccurate. A literature review suggested four hypothesized types of representational predicament: two, disregarding of non-canonical work, and disregarding of job-related stressors, characterized primarily by unfavourable invisibility; two, negative spotlighting and unfair canonical presumption of guilt, characterized primarily by unfavourable visibility. This study developed an instrument to measure prevalence of representational predicaments. Qualitative interviews confirmed the hypothesized variables, but exploratory factor analyses identified a different set of four emergent subscales. Of these: two, being neglected and negative spotlighting, indicated representational predicaments; two, fair recognition of work, and fair treatment of alleged mistakes, indicated their absence. Further research into the relationship between individualized consideration and representational predicaments is suggested.
Disclaimer

The responsibility for facts, languages and opinions expressed in this publication rests exclusively with the authors and their interpretations, do not necessarily reflect the views or the policy of the Hong Kong Institute of Business Studies and the Faculty of Business.
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As defined by Snell & Wong (2009), representational predicaments (RPs) reflect an employee’s belief that a key superior has a mental picture about his or her work, competence, or performance, which, from the employee’s perspective, is not only inaccurate, misguided and/or incomplete, to the extent that it constitutes false impressions, but is also unfavourable to himself or herself. Snell & Wong (2009) distinguish two broad types of RP, one characterized primarily by unfavourable invisibility (UFI), the other characterized primarily by unfavourable visibility (UFV).

RPs that are characterized primarily by UFI reflect an employee’s belief that a key superior has, to the detriment of the employee, been unaware of, or inattentive to, one or more significant aspects of the employee’s work or work context, thereby entailing perceptual incongruence vis-à-vis the superior (Graen & Schiemann, 1978; White, Crino, & Hatfield, 1985).

RPs that are characterized primarily by UFV reflect an employee’s belief that a key superior has been paying disproportionate attention to events, outcomes, allegations or impressions that cast the employee in a negative light. Some RPs of this kind may, from the employee’s perspective, entail perceptual incongruence vis-à-vis the superior, as when the employee believes that the superior has been focusing exclusively on his or her mistakes and ignoring good work. Other RPs of this kind entail attributional conflict (Wilhelm, Herd, & Steiner, 1993), where the employee believes he or she has been being wrongly blamed for mistakes or mishaps that should have been attributed to others.
RPs primarily featuring unfavourable invisibility

Prior literature has identified two types of situation in which employees experience RPs that are characterized primarily by UFI (Snell & Wong, 2009). The first type of situation involves the performance of disregarded non-canonical work. Non-canonical work is not formally prescribed by organizational ‘road maps’ (Brown & Duguid, 2000), such as job descriptions, formal training events or official instructions. Like contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Johnson, 2001; Motowidlo, 2000; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994), non-canonical work typically requires persistence, dedication, and extra effort, and entails facilitating, helping or cooperating with others. Unlike contextual performance, employees appear to experience non-canonical work as somehow extorted by situational imperatives, rather than as discretionary effort (Snell & Wong, 2009). In the case of disregarded non-canonical work, the employee believes also that, to his or her detriment, such effort, and the value deriving from it, is going unnoticed by the respective superior, or if noticed, is being substantially under-estimated (Baird & Diebolt, 1976). Studies have identified relational practices (Fletcher, 1995, 1998), articulation work (Hampson & Junor, 2005), compassion work (O’Donohoe & Turley, 2006), and on-call support services (Star & Strauss, 1999) as non-canonical work activities that appear to be prone to UFI.

Relational practices comprise various ‘behind the scenes’ activities, such as providing interpersonal support and undertaking office based ‘housekeeping’ activities, aimed at keeping projects on track, helping or empowering others, building and nurturing cooperation with other parties, or maintaining team spirit (Fletcher, 1995, 1998). If employees engage in relational practices, they may experience fleeting acknowledgement for their efforts, but these are likely to ‘get disappeared’ in terms of longer term recognition by superiors (Fletcher, 1995, 1998; Gherardi, 1994, p. 597; Townley, 1994).
Articulation work involves improvisation of solutions and, where necessary, the smoothing of interpersonal conflicts, in order to achieve alignment, coordination and integration among various service providers and stages of work flow (Bowker, Timmermans, & Star, 1995; Gerson & Star, 1986; Hampson & Junor, 2005; Star & Strauss, 1999; Strauss, 1985; Strauss, Fagerbaugh, Suczek, & Wiener, 1985). Such work tends to reside outside the boundaries of what is anticipated by formal models of work and organization (Strauss, 1993; Star & Strauss, 1999, p. 10), and hence may be inherently invisible to managements.

Compassion work entails being psychologically present for others in order to alleviate, or make more bearable, their pain or suffering (Kanov, Maitlis, Worline, Dutton, Frost, & Lillius, 2004). For example, a terminally ill client may require a life insurance agent to counsel her (Snell & Wong, 2009, p. 789), while a clerk at a newspaper office may need to console a bereaved member of the public, who breaks down while placing an In Memoriam notice (O’Donohoe & Turley, 2006). While employees who perform compassion work are likely to appreciate its intrinsic value, they may also believe that superiors do not consider it ‘productive’ (Snell & Wong, 2009, p. 789).

On-call support services are typically undertaken by technicians, nurses, clerks, and secretaries, in support of managers or professionals who enjoy substantially greater status, and who may underestimate the extent of creative improvisation, emotional intelligence, and cognitive problem solving required in such work (Blomberg, Suchman & Trigg 1996; Bolton 2004; Robinson 1992; Shapin 1989; Star & Strauss 1999).

Prior literature has suggested a number of factors that may predispose the above kinds of non-canonical work activities to UFI and RPs. These include their lack of amenability to systematization and control (Fletcher, 1995, 1998), and their expression of the ethics of care and of traditional female gender identity (Fletcher, 1995, 1998; O’Donohoe & Turley, 2006), the voices of which are typically silent in organizational discourse (Derry, 1989). Moreover,
relational practices and compassion work are discreet activities, which are incompatible with self-promotion (Fletcher, 1998) and with pecuniary calculation (O’Donohoe & Turley, 2006).

The second type of situation, in which employees experience RPs that feature UFI, entails the suffering of job-related stressors or obstacles, which, employees believe, either goes unnoticed by, or is disregarded by, key superiors. For example, assembly line workers may believe that their superiors have been ignoring the adverse physical impact on them of poor ergonomic design or substandard components (DeSantis, 1999; Runcie, 2000), call centre employees may believe that supervisors have not been appreciating the adverse psychological impact of abusive calls (Korczynski, 2003), while night nurses may feel generally isolated and neglected (Brown & Brooks, 2002). We cite these cases, not as an exhaustive list, but rather as illustrations of the wide variety of stressors that employees may regard as going unnoticed or unaddressed by their superiors. Commentators have suggested that the apparent neglect of job-related stressors might reflect a turning away from the human relations movement by managements (Dingley, 1997), attempts by managements to harness all the resources that human resources can offer (Sturdy & Fineman, 2001), and the associated neglect of the Kantian categorical imperative, which urges respect for other human beings and not to regard other human being merely as means to serve instrumental purposes (Legge, 1998; Shipley, 1998).

RPs primarily featuring unfavourable visibility

Prior literature has identified two types of situation, in which employees experience RPs that are characterized primarily by UFV. In the first type of situation, the employee perceives that a key superior has been focusing attention on the negatives rather than the positives of his or her performance, a phenomenon that we term negative spotlighting. In the event that an
employee has made a mistake, has underperformed, has engaged in rule violation, or has otherwise caused a problem or loss for their organization, and in the event also that he or she acknowledges and accepts that this has been the case, that employee may still experience perceptual incongruence with a key superior regarding the relative salience or gravity of such issues in the context of their overall performance. RPs concerning negative spotlighting thus arise if the employee perceives that a key superior has not been taking mitigating circumstances or offsetting achievements into account when arriving at an overall evaluation of their actions (Washington State Supreme Court, 1996; Odom & Green, 2003), and has thus been spotlighting faults (Gabriel, 1998). Such cases might reflect the ‘negative’ management style of a key authority (Kagawa, 1997; Swierczek & Onishi, 2003) or may even reflect a key superior has been engaged in a prejudicial search for incriminating evidence (Halcrow, 2002).

In the second type of situation, unfair canonical presumption of guilt, the employee believes that he or she has not done anything particularly wrong, but receives a reprimand from a key superior, and/or perceives that that a key superior concurs with a third party accusation or complaint about himself or herself that the employee regards as unwarranted. In such situations, the employee may consider that the key superior is misattributing blame for problems that have actually been caused by others (Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979; Bell & Tetlock, 1989; Bonazzi, 1983; Brown & Jones, 2000; Spiri, 2001; Tang, Johansson, Wadensten, Wenneberg, & Ahlström, 2007), and/or that the key superior is initiating or concurring with accusations against himself or herself that are based on fabricated evidence (d'Iribarne, 2002).

Although, as analyzed above, RPs of both types may be regarded as primarily characterized by UFV, since what employees believe is ‘seen’ by the respective key superiors them overshadows what is not seen by them, they are also, by implication, characterized by some UFI.
THE NEED FOR A SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Qualitative research has analyzed the nature of RPs in various contexts, but quantitative research may be more appropriate for establishing the antecedents and consequences of RPs (Snell & Wong, 2009). Quantitative studies might, for example, test hypotheses deriving from Snell & Wong’s (2009, p. 797) prediction that RPs are more likely to arise in situations where power asymmetries and social distance between employees and managements are relatively high. Quantitative studies might, as suggested by Snell & Wong (2009, p. 798) investigate the impact of RPs on overall job satisfaction (Rose, 2005), organizational commitment (Price, 1997) and turnover intention (Lyons 1971). Such research would require a suitable survey instrument for measuring RPs, and developing such an instrument formed the aim of the current study.

METHODOLOGY

Instrument and Scale Development

The construct of RP, its constituents, UFV and UFI, and the associated phenomena of perceptual congruence and attributional conflict, form a sets of complex explanatory phenomena, which are not directly observable, and therefore present a considerable challenge for measurement. We developed an instrument for validation, comprising 32 items. Among these, 18 items sought to measure the perceived extent of two RPs considered to be predominantly characterized by UFI, namely: the disregarding of non-canonical work (8 items); and the disregarding of job-related stressors or obstacles (10 items). In addition, 14 items sought to measure the extent of perceived subjection to the two RPs predominantly
characterized by UFV, namely: negative spotlighting of performance gaps or rule beaches (6 items); and subjection to unwarranted accusations, complaints or reprimands (8 items). Among the 32 items, half were designed in reversed form for each of the four subscales, so as to reduce potential social desirability effects that might otherwise lead to bias in a self-reported scale (Burton-Jones, 2009). Seven-point Likert rating scales, with anchors from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) were used for each scale item.

The original questionnaire was developed in English, but since our targeted sample comprised Hong Kong Chinese employees, we also produced a Chinese version. To enhance the accuracy of the translation, we asked an independent researcher to translate the Chinese version back into English version (Butcher, 1982). In addition, as a check to ensure that the investigators’ understanding of the items coincided with those of the respondents, a pretest was conducted with five local managers, which resulted in revisions to some wordings, based on their feedback. The initial questionnaire items are shown in Appendix 1.

Insert Appendix 1 about here

*Individual interviews*

As a further check on the construct validity of the hypothesized subscales, and on whether the questionnaire items were eliciting consistent and reliable responses, a convenience sample of eight respondents, after completing the questionnaire, were invited to participate in individual interviews. All eight accepted, and in the interview, they were asked to explain their responses to items that they had scored one or seven, and to share case illustrations of the four main types of representational predicament (and the absence thereof) based on their personal workplace experiences.
Survey

A total of 327 survey responses (193 from females, 134 from males) were collected through snowball sampling (Doran 1997). Respondents included 226 frontline staff, 62 junior managers, 26 middle managers, 4 senior managers, and 9 not indicating their position. Altogether, 196 respondents were employed by companies employing fewer than 500 and 131 respondents were employed by companies employing over 500.

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

Interviewees’ case illustrations indicated a reasonably close match with our hypothesized subscales and their constituent items. We now present eight cases reported by the interviewees to illustrate, respectively the presence or absence of the various RP subtypes.

Disregarding of non-canonical work

Below is an extract from an interview with Ms. J, a female in her mid-40s, describing a RP involving the disregarding of non-canonical work in her previous employment at a printing company. We shall refer to this as Case 1. Ms. J’s account indicated perceptual incongruence and UFI vis-à-vis her line manager, in that that she believed that demands on her internal services by other colleagues constituted additional duties, but her line manager had not prescribed such duties and appeared not to notice or recognize their necessity and value.

Interviewer: Did you feel you took up a lot of duties, which were not recognized as part of your role as an administrator at that time?
Ms J: I played a lot of roles at that time, and until the arrival of a lady, who was responsible for administration, I did everything.

Interviewer: So your role required you to take up a lot of different responsibilities?

Ms J: Yes ... I had to do everything because of the company’s small scale. From the point of view of my boss, only certain things were my duty, but my colleagues would assume that I also should do a lot of additional things to support them.

Interviewer: They would realize that you have done a lot of extra work?

Ms J: Yes, but I felt it was unfair that... the company would not create another position for administration until after I left.

Case 2, below, is extracted from an interview with Mr. S, a male in his mid-40s, who had been working for a small IT company for over a year, and indicated the absence of the kind of RP that is illustrated in Case 1. Instead, Mr. S believed that he had gained recognition from his key superior for performing previously unprescribed duties.

Mr. S: In matters concerning my job, when I realize that some changes can be made to make it better, I’ll reflect my opinions to my boss, and he’ll reflect these to the company and will make some changes. As a result, from these workplace examples, you’ll realize that your boss actually trusts your judgment at work. Likewise, the boss will also see you as protecting his company’s interest and as doing your job to make the company better.

Disregarding of job-related stressors

The following extract, Case 3, is from an interview with Ms. C, a female in her mid-40s, who had been working as an accountant in the Hong Kong based regional headquarters office
of a large manufacturing firm for over 20 years. The extract describes a RP, which involves the disregarding of job-related stressors, and which is characterized by perceptual incongruence and UFI vis-à-vis key superiors, who, according to Ms. C's account, did not recognize the adverse impact of substantial unpaid overtime work.

Interviewer: ... As you said, your superior does not fully understand the impact of overtime working, so the morale might be fairly low. Do you feel that the management has ever tried to figure out any measures to remedy the situation?

Ms. C: I do not think so. Probably not. Right now, it is true that morale is pretty low. Besides, there are a lot of newcomers and they just want to secure their jobs. If someone thinks he or she has better opportunities outside, they will just quit the job.

Interviewer: So you feel that management has never attempted to improve the situation? They just allow the low morale to carry on?

Ms. C: Yes...

Interviewer: So they just turn a blind eye to the problem?

Ms. C: Or the management just lays off those who, they think, are not contributing. And I do not mean that just my superior is like that, I mean the whole company runs like that.

By contrast, Case 4, below, extracted from an interview with Ms. L, a female in her late 30s, who had worked for a local government organization for over 10 years, illustrated the absence of the kind of RP illustrated in case 3. Instead, Ms. L indicated that key superiors recognized and praised her resilience.

Interviewer: This means that although you voiced your opinion that you were unable to handle the task at the time, you remained the one who took up the job. Then, what was the result?
HKIBS/WPS/068-1011

Mrs. L: Afterwards, the management board showed appreciation for my willingness to work under such a tight schedule.

Interviewer: How did the management board show their appreciation?

Mrs. L: I think the management board reflected their view of my work in the appraisal report. Besides this, they nominated me for the award of commendation.

**Negative spotlighting**

Below is Case 5, which illustrates a RP, which involves negative spotlighting, and is characterized by perceptual incongruence and UFV vis-à-vis a supervisor. It is another extract from the transcript of Ms. C., and also appears to reflect what Ms. C perceives as her superior’s negatively-oriented leadership style in focusing exclusively on actual or potential weak points.

Ms C: Whenever I have committed a mistake, my superior will keep that in mind. She will make sure she remembers my mistake. On the other hand, even if I have done 10 tasks correctly, she would not be able to recall even one of them. My superior always bears in mind what kinds of mistakes I have made and constantly reminds me not to commit them again. In general, she explicitly reminds me of my previous errors all the time. I feel that she has to recall my mistakes even though they were made a very long time ago but she never remembers even one of my recent achievements. Once she assigned me a task to complete but she never reminded me about it, until several years later, she said, ‘I remember you still have not completed that task’.

By contrast, in Case 6, next, Mr. A, a male intern in his early 20s, who had worked for a medium-sized IT networking company for one year, indicated the absence of perceptual
incongruence vis-à-vis his boss regarding performance evaluation, and hence no negative spotlighting.

Interviewer: Item 1 was, ‘The management usually gives a fair weighting to both the positives and the negatives of my job performance’. You agreed with this.

Mr. A: Yes... my boss has been fair to me. If you work slowly, he scolds you; if you work efficiently, he praises you.

Unfair canonical presumption of guilt

Below, as Case 7, is a third extract from the transcript of the interview with Ms. C. This particular extract reflects Ms. C’s perception that she suffered an RP involving unfair canonical presumption of guilt, characterized by attributional conflict and UFV vis-à-vis her superior, who, according to Ms. C automatically assumed the validity of an unfavourable allegation against her.

Interviewer: So, this branch manager was complaining that you were working too slowly.

Ms. C: Yes.

Interviewer: Was it really the case that your efficiency was low?

Ms. C: Of course not. It was just that my plate was stuffed with too much work. The workload was so high that I did not have enough time to finish all the required tasks!

However, from their perspective, they may think it was my problem of being slow.

Interviewer: Then how did your superior handle the complaint when she received it?

Ms. C: She told me directly that I worked too slowly.
By contrast, the following extract, Case 8, taken from the interview with Mr. A, indicated the absence of this kind of RP.

Interviewer: Okay... You also agree with item 11, ‘When things go wrong, the management tends to listen to my side of the story’.

Mr. A: Yeah... when an order is made, I send out emails and on the mailing list there are also the other departments. Normally, when these departments receive my emails, they are supposed to cross-check whether there is an overlap. However, most of them do not cross-check. Then, when an overlap arises, and departments discover that they have sent duplicate items to the customer, they come to my supervisor to put the blame on me. However, it is actually their problem.

Interviewer: So your supervisor understands that it is actually the fault of the other departments, not yours.

Mr. A: Yes.

Interviewer: Then will your supervisor later on approach these other departments clarifying that it is in the first place not your problem although they complained about you?

Mr. A: Yes. He’ll call the respective department immediately, telling them they have mixed things up.

Interviewer: So he’ll tell them on your behalf, and you approve of his way of dealing with these kinds of incidents?

Mr. A: Yes.
Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a set of multivariate statistical methods for data reduction (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum & Strahan, 1999), enabling investigators to maximize parsimony and to obtain a reasonable approximation of uni-dimensionality (Churchill, 1979). For EFA, the ratio of a sample size to items should be above 10:1 (Nunnally, 1978). Since there were 32 items in the study questionnaire, representing the four hypothesized subscales, and a sample of 327 questionnaires were returned, the ratio in this research was 10.0:1, which was acceptable in terms of the sample size required to carry out EFA.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, and Bartlett’s significance test of sphericity were first evaluated in order to check whether or not the EFA could be further analyzed (Malhorta, 1999). An acceptable level of KMO for exploratory factor analysis is 0.8 or higher (Malhorta, 1999), and was 0.906 in this study, above the acceptable level. The result for Bartlett’s significance test was 0.001, surpassing the acceptable level, 0.05 or lower (Malhorta, 1999). Hence it was deemed appropriate to conduct a principal component analysis, which produced an initial seven-factor solution, with eigenvalues over 1.0, as listed in Table 1.

The hypothesized dimensions did not emerge strongly in the first run. Two hypothesized subscales, disregarding of non-canonical work, and disregarding of job-related stressors, had been intended to describe RPs that primarily involve UFI. However, the non reverse-scored items from these two hypothesized subscales did not emerge as two distinct
factors. Instead, most of them (A17, A19, A21, A27, A29, A30, and A31) loaded onto one common factor (factor 1; being neglected), while half of the corresponding reverse-scored items (A16, A20, A23, and A24) loaded onto another common factor (factor 2). Inspection of the latter items suggested that if the scoring thereof were to be unreversed, factor 2 would describe the fair recognition of work.

Two hypothesized subscales, negative spotlighting, and unfair canonical presumption of guilt, had been intended to describe RPs involving UFV. Of the items from the proposed negative spotlighting subscale, the non-reverse-scored ones loaded, as expected, onto one factor (factor 3, negative spotlighting), but two of the reverse-scored items loaded onto a different factor (factor 4). Inspection of the items loading onto factor 4, which were all reverse-scored, suggested that if the scoring thereof were to be unreversed, factor 4 would describe fair treatment of alleged mistakes. Items comprising the proposed unfair canonical presumption of guilt subscale were found to be scattered among factors 5, 6, and 7. There was no discernable conceptual distinction between these emergent factors, each of which accounted for less than 5% of the variance. Since factor 6 and factor 7 had loadings of > 0.5 by fewer than 3 items, they were dropped from further analysis.

EFA was run a second time, including factors 1-5 in the analysis. Subsequent interpretation of the scree test, however, suggested only four factors, see Figure 1. This four-factor solution involved 18 items, with eigenvalues over 1.0, as listed in Table 2, with KMO of 0.892 and a result for Bartlett’s significance test of 0.001, again surpassing the acceptable level (Malhorta, 1999).

In the final 4-factor solution, however, item A29 was, after inspection, dropped from factor 1, because in terms of meaning content, it was very similar to item A30, which had a
higher factor loading. After dropping A29, factor 1 comprised 6 items (A17, A19, A21, A27, A30 and A31), representing being neglected. Moreover, item A22 was dropped from factor 2, on the grounds that this item, unlike the other items loading onto that factor, does not refer directly to work content. After dropping item 22, factor 2 comprised 4 items (A16, A20, A23, A24), representing the fair recognition of work. Factor 3 is made up of 3 items (A2, A4, A5), representing negative spotlighting. Factor 4 contains 3 items (A3, A6, A11), representing fair treatment of alleged mistakes. After the adjustments, the four emergent factors still have generally sound empirical support, both in terms of the magnitude of item loadings, and in terms of inter-item consistency.

Reliability estimates

Table 3 provides the results of an analysis of coefficient alphas, representing the internal consistency and homogeneity (Hair, Anderson & Tatham, 1987) of the 4 subscales. These were as follows: F1, being neglected, 0.84; F2, fair recognition of work, 0.75; F3, negative spotlighting, 0.73; and F4, fair treatment of alleged mistakes, 0.62. While the alphas for F1-F3 were above the generally accepted level of 0.7, the alpha for F4 was below 0.7, indicating the need for caution when interpreting the results of that particular subscale.

Basic statistics

Table 3 also indicates the means, standard deviations, correlations, and sample size for each of the four factors. The correlation coefficient between F1 and F3, both measuring RPs,
was positive, as was the correlation between F2 and F4, both measuring the absence of RPs, while the other inter-correlations were negative.

DISCUSSION

Table 4 summarizes the pattern of matches between items from the hypothesized subscales, as illustrated by the respective cases, and the emergent subscales. A general discovery was that the EFA failed to establish that the hypothesized reverse scale items were exact opposites of their non-reversed counterparts. As shown in Table 4, although interviewees could provide personal workplace cases corresponding to each pole of the hypothesized subscales, and overall there was some correspondence between the hypothesized subscales and the emergent subscales, there tended not to be close one-to-one correspondence between them.

The emergent F1 subscale, being neglected, comprises an amalgam of non-reversed items from two hypothesized subscales: disregarding of non-canonical work, and disregarding of job-related stressors or obstacles. The constituent items measure the perceived presence of RPs that are primarily characterized by UFI and by perceptual incongruence between employees and their key superiors about the work in its socio-technical context. The emergent F2 subscale, fair recognition of work, comprises an amalgam of originally reverse-scored items from the same two hypothesized subscales: disregarding of non-canonical work, and disregarding of job-related stressors or obstacles. The items that constitute F2 measure the perceived absence of the RPs that are measured by F1. The emergent F3 subscale, negative spotlighting, corresponds with the non-reversed items from the hypothesized negative
spotlighting subscale, describing a particular kind of RP that is primarily characterized by UFV and by perceptual incongruence between employees and their key superiors. The emergent F4 subscale, fair treatment of alleged mistakes, comprises an amalgam of originally reverse-scored items from two hypothesized subscales: negative spotlighting and unfair canonical presumption of guilt. The items that constitute F4 measure the perceived absence of RPs that are primarily characterized by UFV and characterized by perceptual congruence or by attributional conflict between employees and their key superiors.

Following the EFA, the resulting instrument may be used in further studies to examine the causal relationships between RPs and their antecedents and consequences. Various potential antecedents and consequences for testing have been identified earlier in the paper. In addition, as suggested by Cases 2-8, it would be interesting to examine the role in preventing or ameliorating RPs, of individualized consideration, a component of transformational leadership, which reflects the extent to which the leader cares about subordinates' needs and concerns and seeks to provide emotional and developmental support (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994; Burns, 1978).
REFERENCES


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HKIBS/WPS/068-1011
Table 2

Further Exploratory Factor Analysis

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<th>Component 3</th>
<th>Component 4</th>
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Variance explained

|                | 33 | 9 | 8 | 6 |

Notes. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. None of the items are reversed.
Table 3

*Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficient Reliabilities, and Correlations*

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<th>Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
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<th>F2</th>
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*Note.* All correlations are significant at $p \leq 0.01$. 

25
Table 4

**Mapping of Hypothesized Subscales against Emergent Subscales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized subscales</th>
<th>Illustrative case</th>
<th>Mapping to which emergent subscale?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disregarded non-canonical work (non-reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 1</td>
<td>3 out of 4 items load onto F1 - being neglected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disregarded job-related stressor/obstacle (non-reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 3</td>
<td>3 out of 5 items load onto F1 - being neglected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disregarded non-canonical work (reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 2</td>
<td>2 out of 4 items load onto F2 - fair recognition of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disregarded job-related stressor/obstacle (reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 4</td>
<td>2 out of 5 items load onto F2 - fair recognition of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative spotlighting (non-reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 5</td>
<td>All 3 items load onto F3 - negative spotlighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative spotlighting (reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 6</td>
<td>2 out of 3 items load onto F4 - fair treatment of alleged mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair canonical presumption of guilt (reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 8</td>
<td>1 out of 4 items loaded onto F4 - fair treatment of alleged mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unfair canonical presumption of guilt (non-reversed items)</td>
<td>Case 7</td>
<td>None of the 4 items load onto F1 - F4</td>
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Figure 1. Scree plot of exploratory factor analysis.
Appendix 1

Original Questionnaire Items

Negative spotlighting (6 items).
1. The management usually gives a fair weighting to both the positives and the negatives of my job performance. (Reverse scale)
2. The management tends to pay more attention to my failures than to my successes.
3. If I make mistakes, the management usually sees this in proportion. (Reverse scale).
4. The management always puts undue emphasis on my weaknesses.
5. The management never forgives the mistake that I have committed.
6. The management tends to remember my strengths, even when I make mistakes. (Reverse scale).

Unfair canonical presumption of guilt (8 items).
7. I always have to handle certain individuals with extreme caution, otherwise they might complain about me.
8. In this job I tend to get blamed for other people’s mistakes.
9. The management generally accepts my explanations when other people let me down. (Reverse scale).
10. The management often blames me whenever others fail to deliver on their promises.
11. When things go wrong, the management tends to listen to my side of the story. (Reverse scale).
12. In this job I never have to worry about being unfairly criticized. (Reverse scale).
13. People often make unfair allegations to the management about my work.
14. I always feel respected by the people I deal with in my work. (Reverse scale).

Disregarding of non-canonical work (8 items).
15. The job often requires me to do things that are not considered to be my formal duties.
16. The management takes all the work that I do into consideration. (Reverse scale).
17. The management disregards many of the things that I do even though they are a necessary part of my job.
18. The management always recognizes that there are important aspects of my job that cannot be prescribed. (Reverse scale).
19. There are important differences between the work that I have to do and what management thinks the work involves.
20. The management is generally aware of all the aspects of my work. (Reverse scale).
21. The management tends to disregard my effort even when it helps to address, eliminate or prevent a company problem.
22. The management fully trusts my effort and integrity. (Reverse scale).

Disregarding of job-related stressor or obstacle (10 items).
23. The work assignments given to me are always reasonable and appropriate tasks for me to do. (Reverse scale).
24. The management always realizes that my job depends on the cooperation of others. (Reverse scale).
25. At work I often have to deal with impossible demands.
26. The management always understands that some aspects of my work can be very stressful. (Reverse scale).
27. The management tends to ignore my needs even when it is clear that I need help.
28. The management always gives me support whenever I am under pressure. (Reverse scale).
29. I often handle unpleasant problems on my own, without recognition from the management.
30. The management makes no allowances for troublesome problems that I have to face in my work.
31. The management fails to appreciate how hard I have to work in order to get things to run smoothly.
32. The management tends to be aware of the roadblocks that I have to overcome in order to meet targets. (Reverse scale).
Appendix 2

Reconstructed subscales

Being neglected
17. The management disregards many of the things that I do even though they are a necessary part of my job.
19. There are important differences between the work that I have to do and what management thinks the work involves.
21. The management tends to disregard my effort even when it helps to address, eliminate or prevent a company problem.
27. The management tends to ignore my needs even when it is clear that I need help.
30. The management makes no allowances for troublesome problems that I have to face in my work.
31. The management fails to appreciate how hard I have to work in order to get things to run smoothly.

Negative Spotlighting
2. The management tends to pay more attention to my failures than to my successes.
4. The management always puts undue emphasis on my weaknesses.
5. The management never forgives the mistakes that I have committed.

Fair Recognition of Work
16. The management takes all the work that I do into consideration.
20. The management is generally aware of all the aspects of my work.
23. The work assignments given to me are always reasonable and appropriate tasks for me to do.
24. The management always realizes that my job depends on the cooperation of others.

Fair Treatment of Alleged Mistakes
3. If I make mistakes, the management usually sees this in proportion.
6. The management tends to remember my strengths, even when I make mistakes.
11. When things go wrong, the management tends to listen to my side of the story.