The effect of working with difficult clients on recovery need, through the mediating effect of emotional load

The moderating effect of participation in decision-making and social support from the leader.

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Abstract

Service occupations have been highlighted as a vulnerable profession with respect to stress. Recovery need is a natural consequence of normal work efforts, but can be detrimental to wellbeing if the work efforts goes beyond normal amounts. Hence, it is important to identify resources that can aid in keeping recovery need low. The objectives of this study are 1) To investigate the correlation between working with difficult clients, emotional load and need for recovery among bank employees. 2) To investigate whether participation in decision-making and/or social support from the leader could decrease this effect. Participants were recruited by e-mail. They filled out the Short Inventory for Measuring Psychosocial Hazards (SIMPH), which is a self-report questionnaire. Data was analysed using PROCESS, an add-on software for moderation analyses in SPSS. The relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need was partially mediated by emotional load. Participation in decision-making and social support from the leader did not moderate the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load. They enhanced the relationship between emotional load and recovery need when tested in isolation, but acted as a buffer when tested together. Participation in decision-making and social support from the leader weakened the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need in isolation in two of the analyses, but not in the final analysis. The interaction of the double moderation was not significant when they were tested together on the direct relationship.

Key words: Clients, Participation, Social Support, Stress, Supervisor Employee Interaction

Sammendrag

Serviceyrker har blitt løftet frem som en sårbar yrkesgruppe i forbindelse med stress. Behovet for å hente seg inn etter en arbeidsdag er en naturlig konsekvens av normal arbeidsinnsats, men kan ha negativ innvirkning på velvære dersom det overgår normale mengder. Det er derfor viktig å identifisere ulike ressurser som kan bidra i å holde behovet for å hente seg inn, lavt. Målene for denne studien er 1) Å undersøke korrelasjonen mellom å jobbe med vanskelige klienter, emosjonell belastning og behov for å hente seg inn blant bankansatte. 2) Å undersøke hvorvidt deltakelse i beslutningstaking og/eller støtte fra lederen kan redusere denne effekten. Deltakerne ble rekruttert via mail. De fylte ut Short Inventory for Measuring Psychosocial Hazards (SIMPH), som er et selvrapport-spørreskjema. Data ble analysert ved bruk av PROCESS, som er et programvaretillegg for moderasjonsanalyser i SPSS. Forholdet mellom kontakt med vanskelige klienter og behovet for å hente seg inn var delvis mediert av emosjonell belastning. Deltakelse i beslutningstaking og sosial støtte fra leder modererte ikke forholdet mellom kontakt med vanskelige klienter og emosjonell belastning. De forsterket forholdet mellom emosjonell belastning og behov for å hente seg inn når de ble testet i isolasjon, men svekket forholdet når de ble testet sammen. Deltakelse i beslutningstaking og sosial støtte fra leder svekket det direkte forholdet mellom kontakt med vanskelige klienter og behov for å hente seg inn når de ble testet i isolasjon i to av analysene, men ikke i den siste analysen. Interaksjonen av den doble modereringen var ikke signifikant når de ble testet sammen på det direkte forholdet.

Nøkkelord: Klienter, Deltakelse, Sosial støtte, Stress, Leder-medarbeider interaksjon

Acknowledgements

This thesis, "The effect of working with difficult clients on recovery need, through the mediating effect of emotional load. The moderating effect of participation in decision-making and social support from the leader" is based on a survey of bank employees' wellbeing. The survey was conducted in a large constitutional bank in Belgium. The thesis has been written to fulfil the graduation requirements of the Master's Programme in Psychology at the University of Bergen (UiB). We were engaged in writing this thesis from August 2015 to February 2016.

We come from different backgrounds and master programmes in psychology: Work- and Organisation Psychology and Psychological Sciences. This interdisciplinary cooperation has inspired fruitful conversations and different perspectives that we believe have helped this thesis. To ensure an equal division of labour, we have actively taken part in every aspect of the thesis. By working closely together, we believe that this thesis truly is the product of joint efforts.

We would like to thank our supervisor, Professor Guy Notelaers, for excellent and useful guidance and support during this process. The comments and feedback we have received during this process have left us feeling more equipped to do research, by challenging us to connect theories and ideas, as well as challenging us with advanced statistical procedures. We also wish to thank all of the respondents, without whose cooperation we would not have been able to write this thesis.

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We hope you enjoy our work.

Sincerely,

Christer Halsøy Normann and Åshild Marie Tveit Walseth

Bergen, 14.02.16

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Introduction

Work- and organisational psychology has shown that stress-related illnesses seem to become more prevalent now compared to previous years. This is evident both in the growing number of studies on the topic, as well as from population studies showing that stress-related illnesses are increasingly more common diagnoses. For instance, a study on a Norwegian sample of young people aged 20-39 shows that psychological stress has increased by more than 100% in the period 1992-2000 (Tveramo, Dalgard, & Claussen, 2003). A comparative analytical report on work-related stress, written for the European Observatory of Working Life (EurWORK), revealed that 29% of the Dutch population experienced a need for recovery after work in 2008 (Hesselink & Houtman, 2011). The report further revealed that as many as 12% of the population had a high burnout score, and that 18% experienced high work stress (Hesselink & Houtman, 2011). Moreover, 47% of the population reported that the work stress had increased during the past two years (Hesselink & Houtman, 2011).

To understand these trends, it may be beneficial to shed a light on need for recovery after work. Recovery need has been identified as an important factor in stress-related illnesses, and is shown to reflect a bridge between normal work related efforts and work related illnesses, such as fatigue and burnout (Van Veldhoven & Broersen, 2003). It can be a warning sign of a negative developmental trajectory of psychological wellbeing. The concept recovery need originates from the Effort-Recuperation model (Meijman, Mulder, Drenth, & Thierry, 1998). The model shows that if the need for recovery is not sufficiently fulfilled, one can observe a cumulative effect. The residual need for recovery will eventually constitute a larger need for recovery that will be more difficult to satisfy. As a result, employees may be at risk for work related fatigue syndroms (Jansen, Kant, & van den Brandt, 2002; Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006), health complaints (Sluiter, De Croon, Meijman, & Frings-Dresen, 2003; Sluiter, van der Beek, & Frings-Dresen, 1999), and decreased psychological wellbeing (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006). The consequences of this can lead to problems such as sickness absenteeism and even long-term work disablement (De Croon, Sluiter, & Frings-Dresen, 2003).

In particular, professions with a high degree of direct contact with customers, clients or patients have been highlighted as an occupational high-risk group for increased need for recovery (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Sonnentag, Kuttler, & Fritz, 2010). Working with clients can be both emotionally and cognitively demanding. If these demands are not met with an appropriate resource, the Conservation of Resources theory and the Job Demand-Control model suggest that increased strain and stress reactions can follow as a result (Hobfoll, 1989;

Karasek, 1979). This thesis will study the need for recovery in the banking sector. The sample used in the thesis is drawn from employees at the operational level of a large institutional bank in Belgium. This sample is highly relevant, as the banking sector is becoming more and more competitive (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992). High quality products and higher service orientations is becoming a necessity to keep old clients and attract new ones (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992). In addition, technological innovations have created more possibilities for the clients, but have also possibly led to more complexity for the employees managing the clients. This means that banks may require more from the employees in order to gain a competitive edge over other banks (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992; Yavas, Bilgin, & Shemwell, 1997).

The thesis will inspect whether the relationship between having to deal with difficult clients and recovery need after work can be explained at least partially by emotional load. Furthermore, we will investigate whether this relationship can be influenced by the two resources participation in decision-making and social support from the leader. In particular, we will investigate whether these two resources interact with the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, both on the direct relationship and the indirect relationship via emotional load. It is expected that the interactions will lead to a decrease in recovery need after work.

Previous research has to a large extent investigated social support as a factor that can buffer the effects that demands may have on recovery need in the workplace (Schwarzer & Leppin, 1989; Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). However, to our knowledge, a fewer number of studies have specifically addressed social support from the leader. Moreover, participation in decision-making has yet to be thoroughly investigated as a job resource that can reduce need for recovery. In our study, we aim to fill this void by investigating the possibility of social support from the leader and participation in decision-making acting not only as buffering resources on their own, but whether they may constitute an even more potent combination of resources when both are present.

In our thesis we rely on the Demand Induced Strain Compensation model (DISC). The DISC model has been developed as a framework to obtain a more profound understanding of the interaction between demands and resources in the workplace, and why their interaction produces different outcomes depending on the nature of variables involved (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003).

The Demand-Induced Strain Compensation Model

In occupational settings, job demands are the different factors that can drain energy (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), while resources are the factors that can

help keep balance by reducing the outcome effects of job demands (Karasek, 1979). Nowadays these concepts are used in connection to the Job Demand-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Historically they date back to the Job Demand-Control model (Karasek, 1979), which is one of the most prevailing stress models in the field of organisational psychology for examining the relationship between work and health. Another important, yet competing, model within this field is the Effort-Reward Imbalance model. The Effort-Reward Imbalance postulates that beneficial outcomes are the result of a reciprocal relationship between efforts and rewards in the workplace (Siegrist, 1996). Consequently, in an attempt to create a more comprehensive theoretical model of work stress, de Jonge and Dormann (2003) introduced the Demand-Induced Strain Compensation Model (DISC). The DISC model combines principles from the existing theories, and synthesises the Job Demand-Control model and the Effort-Reward Imbalance model into one unitary model (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003, 2006; de Jonge, Dormann, & van den Tooren, 2008). In general, attempts at demonstrating interaction effects between stressors and resources have yielded inconsistent results. This represents a threat to the validity of organisational stress models (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006). Therefore, the DISC model provides a more thorough understanding of the mechanisms of interactions between demands and resources.

The DISC model adds to the field of research as it seeks to improve understanding of how job resources moderate the relationship between job demands and job outcomes (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003). This has the potential of being an important addition, because it can be easier to increase job resources rather than decrease job demands in the workplace (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006). In addition, it views job demands and resources as having cognitive, behavioural and emotional components. This gives a new and more nuanced perspective on demands and resources.

The DISC model is based on four core principles, namely 1) multidimensionality of concepts, 2) the triple match principle, 3) the compensation principle, and 4) the balance principle. The first principle is centred around the view that demands and resources are not unidimensional concepts, but have cognitive, physical and emotional dimensions. The failure to account for these dimensions may explain the inconsistent findings concerning the interaction effects of demands and resources. For example, the fact that cognitive demands are investigated in interaction with emotional resources represents a mismatch between type of demand and type of resource. This leads de Jonge and Dormann, the main authors of the DISC model, to the second principle. The second principle is the principle of triple match between the variables: In order to make a valid claim on relationships between demands,

resources and wellbeing outcomes, there must be a dimensional match. This means that an emotional demand should be seen in interaction with an emotional resource in order to explain an emotional outcome. According to the DISC model, if demands, resources and outcomes match, the probability of finding moderating effects for job resources will increase (van den Tooren, de Jonge, & Dormann, 2011). A meta-analysis testing this matching principle yielded a linear relation between significant interaction effects and degree of match (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006). The triple match principle is the very key element of the model, and is often portrayed as shown in figure 1.

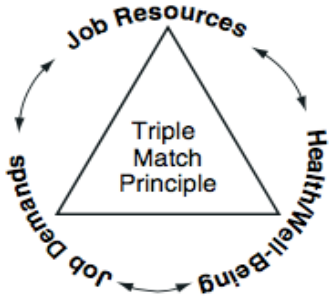

Figure 1. The Triple Match Principle (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003)

Although a triple match is regarded as the most optimal scenario for finding a moderating relationship, the authors have also found evidence for an increased probability to find significant interaction effects with a double match (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006). They distinguish between two different types of double matches: the double match of common kind, and the double match of extended kind. The former refers to a match between demand and resource, while the latter refers to a match between either a demand or a resource, and an outcome (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006).

The triple match principle is closely connected to the third principle, the compensation principle. This principle describes a general tendency to strive towards equilibrium. When demands are high, the employee will attempt to compensate by drawing from a pool of resources to accommodate the demand (de Jonge et al., 2008). According to the DISC model, the compensatory attempts will to a larger degree be able to counteract the impact of high negative demands when an appropriate resource is selected (de Jonge et al., 2008). This means that an emotional resource to a larger degree will counteract the impact of high emotional demands.

Lastly, the balance principle states that the levels of demands and resources must be matched in order to achieve complete balance (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003; de Jonge et al., 2008). This principle explains how the compensatory attempts reach their full effect only when, for instance, a strong emotional resource is used to compensate for a strong emotional demand (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003). Attempting to compensate for the demands by drawing on the different resources in the environment can be regarded as a natural response to a stressful situation. The most favourable outcomes are wellbeing, learning and growth. This ideal situation is accomplished when demands and resources are matched appropriately, concerning both dimensions and levels. Thus, the third principle explains what is needed for survival, whilst the fourth principle shows the optimal scenario for employee wellbeing.

As a metaphor, the four principles are described to work as a homeostatic regulatory process because of how the variables readjust to keep the internal state relatively stable (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003). To initiate the homeostatic process, there first has to be a change in the situation that has to be regulated. Second, something that can affect that situation needs to be available. Furthermore, there should be a mechanism that reduces fluctuations. While homeostasis originally refers to properties of living systems like eco systems or processes in the human body, the metaphor is considered as transferrable to organisational settings (Vancouver, 2000). Following this metaphor, changes in job demands should initiate utilisation of job resources in effort to return to the original state. This viewpoint serves as the theoretical basis for both the triple matching principle specifically, and the entire DISC model generally (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006; de Jonge et al., 2008).

The DISC model has been tested, and research supports that the model can provide fruitful information on the interaction between job demands and job resources (Daniels & de Jonge, 2010; de Jonge, Spoor, Sonnentag, Dormann, & van den Tooren, 2012; van den Tooren & de Jonge, 2008). Although this is a general stress model, support for the model was especially centred on the matching of specific job demands and job resources to specific emotional, physical and cognitive outcomes. In effect, particularly the triple match principle has been supported. In a meta-analysis testing the triple match principle, the most consistent findings were found with regards to emotional matching, indicating a central role of emotions in the field occupational stress (de Jonge & Dormann, 2006). In sum, the DISC model holds that a close inspection of the variables involved will be of predictive value with regards to different outcomes for the worker.

The DISC model can be applied to the present study in several ways. First, it is to a large degree meant to be of explanatory value for service professions. This thesis is based on

a sample from the banking sector, where providing services within a human interaction context is widespread. Second, the DISC model is constructed as a framework suited for testing buffering hypotheses (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003; de Jonge et al., 2008; van den Tooren et al., 2011). The present study is concerned with identifying possible buffers for the relationship between contact with clients and recovery need, and is thus well served with a theoretical framework constructed for this purpose. Onwards, we will present a review of the existing literature regarding the chosen variables. The hypotheses will be presented consecutively throughout the review.

Recovery need

Generally, to be able to deal with demands and the use of resources, people need time to recover from all the demands, either by taking a break or relaxing. This is what is called recovery need, or recuperation need (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006). In contrast, not taking a break but making an extra effort can drain the employee of resources and may lead to a depletion of energy (Hockey, 1996). The effort required to handle demands is dependent on the situation; the more demanding the situation is, the more effort is required to deal with it. If the depletion of resources continues for an extensive period of time with limited time to recuperate, it can lead to exhaustion, and physical and mental impairment (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006).

Recovery need plays an important role in explaining the variance in occupational-induced health complaints, as demonstrated by Sluiter et al. (1999). The authors reported a 12 % increase in explained variance of experienced health complaints when recovery need was added to the analyses, which indicates recovery need as a meaningful predictor for experienced health complaints (Sluiter et al., 1999). Other studies have also pointed to the essential role of need for recovery. For instance, it has been shown that occupational-induced fatigue can become problematic if the employee is unable to recover sufficiently between the work periods (Brown, 1994; Kiss, De Meester, & Braeckman, 2008). More recently, Van Veldhoven and Broersen (2003) demonstrated the necessity of daily opportunities for recovery. Hence, need for recovery can be seen as the short-term effects of the working day (Sluiter, Frings-Dresen, van der Beek, & Meijman, 2001; Van Veldhoven & Broersen, 2003).

Employees with a high need for recovery may find it difficult to relax after work, more frequently have a hard time concentrating, and tend to need much time to recover (Demerouti, Taris, & Bakker, 2007). Research shows that the more intensive the working day has been, the longer it takes for people to unwind in the evening (Meijman, Mulder, Van Dormolen, & Cremer, 1992). Sonnentag and Zijlstra (2006) found in their study that the

effects of an intensive working day are still observable the following morning. The employees with more intensive working days had more trouble unwinding in the evening. The same people reported more sleep complaints and higher levels of fatigue the next day. Insufficient recovery is also shown to be related to experience of higher levels of burnout (Sluiter et al., 1999).

Recovery need is comprised of several elements. It has a physical dimension, as it entails feelings of exhaustion and tiredness. A high need for recovery can also be said to have a cognitive dimension, as concentration is affected. Furthermore, it has been described as a general feeling of "wanting to be left in peace for a while" (Sluiter et al., 2001, p. 29), which points towards the emotional dimension. Hence, within the DISC paradigm, recovery need may serve as an outcome that can be matched on all three dimensions: physical, cognitive and emotional.

Working with difficult clients in the banking sector

The banking sector has become more and more competitive in the last decades, with increased demands from consumers (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992). Higher quality products and service have become a requirement for gaining success (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992). More possibilities for the consumers may lead to a challenge of retaining customers for the bank. When competition between banks increases, it is important to provide good service to consumers and pay attention to service quality to gain a competitive advantage (Yavas et al., 1997). Good service can help attract new customers, increase the banks reputation, and in general bring several advantages with it (Yavas et al., 1997). To get a competetive edge over the other banks, one may have to require more from the employees at the bank in question (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992; Yavas et al., 1997). Surveys have shown that quality service is key to customer retention (Coskun & Frohlich, 1992). Thus, an important part of a bank employees' job is to deal with clients. Consequences of dealing with clients through service work can be diverse; among other things it can lead to more stress and lower wellbeing (Pugliesi, 1999).

With respect to dealing with clients, emotional labour is an important concept which was introduced by Hochschild (1979). Emotional labour refers to the quality of the interaction between an employee and a client (Zapf, 2002). In many jobs, expressing appropriate emotions is a requirement (Zapf, 2002). For bank employees this might entail signalling trust, or to put on a smile regardless of how they actually feel (Zapf, 2002). They have to be able to regulate their emotions. Successful regulation of one's emotions is believed to help influence customers, as well as higher goal achievement (Holman, Martinez-Iñigo, & Totterdell, 2008).

Morris and Feldman (1996, p. 987) defines emotional labour as the "effort, planning, and control needed to express organisationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions". This concept can be said to be especially relevant for service occupations, including the bank sector (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Wharton, 1993; Zapf, 2002). However, the same bank employees may also be dealing with people in a challenging and fragile life situation (Bakker, Killmer, Siegrist, & Schaufeli, 2000). People who are applying for a loan for the first time, or people who need to refinance their bank loan, or even people in delicate situations facing foreclosures. These people may attempt to insist that the bank employee puts personal effort into the case in order to obtain a favourable outcome. Hence, theoretically it is possible to hypothesise that emotional labour plays an important role in the relationship between working with difficult clients and need for recovery. Working with clients can be emotionally demanding, which potentially will drain the employee of resources (Hockey, 1996). This could in turn lead to a higher need for recovery.

Emotional Load

Emotional load refers to the degree to which your work is emotionally demanding (Van Veldhoven & Broersen, 2003; Zoer, Ruitenburg, Botje, Frings-Dresen, & Sluiter, 2011). In the context of organisational psychology, the term does not include influences outside of the workplace. Emotional load increases when the employee experiences work as emotionally demanding, when the work affects the employee personally and when the work puts the employee in emotionally upsetting situations (Van Veldhoven & Broersen, 2003; Zoer et al., 2011). An example of a potentially demanding situation is when employees are expected to express certain feelings and emotions in contact with clients. If the expressed emotions are not genuinely felt at the time, the employee can be brought to a state of emotional dissonance (Zapf, 2002). This can be perceived as stressful and is considered emotionally demanding. C. Maslach (1982) argued that involvement in emotionally charged face-to-face interactions are associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion, which is a key component of burnout (C Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the emotional load of working with clients will be correlated to increased recovery need after work. Furthermore, emotional load has been found to be associated with adverse wellbeing (Kompier, Taris, & Van Veldhoven, 2012), fatigue, stress and burnout (Zoer et al., 2011).

The foundations of the DISC model are to a large degree based on studies showing that service occupations (i.e. working with clients) can be stressful situations (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003, 2006). Having to work with clients is seen as emotionally demanding, which shows that this particular aspect of service professions has a strong emotional dimension (de

Jonge & Dormann, 2003). Thus, it's possible to argue that working with clients can be experienced as an emotional load. This is corroborated by the fact that both emotional load and working with clients have been found to have an effect on need for recovery (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011; Sonnentag et al., 2010). In light of this, we hypothesise that emotional load will mediate the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

However, we recognise the possibility that other variables can mediate the relationship as well. For instance, mental load is a cognitive variable concerning whether the work tasks put strain on information processing abilities. As an example, research has found that concentration seems to be related to the need for recovery as well (De Croon et al., 2003; Sluiter et al., 1999). Taking this into account, we hypothesise that emotional load will partially mediate the relationship between working with difficult clients and recovery need.

Hypothesis 1*: Emotional load mediates the relationship between contact with clients and need for recovery. More specifically we hypothesise a partial mediation.*

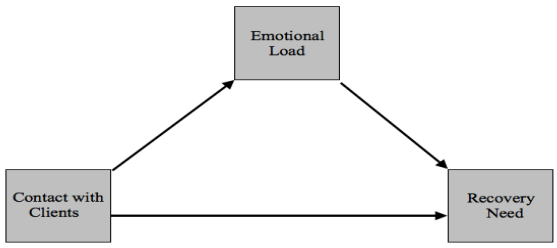

Figure 2. Hypothesis 1

Participation in Decision-Making

Participation in decision-making, hereafter labelled as PDM, can be defined as the degree of influence the employees have over decision-making in their workplace (Patterson et al., 2005). Research has demonstrated that PDM has a positive effect on wellbeing (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004). A study by Da Raeve, Vasse, Jansen, van den Brandt, and Kant (2007) also revealed a negative relationship between PDM and need for recovery. This was further supported in a study by Jansen et al. (2002), who found that low decision latitude was associated with a significantly higher need for recovery in their sample. Decision latitude is a broader concept stemming from the Job Demand-Control model (Karasek, 1979), and is a concept that describes control both over oneself and over the work

environment (Spector, 1986). This can be related to influence over decision-making in the workplace.

Researchers have used various models that propose different mechanisms that describe the effects of participation (Miller & Monge, 1986). These can be divided into cognitive and affective models of PDM (Miller & Monge, 1986). Cognitive models of PDM's effect postulate that participation is beneficial because it increases the use and flow of information (Miller & Monge, 1986). Melcher (1976) reasons that when employees participate in the decision-making process, they will acquire more knowledge about the organisation. Increased knowledge can be perceived as a form of support, and can buffer the relationship between stressors and strain (Daniels & Guppy, 1994). More knowledge can also lead to better information sharing between employee and leader, which might lead to better decisions. Hence, the use of information is a vital part of these models (Miller & Monge, 1986). The manifestation of PDM might be that the employee share more information, which relates to the cognitive dimension.

A high degree of PDM among employees could mean that they share more information with their leader. It is possible that they take part in more meetings, and that they generally take part in the decision-making process that affect their work to a larger extent than employees with low PDM. The specific result of PDM can be that the employees get a clearer understanding of the procedures at work. The information about how to handle difficult clients can make it easier to deal with the situation (Zapf, 2002). For example, they could get more information about the procedures regarding how to handle difficult clients, as well as the possibility to influence these procedures. This could make PDM a moderator that decreases the strength of the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

Affective models of participation effects link PDM to outcomes through affective mechanisms (Miller & Monge, 1986). These models argue that PDM results in the fulfilment of higher-order needs such as respect and independence (Miller & Monge, 1986), which can lead to an increase in outcome variables such as job satisfaction and productivity (Miller & Monge, 1986). This constitutes the emotional dimension of participation (Miller & Monge, 1986). Moreover, the flow of information that comes with PDM can also be of emotional value. For instance, when employees get information of their value in the organisation. A high degree of PDM can be argued to relate to the feeling that one receives attention and is being acknowledged. This is emotional support, which clearly has emotional valence (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Furthermore, a review of the DISC model names attention as an example of

an emotional resource (de Jonge et al., 2008). This leads to the assumption that PDM not only functions as a cognitive resource, but can also act as an emotional resource (de Jonge et al., 2008).

The fact that PDM has both a cognitive and an emotional component makes it a double match of common kind with job demands, and will in light of the DISC-paradigm make it a plausible moderator of an emotional or cognitive outcome (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003, 2006). As recovery need has been argued to be such an outcome, there is a triple match on both the cognitive and emotional dimension. This makes it possible to study a triple match with difficult clients and their cases on one side, need for recovery on the other side, and PDM as a resource moderating the relationships. Receiving attention and being valued may work as a buffer for the relationship between working with difficult clients on recovery need through emotional load. The information may buffer the emotional strain that comes from working with difficult clients (Zapf, 2002).

By reasoning that sharing information about how to deal with difficult clients could potentially have beneficial effects on how one experiences that interaction, and seen in relation to the findings in the literature on PDM, we postulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *Participation in decision making moderates the mediated relationship between contact with difficult clients, emotional load and need for recovery, and the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and need for recovery. We expect that participation in decision-making will act as a buffer on the relationships.*

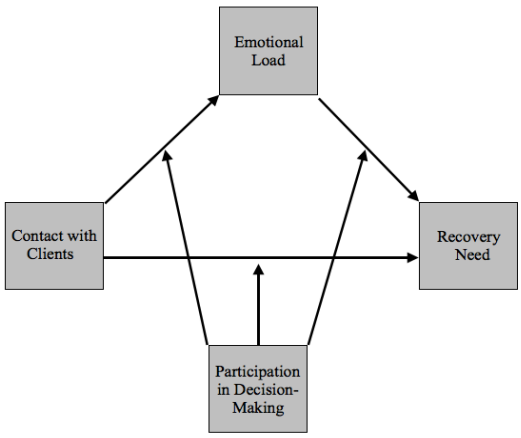

Figure 3. Hypothesis 2

Social support from the leader

During the last decades, researchers have done a vast amount of studies trying to investigate whether social support can have beneficial effects on coping with demands (Alarcon, 2011; Nahum-Shani, Henderson, Lim, & Vinokur, 2014; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1989). In general, social support is found to have a beneficial effect on wellbeing (Alarcon, 2011; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). It is often seen in relationship with strain and stress, both theoretically and empirically (Viswesvaran et al., 1999). It is theoretically sound to assume that having a support system to rely on could prevent the strain experienced at work from having as adverse affects as if one does not have a support system. In other words, social support from the leader, hereafter labelled SSL, or others is assumed to act as a buffer on the strain-stress relationship (Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Many studies have shown the buffering effect of social support on high demands (van der Doef & Maes, 1999), and it seems that social support could function as a moderator between demands and their outcomes; in this thesis these demands and outcomes are working with difficult clients and recovery need.

Some studies have investigated the effects of social support, and there are indications that employees who have leaders that provide them with support are in better health than people with less social support (Broadhead et al., 1983; Cohen & Wills, 1985). For example, if an employee experiences a lot of demands at work that are perceived as stressful, a support system could boost the employee's perception of his or her ability to cope with these demands. Thus, the situation is less likely to be perceived as highly stressful (Cohen & Wills, 1985). A support system can also have an overall positive effect on wellbeing by giving the employee a sense of self-worth (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Koeske and Koeske (1989) found social support to be a moderator of the relationship between contact with clients and burnout. Moderating effects were also found in a literature review looking into different findings for the interaction between emotional labour, social support and job stress (Zapf, 2002). The assumption is that having a support system can help employees to deal with the demands that can be experienced from working with clients (Hockey, 1996), and that this can make it easier to recover from work.

Social support is typically divided into four main categories or attributes. Those are emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support (Chen, SIU, Lu, Cooper, & Phillips, 2009). Emotional support is often referred to as support involving communication to a person that he or she is valued (Cohen & Wills, 1985). This type of support involves, among others, caring and empathy (House, 1981). Informational support can be characterised as help to deal with ambiguous experiences, or information provided to a person under stress (Cohen

& Wills, 1985; House, 1981). Instrumental support, on the other hand, has often been referred to as the provision of financial aid, material resources and needed services (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, 1981). Appraisal support is concerned with appraisal from different sources. It involves information about appraisal, rather than information aimed at problem solving (Cohen & Wills, 1985; House, 1981). Thus, social support can be seen as a multidimensional concept involving emotional, information, instrumental aid, and appraisal (Chen et al., 2009). This thesis is mainly concerned with the context in which employees feel that they have emotional and appraisal support. More specifically, this study focuses on whether employees are affected by difficult clients, and if SSL can buffer some of the negative effects related to working with clients.

Although social support has been divided theoretically into four dimensions, they are not independent from each other. Moreover, they are often treated as a single concept (Cohen & Wills, 1985). One can assume that people who have more emotional support, may also have more available instrumental support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). For example, employees who receive social support from their environment might also gain financial aid if required. In effect, they also have instrumental support. Co-workers serve as an important source of social support, as the social relationship stands for the largest part of interactions at work (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). SSL can also be an important source of support, which is the perspective taken in this thesis. Previous research provides strong evidence indicating social support as an important factor that can ameliorate the negative effects of stressors (Daniels & Guppy, 1994; Pretorius, 1993). Poor SSL has also been implicated as a significant risk for stress related symptoms on the energy axis of burnout (Zoer et al., 2011).

The categories of social support overlap acceptably with the affective and cognitive dimensions of the DISC model. Emotional support can take the form of providing sympathy and esteem. For example, if an employee expresses emotional distress after an encounter with a difficult client, the leader could offer consolation as emotional support. Instrumental support can deal with environmental factors in the workplace. Providing information falls under informational support, and is of cognitive nature. Appraisal support can manifest itself when employees share information with each other about how to handle difficult clients (Williams, Barclay, & Schmied, 2004). This can be identified as a cognitive dimension of SSL.

Attempts have been made to understand how social support affects stress. A review of the literature yielded that results have been found for both a main effect and an interaction effect model (Cohen & Wills, 1985). This means that social support has been found to directly affect stress and wellbeing in a positive way, as well as a resource that can buffer the

adverse effects of demands. Although this appears contradictory, a further inspection of the methodology and statistical techniques used in the different studies showed that the two models explain different processes (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The results that indicated a direct effect on stress were derived from measures on the individual's integration in a social network, while buffering effects were found when social support was measured as an interpersonal resource provided in stressful situations (Cohen & Wills, 1985). This study measures social support as an interpersonal resource provided from the leader to the employee. In sum, SSL comprises a cognitive and an emotional component. This results in a triple match between demand, resource and outcome on the cognitive and emotional dimension in this study. The expectation that these two dimensions will result in a buffering effect on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need is corroborated by a meta analysis investigating how social support works to affect stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The meta analysis was able to show that social support provided by esteem and informational support acted as an enhancer on the buffering process (Cohen & Wills, 1985).Hence, it is expected that SSL will act as a buffer between contact with difficult clients and subsequent recovery need. We consequently postulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *Social support from the leader moderates the mediated relationship between contact with difficult clients, emotional load and need for recovery, and the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and need for recovery. We expect social support from the leader to act as a buffer on the relationships.*

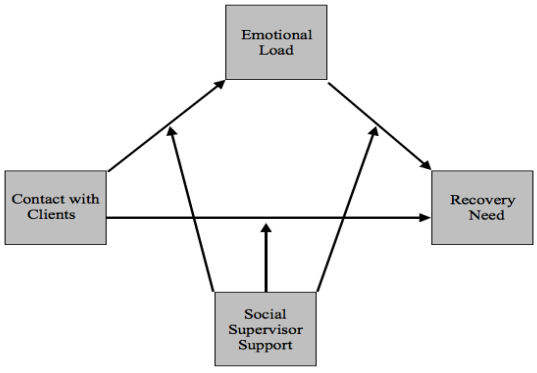

Figure 4. Hypothesis 3

The relationship between participation in decision-making and social support from the leader

The empirical evidence regarding PDM and SSL suggests that both can be regarded as possible moderators for stress-related outcomes (De Croon, Sluiter, Blonk, Broersen, & Frings-Dresen, 2004; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Being able to participate in the decision-making processes at work and having support from a leader, could arguably make it easier to deal with the demands arising from dealing with clients (Zapf, 2002). This could lead to having an easier time recovering from work; In effect, decrease the need for recovery.

A study by van der Doef, Maes, and Diekstra (2000) examined the impact of control and social support in the work place, and found that control could indeed moderate high demands. Moreover, they found that this was especially true in situations where the employee also experienced high social support from the leader (van der Doef et al., 2000). van der Doef et al. (2003) do not attempt to explain why this effect occurred, but conclude with stressing the importance of a social dimension together with control when looking at moderators for job demands and stress in the workplace.

It seems apparent that employees need both job control and social support to adequately deal with high demands (van der Doef et al., 2000). The reason for these findings could be that in order for PDM to have its largest effect, it is important with SSL. It has been proposed that perceived PDM could be a function of leader behaviours (Mohrman, Cooke, & Mohrman, 1978). It could be the case that lack of SSL may devaluate the participatory decision-making. Socially supportive communication from the leader can increase the employee's sense of control over the work environment (Miller, Ellis, Zook, & Lyles, 1990), and thus moderate the effect of PDM. If an employee receives SSL and feels that he or she is valued, it is possible to assume that this communication will make the moderating effects of PDM stronger. This could be because the participation can seem more meaningful when the employee feels appreciated, as it provides information about self-worth (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Supportive communication can also help clarify expectations in the organisation, and increase perception of personal control (Ray & Miller, 1991). This can potentially moderate the effect of PDM. It has been extensively confirmed that supportive communication can reduce stress, where SSL has shown the strongest relationship (Ray & Miller, 1991). We therefore postulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: *Social supervisor support moderates the moderated mediation relationship between contact with difficult clients, emotional load, participation in decision making and*

need for recovery and the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

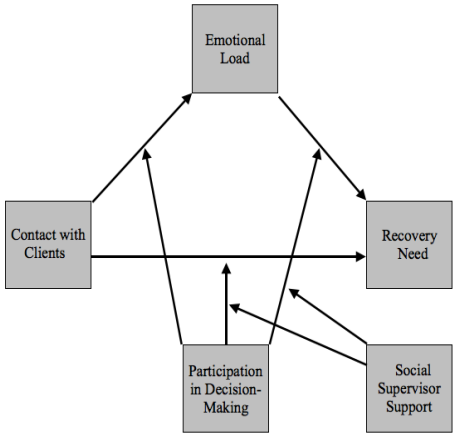

Figure 5. Hypothesis 4

The present study

The demands, resources and outcome subjected to investigation in the present study have been argued to hold both emotional and cognitive qualities, thus fulfilling the triple match principle in line with the DISC model. Hence, two paths present themselves in our hypotheses. The first path goes from contact with difficult clients to recovery need, through emotional load, and constitutes the emotional path of our model. The second path goes from contact with difficult clients to recovery need, and leaves the possibility to investigate through a cognitive path. This allows us to test both the emotional and the cognitive dimensions of the demand, resources and outcome in this study.

Method

Data Sample

To obtain data, 5763 employees in a large institutional bank in Belgium received an e-mail to take part in the study. The data was collected by self-report surveys. 3920 employees voluntarily completed the questionnaire, which leaves us with a response rate of 68 %. We were interested in respondents at the lowest operational level (core level) at the bank, which means that they typically deal with clients and day-to-day banking operations. This selection left us with a sample of 1571 respondents, of which 830 were men and 741 were women. The median age of the sample is represented by the age category “45-54 years”. The large majority of the employees have been working in the company for 15 years or more, and most of them are employed as full time workers.

Measurement instruments

The Short Inventory to Monitor Psychosocial Hazards (SIMPH) (Notelaers, De Witte, Van Veldhoven, & Vermunt, 2007) was used in the present study, and consists of several sub-scales, see Appendix. The "Need for Recovery" scale consisted of five items and was measured on a dichotomous scale. The analysis for the need for recovery scale revealed sufficient correlations between the items of the scale, with the majority of the correlations above .3 (Pallant, 2013). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is also satisfactory, at .839 (Dziuban & Shirkey, 1974). The Cronbach's Alpha value (α) of the scale was .813, which is satisfactory. It is argued that a value above .7 is necessary for a good analysis (George & Mallery, 2003, p. 231). The analysis extracted one factor with an Eigenvalue above 1 (Pallant, 2013), explaining 57.77 % of the variance. This was confirmed in a parallel test, and also reflected what was seen in the scree plot.

Emotional load was measured using three items rated on a four point Likert scale, and included questions such as "Does your work demand a lot from you emotionally?". The answers ranged from "always" to "never". The analysis for the scale measuring emotional load also had satisfactory inter-correlations, and an α-value of .851. The KMO value was .727, which is moderate, but sufficient for the analysis (Pallant, 2013). This analysis also extracted one factor that explained 77.48 % of the variance. Both the parallel analysis and the scree plot support this solution.

The sub-scale measuring PDM also consisted of three items rated on a four point Likert scale, with answer categories ranging from "always" to "never." "Can you participate in decisions affecting issues related to your work" is an example of one of the questions used. PDM also had good inter-correlations, with α = .871 and sufficient KMO-value of .705. The one factor extracted explained 73.54 % of the variance. Support for one single factor was found by running a parallel analysis, and by inspecting the scree plot.

The measure of SSL is a sub-scale containing three items. "Can you count on your direct boss when you come across difficulties in your work" is an example of a question intended to measure social support from the leader. The scale showed satisfactory inter-correlations, an α= .888, and a KMO-value of .709. The analysis extracted one factor, which explained 81.76 % of the variance. Support for a single factor was found in the parallel analysis and the scree plot.

Contact with difficult clients was measured using 8 items on a 4-point Likert scale. This scale does not originate from the SIMPH (Notelaers et al., 2007), but is an unpublished scale developed by our supervisor, Guy Notelaers. It has not yet been subjected to validation.

Questions ranged from dealing with time spent with customers to the nature of the experience. The reliability value of the scale proved to be acceptable, α = .860. The scale for contact with clients had most of its inter-correlations above .3, and a KMO-value of .891. Two factors with an Eigenvalue above 1 was extracted, explaining 49.16 and 5.61 % of the variance. However, comparisons with a parallel analysis revealed that one factor was sufficient. Overall, the scale showed strong psychometric properties, justifying the choice to use it in the present study.

The overall KMO-value for all the scales combined was found to be sufficient, with a value of .888. An oblique rotation, direct oblimin, was chosen for this analysis, which assumes and allows for the variables to be correlated (Pallant, 2013). The extraction analysis yielded a total of five factors, as shown in Table 1. For the most part, the communalities are sufficiently high, with values over .4 (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The communalites values tell us that most of the items correlate satisfactory with all of the other items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). It should be noted that some significant cross loadings were observed. For instance, the items measuring PDM showed high loading on the same factor as the items measuring SSL. Generally, a gap of .2 between the primary loading and the cross-loading is considered admissible (Bedford, 1997). As shown in Table 1, with just one exception, the gap exceeds .2 for most of the items that show cross loadings. These findings indicate that these items may to some degree measure the same construct, but it could be argued that they are sufficiently different.

Table I. Factor loadings and communalities based on principle axis analysis with direct oblimin rotation for 21 items from the Short Inventory to Monitor Psychosocial Hazards (SIMPH) (N=1480)

	1	2	3	4	5	Communalities
How often do you have contact with clients?	**.592**	.008	.193	-.227	-.050	.357
How often do you have to deal with unfriendly clients?	**.787**	-.116	.302	-.298	-.168	.624
How often do you have conflict with clients?	**.759**	-.100	.264	-.273	.-.098	.580
How often do you experience insults from clients?	**.860**	-.131	.271	-.298	-.141	.747

How often are you confronted with verbally abusive clients?	**.826**	-.131	.305	-.335	-.185	.686
How often are you threatened by clients?	**.644**	-.109	.249	-.326	-.131	.420
How often do you have to deal with clients using emotional reasoning	**.668**	-.091	.248	-.379	-.074	.461
How often have you been confronted with clients using physical violence?	**.234**	-.078	.145	-.209	-.060	.071
Does your work demand a lot from you emotionally?	-.368	.261	-.493	**.757**	.164	.596
Are you confronted in your work with things that affect you personally?	-.338	.251	-.382	**.816**	.114	.667
Does your work put you in emotionally upsetting situations?	-.343	.217	-.417	**.867**	.122	.753
Do you have a lot to say over what is going on in your work area?	-.112	**.430**	-.258	.096	**.753**	.568
Can you participate in decisions affecting issues related to your work?	-.174	**.446**	-.310	.152	**.868**	.757
Can you consult satisfactory with your direct boss about your work?	-.133	**.702**	-.309	.210	**.714**	.652
Can you count on your direct boss when you come across difficulties in your work?	-.118	**.933**	-.319	.262	**.466**	.872

If necessary, can you ask your boss for help?	-.125	**.880**	-.319	.257	.**449**	.776
In your work, do you feel appreciated by your boss?	-.117	**.753**	-.302	.231	**.517**	.585
I find it difficult to relax at the end of a working day	.249	-.253	**.744**	-.393	-.232	.556
Because of my job, at the end of the working day I feel rather exhausted	.264	-.206	**.664**	-.327	-.191	.442
I find it difficult to concentrate in my free time after work	.237	-.270	**.749**	-.353	-.260	.563
Generally, I need more than an hour before I feel completely recuperated after work	.236	-.247	**.788**	-.368	-.226	.623
A feeling of tiredness prevents me from doing my work as well as I normally would during the last part of the working day	.216	-.185	**.480**	-.241	-.215	.237

In a factor analysis, the optimal scenario is to find as few factors as possible (Pallant, 2013). Here, we wished to find evidence for a five factor solution. However, we note that the parallel analysis yielded justification for four factors only, see Table 2. Nonetheless, the five-factor solution that we found with the principle axis factoring supports our initial expectations regarding the factor structure. Therefore, we argue that it is justified to keep the five factor solution, despite the solution proposed by the parallel analysis and the scree plot.

Table II. Parallel analysis

Component number	Eigenvalue from Principle Axis Factoring	Criterion from parallel analysis	Decision
1	6.471	1.2198	**Accept**
2	3.360	1.1870	**Accept**
3	2.109	1.1599	**Accept**
4	1.458	1.1380	**Accept**
5	1.026	1.1157	Reject
6	.992	1.0950	Reject
7	.772	1.0765	Reject
8	.663	1.0574	Reject
9	.572	1.0394	Reject
10	.540	1.0222	Reject
11	.500	1.0036	Reject

Preliminary analyses

Table 3 shows the sample means for the individual variables. The scales were scored from 0 to 3, ranging from “never” to “always. The only exception was the scale for recovery need. This was a dichotomous scale ranging from 0 to 1, with the categories “no” and “yes”. Frequencies analyses yielded a sample mean score of .59 for contact with difficult clients, which means that on average the employees in this sample experience contact with difficult clients somewhere between “never” and “sometimes”. Mean score of emotional load was 1.01, which means that the average of the sample leans towards “sometimes" experiencing different aspects of emotional load. The data sample was measured to a sample mean of 1.15 for PDM, and 1.58 for SSL. This indicates that the perceived PDM on average lies between "often" and “sometimes", with an inclination towards "sometimes". The perceived SSL falls between the same two categories, but with a stronger inclination towards “often". The sample mean for recovery need was .55, showing a trend towards elevated levels of recovery need.

Further, it is important to note that table 3 shows us that multicollinearity may threaten the validity of the regression analysis due to the correlation of .608 between PDM and SSL. Moderate multicollinearity is present when variables show a correlation between .6 and .8, and puts the result at risk for Type II errors (Grewal, Cote, & Baumgartner, 2004). In other words, it could lead to failure to reject a false null hypothesis. However, the Type II error rates become less important if the reliability value is above .8 (Grewal et al., 2004). As

illustrated in table 4, both variables show sufficiently high alpha scores, with .871 and .888 for PDM and SSL, respectively. Hence, the moderate multicollinearity may pose a problem after all.

Table III. Descriptive statistics for the five Short Inventory to Monitor Psychosocial Hazards factors (N=1480)

	Range	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Contact with difficult clients	0-3	.59	.37	**(.860)**				
2. Emotional Load	0-3	1.01	.67	.386*	**(.851)**			
3. PDM	0-3	1.15	.64	-.174*	-.196*	**(.871)**		
4. SSL	0-3	1.58	.81	-.153*	-.263*	.603	**(.888)**	
5. Recovery Need	0-1	.55	.37	.313*	.452*	-.315*	-.316*	**(.813)**

**p< .01, Reliability values are in diagonal in parentheses.*

Procedure and analyses

To run the analyses, we used PROCESS (Version 2.13; Hayes, 2014), which is a software add-on for the statistical analysis program SPSS (IBM Corp, 2013). It is used to facilitate mediation and moderation analyses. To investigate hypothesis 1, we first ran a simple mediation analysis, which is model 4 in PROCESS (Version 2.13; Hayes, 2014). The independent variable was contact with difficult clients, the dependent variable was need for recovery, and the mediator was emotional load. Bootstrap confidence intervals were used to assess the significance. For hypotheses 2 and 3, we ran two separate moderated mediation analyses, with PDM and SSL as moderators, respectively. In particular, we used model 58 in PROCESS to assess these hypotheses (Version 2.13; Hayes, 2014). To obtain a complete picture of the interaction effects, we chose to run a simple moderation analysis for all the interactions that are included in model 58. This is model 1 in PROCESS (Version 2.13; Hayes, 2014). In the analysis for hypothesis 4, we tested whether SSL moderated the moderated mediation relationship between contact with difficult clients, emotional load, PDM and need for recovery. This is model 71 in PROCESS (Version 2.13; Hayes, 2014). Model 71 was chosen due to the fact that the analyses were unable to yield any significant first order interaction when we tested hypothesis 2 and 3, thus making it unnecessary to test for a double moderation on this relationship in the fourth hypothesis. To gain further insight into how much impact emotional load had on recovery need, we chose to run model 3 with emotional

load as the dependent variable. Both PDM and SSL were entered as moderators. This was done in order to produce a percentiles table that would provide us with a more thorough understanding of the interactions in our dataset. Unstandardised indirect effects were computed for each of the 1000 bootstrapped samples, and the 95 % confidence interval was computed determining the indirect effects at the 10th, 25th, 75th and 95th percentiles. The reason for running four different models as compared to one, is that we wanted to investigate and capture various interactions and interaction effects, which we could not have done by only running model 71.

Finally, we note that we included age, gender and size of employment contract as control variables. Previous literature has illustrated that all the variables in our study to some extent can be impacted by age (Gommans, Jansen, Stynen, de Grip, & Kant, 2015; Jansen et al., 2002; Zoer et al., 2011). To avoid the potential effect this variable could have on our results, we controlled for age. Furthermore, the literature search indicate that gender could account for some differences in measures related to recovery need (Rydstedt, Cropley, Devereux, & Michalianou, 2009). Hence, gender was also controlled for. We also believe that size of employment may have an impact on the variables in the study. It is sound to assume that if one works full-time, the results on recovery need will be different. When employees work full-time, they engage in work-related efforts more often than employees who work part-time. This could lead to different results on recovery need. Consequently, size of employment was chosen as the third control variable.

Results

First, we hypothesised that emotional load partially mediated the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need. The results, illustrated in table 4, showed that the direct effect of contact with difficult clients on recovery need was significant, $b = .137$, $t(1478) = 6.581$, $p = .000$. The indirect effect of contact with difficult clients on recovery need through emotional load was (.584)(.215) = .126. The significance was determined by using bootstrapping procedures. The bootstrapped 95% confidence interval ranged from .105 to .149. Since it did not include zero, the mediation was significant (Hayes, 2015). Since the effect of contact with difficult clients had been reduced we have support for partial mediation in our model. The mediation effect was 47,9%. Hence, almost half of the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need was explained by emotional load.

Table IV. Mediation Effects of Emotional Load on the Relationship between Contact With Difficult Clients and Recovery Need, N = 1480

		$CI_{95\%}$	
Effect	Unstandardised *beta*	Lower	Upper
Total	.263	.222	.303
Direct	.137	.096	.177
Indirect (mediation)	.126	.105	.149

p = .000

Second, we hypothesised that PDM moderated the mediating effect of emotional load on recovery need. The overall model was significant, $F(5, 1474) = 113.549$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .278$. PDM had a direct effect on recovery need, $b = -.128$, $t(5,1474) = -9.833$, $p = .000$, which means that an increase of PDM is related to a decrease of recovery need. The first stage interaction between contact with difficult clients and PDM was not significant, ($b = -.003$, $t(3,1476) = -.050$, $p = .96$), meaning that PDM did not moderate the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load. The second stage moderation was significant ($b = .057$, $t(5,14764 = 2.853$, $p = .004$). This means that PDM moderated the mediating effect emotional load had on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need. However, the direction was not as expected. The sign of the unstandardised *b* showed that PDM was enhancing the effect of contact with difficult clients on recovery need. Next, we also found that PDM moderated the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need $b = -.068$, $t(5,1476) = -2.147$, $p = .032$. In sum, this means that not only did PDM moderate the indirect effect of emotional load, but also the remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

Table V. Moderation effect of Participation in Decision-Making on the Relationship between Emotional Load and Recovery Need, N = 1480

				$CI_{95\%}$ for *b*	
Predictor	*b*	SE	*p*	Lower	Upper
Intercept	.550	.008	.000	.553	.566
Emotional load	.202	.014	.000	.176	.229
PDM	-.128	.013	.000	-.163	-.102
Contact with difficult clients x PDM	-.003	.055	*ns*	-.111	.105
Emotional load x PDM	.057	.020	.004	.018	.097
Contact with difficult clients x PDM	-.068	.031	.032	-.129	-.006

Note. Fit for model $R^2 = .278$, $F(5, 1474) = 113.55$, p = .000.

Table 6 shows the indirect effects of contact with difficult clients on recovery need through emotional load, dependent on different levels of the moderator. Values for the moderator are at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th and 90th percentile. The unstandardised direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, via emotional load, showed us that as the levels of PDM increased, emotional load was increasingly more important as a partial mediator. The first stage interaction showed that the effect of contact with difficult clients on emotional load decreased as PDM increased, but only slightly. The difference between employees at the 10th percentile and the 90th percentile is a mere .004. Table 6 further shows that the effect of contact with difficult clients on recovery need increased in the second stage interaction condition, with an impact of .197 at the 10th percentile and .260 at the 90th percentile. Thus, the relationship between emotional load and recovery need was strengthened in a linear fashion as levels of the moderator PDM increased. This is in accordance with the enhancing effect shown in table 5. Finally, inspection of table 6 also showed a linear decline in the strength of the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need. As the level of PDM increased, this relationship is weakened. This supports the buffering effect found for PDM on the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

Table VI. Percentiles values for participation in decision-making

	10th	*25th*	*50th*	*75th*	*90th*
Unstandardised indirect relationship between contact with difficult clients, via emotional load, and recovery need	.085^{+}	.096^{+}	.106^{+}	.127^{+}	.137^{+}
Unstandardised direct relationship between contact with clients and emotional load (First stage)	.551***	.550***	.549***	.548***	.547***
Unstandardised direct relationship between emotional load and recovery need (Second stage)	.197***	.210***	.222***	.248***	.260***
Remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need	.163***	.140***	.118***	.073***	.050***

$^{+}$ = significant bootstrap intervals, $^{***}p$ = .00

Third, we hypothesised that SSL would moderate the mediating effect of emotional on recovery need. The overall model was significant, $F(5,1474) = 108.241$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .269$, and was able to explain 26,9% of the variance in our data set. SSL had a negative effect on recovery need, $b = -.092$, $t(5,1474) = -.8.620$, $p = .000$. Hence, a unit increase in SSL results in a decrease of .092 units in need for recovery. With respect to the first stage moderation we see that the interaction between contact with difficult clients and SSL was not significant, $b = .045$, $t(3,1476) = 1.055$, $p = .292$. This entails that SSL did not moderate the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load. However, there was a significant second stage moderation, $b = .054$, $t(5,1474) = 3.394$, $p = .001$. As the unstandardized b showed, SSL enhanced the effect of contact with difficult clients on recovery need, through emotional load. This was in contrast to our hypothesis. The results also showed that SSL had a moderating effect on the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, $b = -.054$, $t(5,1474) = -2.152$, $p = .032$. The more SSL the employees report, the weaker the strength of the relationship between working with difficult clients on recovery need. In sum, this means that not only does SSL moderate the indirect effect of emotional load, but also the remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

Taken together, the results regarding hypothesis 2 and 3 yielded that both PDM and SSL are enhancers of the relationship between emotional load and recovery need. However, the remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need was buffered by the moderators, as hypothesised. This gives us partial support for hypothesis 2 and 3.

Table VII. Moderation effect of Social Support from the Leader on the Relationship between Emotional Load and Recovery Need, N = 1480

				$CI_{95\%}$ for *b*	
Predictor	*b*	SE	*p*	Lower	Upper
Intercept	.002	.016	.000	-.028	.033
Emotional load	.195	.014	.000	.168	.223
SSL	-.092	.011	.000	-.113	-.071
Contact with difficult clients x SSL	.045	.043	*ns*	-.039	.128
Emotional load x SSL	.054	.016	.001	.023	.085
Contact with difficult clients x SSL	-.054	.025	.032	-.104	-.005

Note. Fit for model $R^2 = .269$, $F(5, 1474) = 113.55$, $p = .000$

Table 8 shows the indirect effects of the effect of working with difficult clients on recovery need, at different levels of SSL, through emotional load. Again, the mediator had a larger effect on the relationship between emotional load and recovery need when the values of the moderator were higher. Although the first stage moderation was not significant, it is evident from the percentiles that the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load was still significant at all levels of SSL. Table 8 further shows that the second stage interaction showed an increasing effect at higher levels of SSL, which was in line with the enhancing effect shown in table 7. The interaction between SSL, contact with difficult clients and recovery need showed that the strength of the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need is weakened as values of SSL increased. This was also in accordance with the results presented in table 7, showing indications of a buffering effect.

Table VIII. Percentiles values for social support from the leader

	10th	*25th*	*50th*	*75th*	*90th*
Unstandardised indirect relationship between contact with difficult clients, via emotional load, and recovery need	.072^{+}	.084^{+}	.108^{+}	.121^{+}	.149^{+}
Unstandardised direct relationship between contact with clients and emotional load (First stage)	.496***	.511***	.541***	.556***	.585***
Unstandardised direct relationship between emotional load and recovery need (Second stage)	.185***	.199***	.227***	.242***	.270***
Remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need	.167***	.149***	.113***	.095***	.059***

$^{+}$ = *significant bootstrap intervals,* $^{***}p = .000$

Lastly, we hypothesised that SSL would moderate the moderated mediation between contact with difficult clients, emotional load, PDM and recovery need. The overall model for hypothesis 4 was significant, $F(14,1458) = 44.052$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .297$. Similar to the previous models, PDM did not moderate the first stage relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load, $b = .005$, $t(6,1466) = .098$, $p = .921$. The second stage moderation was still significant for both SSL and PDM, $b = .113$, $t(14,1458) = 3.496$, $p = .000$ and $b = .131$, $t(14,1458) = 2.961$, $p = .003$, respectively. Further, SSL did not seem to moderate the effect of PDM on recovery need, $b = -.081$, $t(14,1458) = 2.938$, $p = .003$. The second order interaction between emotional load, PDM and SSL on recovery need was significant, $b = -.069$, $t(14,1458) = -2.935$, $p = .003$. This means that SSL moderated the moderating effect PDM had on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, through the indirect effect of emotional load. Both moderators, SSL and PDM,

had a significant, negative direct effect on recovery need, b = -.152, t(14,1458) = -3.844, p = .000, and b = -.235, t(14,1458) = -3.937, p = .000, respectively.

The model for hypothesis 4 further showed a non-significant simple moderation of both PDM and SSL on the remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, (b = .016, t(14,1458) = .236, p = .813), and b = -.008, t(14,1458) = -.162, p = .871, respectively. We also found that the relationship between contact with difficult clients, PDM and SSL was not significant, b = -034, t(14,1458) = -.891, p = .372, implying that SSL did not moderate the direct moderation that PDM had on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need. Age, gender and employment contract were used as control variables, of which only age was significant, b = .018, t(14,1458) =2.1635, p = .031.

Table IX. Moderation effect of Social Support from the Leader on the Moderation effect of Participation in Decision-Making on the Relationship between Emotional Load and Recovery Need, N = 1480

				$CL_{95\%}$ for b	
Predictor	b	SE	p	Lower	Upper
Intercept	.555	.079	.000	.398	.711
Age	.018	.008	.031	.002	.034
Gender	-.018	.018	*ns*	-.053	.017
Employment contract	.018	.020	*ns*	-.020	.057
Main effects on recovery need					
Contact with difficult clients	.177	.065	.006	.049	.306
Emotional load	.016	.042	*ns*	-.066	.098
PDM	-.235	.060	.000	-.352	-.118
SSL	-.152	.039	.000	-.230	-.074
First stage: Contact with difficult clients → Emotional load					
Contact with difficult clients x PDM	.005	.055	*ns*	-.102	.113

Second stage: via Emotional Load → Recovery need					
Emotional load x PDM	.131	.044	.003	.044	.218
Emotional load x SSL	.113	.032	.000	.049	.177
PDM x SSL	.081	.028	.003	.027	.136
Emotional Load x PDM x SSL	-.069	.023	.003	-.115	-.023
Direct moderation: Contact with difficult clients → Recovery need					
Contact with difficult clients x PDM	.016	.070	*ns*	-.122	.156
Contact with difficult clients x SSL	-.008	.053	*ns*	-.112	.095
Contact with difficult clients x PDM x SSL	-.034	.038	*ns*	-.108	.040

Note. Fit for model $R^2 = .297$, $F(14, 1458) = 44.052$, $p = .000$.

Table 10 illustrates the direct effects of the impact of emotional load on recovery need, at different levels of the combination of PDM and SSL. It appears that at the lowest percentile level of PDM, emotional load had an increasingly bigger impact on recovery need as the level of SSL increased. The same effect can be seen on the lowest percentile of SSL as levels of PDM increased. At the 50th percentile of SSL, the impact of emotional load did not increase along with higher levels of PDM. In fact, there was a slight decrease. At the 90th percentile of both PDM and SSL, it is possible to observe a decrease in emotional load's effect on recovery need as the levels of the other moderator increased. However, the table shows that the lowest impact of emotional load was found at the lowest percentile for both PDM and SSL. This means that the situation where emotional load had the least effect on recovery need was when the employee experienced little participation and received little support from their leader.

Table X. Percentiles for the direct effect of emotional load on recovery need on the different levels of participation in decision-making and social support from the leader

Unstandardised indirect relationship between emotional load and recovery need		PDM				
		10th	*25th*	*50th*	*75th*	*90th*
	SSL					
	10th	.1603***	.1851***	.2098***	.2592	.2839***
	25th	.1909***	.2073***	.2236***	.2563***	.2727***
	50th	.2521***	.2518***	.2514***	.2506***	.2502***
	75th	.2827***	.2740***	.2652***	.2477***	.2389***
	90th	.3439***	.3185***	.2930***	.2420***	.2165***

***$p = .000$

Table 11 shows the indirect effects of the impact of working with difficult clients on recovery, through emotional load, at different levels of the combination of the two moderators, namely PDM and SSL. The percentiles revealed that when levels of PDM were low, the effect of working with difficult clients on recovery, via emotional load, increased along with increasing levels of SSL. The same pattern was found for low levels of SSL and increasing levels of PDM. The table indicates that emotional load contributed to explaining the relationship between working with diffuclt clients, as emotional load had an increasingly larger effect when one of the moderators was high and the other was low. This tendency changed around the 75th percentile for both moderators. If employees received a lot of social support from the leader, and experienced having a lot of say over the decision-making processes, emotional load had a smaller effect on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need.

Table XI. Percentiles for the indirect effect of contact with clients on recovery need through emotional load, on the different levels of participation in decision-making and social support from the leader

Unstandardised relationship between emotional load and recovery need	Participation in decision-making				
	10th	*25th*	*50th*	*75th*	*90th*
Social Support from the Leader					
10th	.0662+	.0817+	.0972+	.1281+	.1435+
25th	.0831+	.0943+	.1056+	.1279+	.1390+
50th	.1169+	.1196+	.1222+	.1276+	.1302+
75th	.1338+	.1322+	.1306+	.1274+	.1258+
90th	.1676+	.1574+	.1472+	.1270+	.1169+

+ = *significant bootstrap intervals*

Discussion

This thesis wanted to explore the relationship between demands and resources on employees working with difficult clients, and how these two elements affect recovery need as an outcome. The sample was drawn from the banking sector, a sector where employees often have to deal with clients. The starting point of the thesis was the hypothesis that increased contact with difficult clients could be associated with increased recovery need. Many studies have looked further into what accounts for this association, and have found that the emotional load that stems from performing emotional labour in this context is a possible factor (Pugliesi, 1999). Thus, we assumed in our first hypothesis that the relationship between contact with clients and recovery need would be at least partially mediated by the experienced emotional load. Evidence was found in our sample supporting this hypothesis.

Both PDM and SSL, the resources chosen for the study, can be argued to have both an emotional and a cognitive dimension, indicating a double match of common kind with the demand of working with difficult clients. Because recovery need can be argued to be comprised of an emotional and cognitive dimension as well, there is cause to assume that a triple match may exist. According to the DISC model, a triple match will increase the likelihood of finding an interaction effect (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003, 2006; de Jonge et al.,

2008). Hence, for the second and the third hypothesis we wanted to investigate whether PDM and SSL moderated the mediated (indirect) relationship between working with difficult clients, emotional load and recovery need, and the remaining direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need. We also tested for a first stage moderation between contact with difficult clients and emotional load. When testing PDM and SSL separately, we found no first stage moderation, but a significant moderation of the mediated relationship as well as the remaining direct relationship. However, in contrast to our hypotheses, they acted as enhancers rather than buffers on the emotional path of the model. Not only is this in contrast with the original hypothesis, it is also contrary to the assumptions of the DISC model. According to the compensation and balance principles, matching the demands with appropriate resources should either balance or decrease negative effects of straining demands (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003; de Jonge et al., 2008). In this case, we discovered that high levels of the resources PDM or SSL increased the effect of emotional load on recovery need. However, a buffering effect was found on the direct relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need for both moderators, implying that the inclusion of the moderator decreased the levels of recovery need on the cognitive path in each analysis. The latter concurs with the DISC model.

Finally, for the fourth hypothesis we assumed that SSL would moderate the moderated mediation found for PDM. The interactions for the simple moderated mediations (Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3) were still significant, but no significant moderation on the remaining direct relationship was found. When both SSL and PDM were present, the relationship between emotional load and recovery need was reduced. This is in accordance with the DISC model. Interestingly, at very low levels of PDM and SSL, emotional load has very low influence on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need after work.

In sum, the analyses yielded findings that both supported and falsified our hypotheses. Emotional load was able to explain part of the relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, and hypothesis 1 was therefore supported. None of the moderators neither buffered nor enhanced the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load. Separately, the moderators did not seem to operate as hypothesised on the mediated relationship on the emotional path. Individually, PDM and SSL functioned as enhancers rather than as buffers on the relationship between emotional load and recovery, contrary to what we expected. Yet, both the resources acted a buffers on the remaining direct relationship. Thus, hypothesis 2 and 3 were partially supported. PDM and SSL acted as a

buffer on the emotional path when analysed together, but this effect was absent in the remaining direct relationship on the cognitive path. Additionally, no significant simple moderations were found on the direct relationship in the last analysis. In conclusion, hypothesis 4 was only partially supported.

Neither PDM nor SSL moderated the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load. This could be due to the fact that emotional reactions happen quite instantly (Ekman, 1992; Kalish, 1997). PDM and SSL may not be in time to reduce the emotional effects of working with difficult clients, since the emotional reactions would most likely already have occurred (Ekman, 1992).

Although none of the interactions were significant, PDM had a negative effect on the relationship between contact with difficult clients and emotional load, in accordance with our hypothesis. SSL on the other hand, showed an enhancing effect, indicating that SSL could lead to increased emotional load. If resources from the work environment are not able to affect emotional load, it could be the case that personality dispositions play a more important role than factors in the environment. A general disposition towards believing that one has the ability to exert control over one's environment is called having an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Studies have shown that people with internal locus of control are less likely to perceive a situation as stressful (Anderson, 1977). Internal locus of control has further been found to correlate with Class I coping behaviour, which is a tendency to respond to stressful situations in a more task-centred, rather than emotional, way (Anderson, 1977). This could indicate that an internal locus of control could have a buffering effect on the relationship between working with difficult clients and emotional load. This can be argued to go against the premises of the DISC model. Following the DISC model, an emotional coping style should produce the most beneficial interaction with the other variables on the emotional path. However, a more task-centred way of coping with stress seems at face-value to load more heavily onto the cognitive dimension.

The results yielded that PDM increased recovery need via the emotional path, contradictory to our buffer hypothesis. Research on PDM has shown conflicting results, and it is not yet clear what the role of PDM is in the relationship between strain and stress. It is worth mentioning that while past research has uncovered that PDM can reduce stress, there also exist studies that have found neither main effects nor interactional effects (Kraaijeveld, Huysmans, Hoozemans, van der Beek, & Speklé, 2014; Schmidt & Diestel, 2011). Some authors assign these findings to the idea that subordinates may be aware of the formal structures preventing them from fully participating in the decision-making process (Schyns &

Van Veldhoven, 2010), indicating that organisational structure can be important. These arguments lead to Henry Mintzberg's (1980) typology of organisational structuring, which may offer an explanation for why PDM acted as an enhancer on the emotional path when tested alone. Mintzberg (1980) suggests that there are five organisational structures, where machine bureaucracy is one of them. This structure is characterised by a large operating core, executing routine tasks and very formalised procedures (Mintzberg, 1980). Moreover, this structure has relatively centralised power with regards to decision-making, and there is often a sharp distinction between the top and the bottom in the organisation (Mintzberg, 1980). A large institutional Belgian bank may fit this description. In such a bank, a bank employee on the core level, with standardised procedures and routines, may not have much room for making decisions on his or her own. The important decisions are probably made further up in the organisation. When the procedures are inflexible, the employees may experience that their decision-making possibilities are limited, regardless of how much they experience they are allowed to participate. It might be that the participation the employees get in the decision-making processes does not make a substantial difference on how the procedures and processes in the bank are. This could be frustrating, lead to higher stress and thus explain the enhancing effect on need for recovery.

We noted that SSL did not act as a resource between emotional load and recovery need when tested in isolation from PDM. Social support is a resource that both theoretically and intuitively is thought to decrease the effects of strain. However, Viswesvaran et al. (1999) state in their meta-analysis that the empirical evidence of social support as a buffer is mixed. Some studies have found that it has a direct effect on strain (Cohen & Wills, 1985), some have found that it buffers the stressor-strain relationship (van der Doef & Maes, 1999), while others find the opposite: that social support act as an enhancer (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986). This means that high levels of support may reinforce the stressor-stress relationship rather than ease it. Although our findings join the ranks of a minority finding, it is still an interesting discovery. It could be the case that supportive communication leaves the employee feeling that the situation is indeed not optimal, as proposed by Beehr (1976); (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986). Hence, SSL could exacerbate rather than alleviate stress. This could indicate that social support on its own does not function as a buffer for stress, and that it has to be combined with PDM to reduce the relationship between stressors and stress, which in this study is handling difficult clients and recovery need. It could be the case that the emotional dimensions of PDM and SSL are not strong enough on their own, and that they are only able to match the emotional level of the demand and outcome when they are both present. This would be in

accordance with the balance principle of the DISC model, which states that balance is only achieved when the variables not only match onto the same dimension, but also hold the same level of that dimension.

The latter brings us to our statistical argument for the fact that the moderators did not work as expected when tested in isolation. Items measuring PDM and SSL showed some high cross-loadings in the factor analysis (see Table 1), and in the correlation matrix showing descriptive statistics for the sample (see Table 3). This can indicate that they may be strongly related and possibly be measuring a similar underlying construct, rather than two distinct constructs. It is evident from the findings that in order for PDM to buffer the negative effect stemming from emotional load, social support from one's leader is necessary. It could be the case that it feels more valuable to participate when they have support from their leader.

The statistical relationship between PDM and SSL can be supported by literature. For instance, PDM can be seen as a function of leader behaviour (Mohrman et al., 1978), which shows a strong relatedness between PDM and SSL as support certainly is a form of behaviour. The statistical indications of a similarity between the two variables could reflect this. Furthermore, the connection between the two resources can be attributed to the proposal that the very structure in an organisation can work as a replacement for leadership (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). PDM is here seen as not only the behaviour of the leader, but also the design of the organisational hierarchy and interaction between the leader and the employees. The leader may often have some influence over the development of structural aspects in an organisation, thus making PDM a function of leader behaviour. This means that if perceived participation is affected by the behaviour of the leader it strengthens the idea that they are connected.

This implies that leadership theories could provide valuable insight into explaining why PDM and SSL have to be combined to work as a buffer between demands and recovery need. The terms "initiating structure" and "consideration" are two important concepts in the leadership literature, which can be used to build on this argument. Initiating structure refers to directing subordinates towards goals, communication, and give employees room to try out new ideas (Korman, 1966). Consideration reflects the degree of mutual trust and respect between a leader and subordinate (Korman, 1966). PDM enables employees to try out new ideas, and for a leader to give an employee a lot of PDM, he or she needs to respect and trust the employee.

These aspects of consideration and initiating structure are also a part of good Leader-Member Exchange relationship (van Dierendonck, Le Blanc, & van Breukelen, 2002).

Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) is a widely used theory within the paradigm of leadership and is based on the idea of a dyadic relationship between leader and follower. The quality of this relationship influences a variety of factors concerning the employee, including decision-making. According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), social support is an important aspect in the process whereby a high quality dyadic relationship forms between leader and employee. Therefore, the relationship between SSL, PDM and a lower need for recovery might stem from successful LMX leadership.

Another important aspect of LMX leadership is the significance of communication (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Both providing support and creating a participatory environment can be said to be conveyed by means of communication. Hence, it is fully possible that communication is the common construct connecting PDM and SSL. This implies that LMX can be used as a connecting theory between PDM and SSL. Should this be the case, it could possibly explain the cross-loadings in the factor analysis (see Table 1), as well as the moderate multicollinearity in Table 3. Note that the parallel analysis suggested a four factor solution rather than five factors. It could be possible that the fourth factor is leadership style.

It is important to keep in mind that although PDM and SSL combined decreased the effect of emotional load on need for recovery after work, the bigger picture is more nuanced. The percentiles in Table 10 tell an interesting story, and show that employees who experienced a low degree of PDM and SSL had the least effect of emotional load on recovery need. This could indicate that other factors come into play. It is possible to imagine that having little influence over decisions and receiving little support enables the employee to rely on other resources. Psychological detachment from work during non-work time is a concept that has been indicated as a partial factor explaining the relationship between job stressors and recovery need (Sonnentag et al., 2010). Successful psychological detachment from work is characterised as a state of mind during non-work time where the worker does not take part in job-related activities and thoughts (Sonnentag et al., 2010). This can in turn reduce the need for recovery. There is evidence showing that if work demands include a high degree of emotional dissonance, it can lead to decreased psychological detachment (Sonnentag et al., 2010). This conceptually relates psychological detachment to the emotional path of the hypotheses.

The unexpected results of how PDM and SSL interacted with the demand and outcome can to some degree be a result of temporal and spatial distance. With regards to working directly with clients, the resources are distant in both time and space. PDM and SSL can occur both before and after a consultation with a client, but as it is measured in this study

it does not include instantaneous utilisation of the resources. The concepts of proximal and distal stressors described in literature (Ensel & Lin, 1996), might easily be transferred to describe proximal and distal resources as well. Following the classifications of a proximal and distal stressor, a proximal resource is closer in both time and space compared to a distal resource. Having a say over decisions and receiving support from your leader can be argued to be characterised as distal resources. It could be the case that proximal resources would be able to alleviate some of the experienced stress from client consultations. Perhaps having a co-worker nearby that the employee can consult immediately would be perceived as more useful. If an employee is dealing with a difficult client, having someone to consult could strengthen the employee's belief in his or her own decision. Furthermore, it could give the perception that the responsibility for the outcome of that particular case is now shared between the employee and the co-worker. It is possible to imagine that this could decrease the emotional load stemming from working with difficult clients, and thus act as a buffer on the relationship between working with clients and subsequent recovery need. Following the line of argumentation that a proximal resource could be more useful than a distal resource can be understood in light of the balance principle of the DISC model. Perhaps social support from a nearby co-worker has the potential to match the demand of working with difficult clients both on the same emotional dimension as well as the same level, compared to social support from the leader.

The present study argued for both an emotional and a cognitive dimension in all of the variables included in the hypotheses. Based on the theoretical underpinnings of the DISC model and due to the statistical findings, it seems warranted to note that the results point towards a more salient emotional dimension than cognitive dimension. The DISC model clearly states that a proper dimensional match will lead to the strongest interaction effects (de Jonge & Dormann, 2003; de Jonge et al., 2008). Although the results uncovered significant single interactions on the cognitive path as well as the emotional path, the double moderation was only significant for the emotional path. This could imply a heavier loading onto the emotional dimension than on the cognitive dimension.

The findings in this thesis have some important implications. Our study points to the importance of leaders being supportive, *and* that they give employees opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. For example, it seems that if the leader is only supportive, it can make the stressful situation worse in terms of emotional strain. Thus, how leaders interact with their subordinates can play a large role with regards to the subordinates' wellbeing in service occupations. This is important to be aware of for leaders, and they should

strive to be both supportive and to create a participatory environment. This may have some implications for leader development programmes. It may also be beneficial to put effort into running interventions in the organisation. This can enable leaders to be more supportive and increase PDM among employees. A suggestion could be to make leaders and organisations more aware of the fact that SSL and PDM can have beneficial effects when provided together. Heaney, Price, and Rafferty (1995) had service-workers participate in a theory-driven training program. The program, called the "Caregiver Support Program", was intended to teach employees about the benefits of support systems and to teach them about participatory problem-solving approaches, and how to build such skills (Heaney et al., 1995). Results from the program indicated that the leaders of the participants progressed in their efforts to provide social support to their followers as a consequence of the program (Heaney et al., 1995). This can imply that the program could have beneficial effects for the participants in our study.

Strengths and limitations

The current study has some important strengths and limitation. First, one could argue that it is a limitation that the data was collected by the means of self-report (Spector, 1994). Self-report measures put the results at risk for being affected by social desirability bias (Spector, 1994). The results could also be confounded by untruthful reporting in general, often named the common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, the data was collected anonymously, which should reduce the probability for these effects to occur. Future studies could reduce the effects further by including measures from e.g. spouses to obtain a better insight into the actual need for recovery after a workday.

It should also be noted that this is a cross-sectional study, which can only provide correlational data (Coggon, Barker and Rose, 2009). Studies looking into the interplay occurring between the workplace and the worker and how this affects their health would benefit more from a longitudinal study design, as this would be able to give some indications of direction for the relationships investigated (Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan and Moorman, 2008).

The sample consisted of people working in the service profession in a bank, and dealt with customers in their day to day work. Working with clients has been especially highlighted as putting an emotional load on workers, consequently indicating this as a representative sample for the purpose of the study.

In this study, we argue that working with clients is emotionally demanding due to the emotional regulating work associated with this contact, which could produce emotional dissonance (Zapf, 2002). However, we did not measure or differentiate between surface

acting and deep acting, two different processes of emotional regulation (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1979). When employees engage in surface acting they display organisationally appropriate emotions, in effect "faking" emotions, while keeping their true feelings hidden. This is opposed to deep acting, which refers to the process where the employee processes his or her inner feelings to make them congruent with the normative expectations (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1979). It is possible to imagine that different outcomes could be observed for the two conditions, but this study is limited to a less differentiated measure.

Furthermore, emotional load was chosen as the mediator between difficult clients and recovery need. However, we argue that mental load could explain part of the relationship, which is a cognitive mediator. The data in this study did not allow us to test mental load, and thus we were not able to investigate which effects this could have had. As we note the possible importance of this alternative mediator, the lack of testing with a cognitive mediator is considered as a weakness.

We used a step-by-step approach to our analyses in the statistical procedures. In order to gain full insight into the nature of the relationship between the demand, resources and outcomes, we ran several sub-tests. It is important to note that every subtest increases the probability of inflating Type 1 error (Bender and Lange, 2001). Yet, we would not have been aware of the contradictory roles PDM and SSL played in this data set had we not done this. Furthermore, as part of the learning experience, a step-by-step approach is beneficial for us to fully understand the statistical procedures we are executing. This is something we value highly as master students. A step-by-step approach does not only function as a learning process, it is also advised by the creator of the statistical software used in this thesis. Such an approach is commonly known as "probing" an interaction (Hayes, 2013).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the results in this study were produced using a currently invalidated scale. When we ran preliminary analyses, the scale showed good psychometric properties. Hence, this study adds to the research field by providing a validation of a scale measuring contact with difficult clients. As highlighted in the theoretical framework, working with clients is strongly implicated in this particular field of research. A methodologically strong scale for this predictor can therefore be beneficial for future research

Future directions

Our findings indicate that more than half of the effect between working with difficult clients and recovery need can be explained by other factors than emotional load. In the present study, we have looked at resources with both emotional and cognitive dimensions, yet the mediator is emotional in its nature. The cognitive path of the model could have been more

thoroughly tested with a cognitive mediator. The current survey did not present an opportunity to do so, and therefore we can only speculate which factors that could explain the cognitive aspects of dealing with difficult clients. Self-efficacy is a construct that describes an individual's beliefs in and expectations of abilities to complete tasks and achieve goals (Bandura, 1989). It can affect both analytic thinking and motivation, as well as perceived stress (Bandura, 1989). Other studies have related high self-efficacy to increased wellbeing (Bandura, 1989) and even better job performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Self-efficacy has been proposed as a cognitive mediator in previous studies investigating stressful experiences (Litt, 1988a). An encounter with a difficult client could be imagined to lead to decreased self-efficacy. A weak belief in own abilities to adequately handle difficult situations with clients could in turn be argued to increase recovery need, as the situation might be perceived as exceeding the employee's own abilities. Although the DISC model never specifies any guidelines for mediators, the presumption of a dimensional match between the variables seems likely to apply to mediators as well. Moreover, it is interesting to note that self-efficacy is possible to manipulate, to a certain extent. This can imply self-efficacy as a useful target for intervention programs aimed at reducing stress in the workplace. The role of self-efficacy could therefore be interesting to investigate further.

The results showed a significant effect for age. Research has shown that there seems to be age differences in how recovery need is affected by both participation in decision-making (Gommans et al., 2015) and social support (Schwarzer & Leppin, 1989). Recovery need in general has also been found to be higher among workers aged 46-55 years, and significantly lower for workers aged 26-35 years (Jansen et al., 2002). Taken together, this points towards age having a role that goes beyond being a control variable. In light of the existing research, we propose that age should be treated as a moderator on the stressor-stress relationship.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to establish what effect having to deal with difficult clients has on employee's recovery need, through the mediating effect of emotional load, in the present data sample. In addition, we wanted to investigate if there could be found interactional effects for PDM and SSL on this relationship. The present study showed that both PDM and SSL can function as beneficial moderators on the mediated relationship between contact with difficult clients and recovery need, but only when both are present. Especially the significant results found for the moderations of the emotional path strengthen the notion that job demands and job resources do not interact randomly in its influence on wellbeing. The results

in this study seem to point towards an especially strong emotional dimension in the different variables under investigation, as the emotional path was the only path to remain significant through all tests. This is in line with the presumptions of the DISC model, and further strengthens the recommendations that job stress interventions should target specific demands and resources in order to be fully effective (de Jonge et al., 2008). The contradictory results that were found for PDM and SSL in isolation and combination can be said to be in support of the balance principle of the DISC model. It underlines that the demands and resources need to match onto the same dimension as well as hold the same level of that dimension. This can be argued to lend support to the DISC model as a theoretical framework. Hence, awareness of matching between job demands, job resources and job strain in organisational health research is accentuated by the results in this study.

Moreover, the study showed that a single factor is not necessarily sufficient to have an effect on an employee's wellbeing. This implies that rather than focusing on one single factor, organisations and leaders should strive towards creating a healthy and resourceful environment.

The present study also found evidence supporting for a propsed new scale that can be a good addition to research projects with an aim of investigating different effects of working with clients.

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Appendix

SIMPH - 1

Instructions on how to complete the form

Please complete by using CAPITAL LETTERS and *marking the box corresponding to your response with a cross.*

For example ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

PERSONNAL INFORMATION

Year of Birth ? 1 9 ☐ ☐

Gender ? ☐ female

☐ male

Which is the hignest level of education you have completed ?

☐ primary school not completed
☐ primary school
☐ secondary school (lower) - professional training
☐ secondary school (lower) - technical training
☐ secondary school (lower) - general training
☐ secondary school (higher) - professional training
☐ secondary school (higher) - technical training
☐ secondary school (higher) - general training
☐ further/higher education (2-3 years)
☐ further/higher education (4-5 years)
☐ university degree or equivalent
☐ post university degree

Did you follow other courses ? If yes, please describe below.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

How many years have you been working with your current employer? ☐☐ years

Type of contract ? ☐ permanent contract
☐ tempory contract
☐ interim
☐ other type of contract

Type of work regime : ☐ daytime
☐ shift work
☐ irregular hours
☐ night duty

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SIMPH - 2

Do you work full time of part time? ☐ full-time

☐ part-time, 60% or more

☐ part-time less then 60%

How many hours do you work, on average, during the week ? ☐☐ number of hours your really worked

Which position do you currently hold?

☐ bleu collar worker

☐ white collar worker

☐ teaching staff

☐ public servant (permanent position)

☐ public servant (temporary position)

☐ nurse, social worker, assistent nurse,...

☐ paramedic (psychologist, ergotherapist, food consultant,...)

☐ middlemanagement

☐ higher management / board of direction

☐ selfemployed (lawyer, physician,...)

☐ Independent (farmer, ...)

☐ the middle class (shopowner, ...)

☐ ohter profession

How many years do you hold this position with your current employer? ☐☐ years

Do you hold a managerial position ? ☐ no

☐ yes (you have responsability of other workers)

At which department do you work ? ☐ xxx

☐ yyy

☐ zzz

OPTIONAL

To achieve a better understanding of your current job, please complete the following.

Please describe briefly which job you mainly execute, which is the main task at work?
for example: factory worker, accountant, operator, mechinic, maintenance technician, director, printer, secretary, receptionist, administration, salemanager, carpenter, physician, consultant, ergotherapist, foodconsultant, designer, ...

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SIMPH - 2

Do you work full time of part time? ☐ full-time

☐ part-time, 60% or more

☐ part-time less then 60%

How many hours do you work, on average, during the week ? ☐☐ number of hours your really worked

Which position do you currently hold?

☐ bleu collar worker

☐ white collar worker

☐ teaching staff

☐ public servant (permanent position)

☐ public servant (temporary position)

☐ nurse, social worker, assistent nurse,...

☐ paramedic (psychologist, ergotherapist, food consultant,...)

☐ middlemanagement

☐ higher management / board of direction

☐ selfemployed (lawyer, physician,...)

☐ Independent (farmer, ...)

☐ the middle class (shopowner, ...)

☐ ohter profession

How many years do you hold this position with your current employer? ☐☐ years

Do you hold a managerial position ? ☐ no

☐ yes (you have responsability of other workers)

At which department do you work ? ☐ xxx

☐ yyy

☐ zzz

OPTIONAL

To achieve a better understanding of your current job, please complete the following.

Please describe briefly which job you mainly execute, which is the main task at work?
for example: factory worker, accountant, operator, mechinic, maintenance technician, director, printer, secretary, receptionist, administration, salemanager, carpenter, physician, consultant, ergotherapist, foodconsultant, designer, ...

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SIMPH - 3

Explanation and instructions on how to complete the form

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain an accurate picture of how you personally evaluate specific aspects of your work and work environment. Questions are grouped together beneath the titles which indicate the theme.

Please do not omit any questions. Answer all the questions by *marking the appropriate box with a cross*. Choose from the options: '**always**', '**often**', '**sometimes**' or '**never**'.
For exemple ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

	always	often	some times	never
Pace and amount of work				
Do you have to work extra hard in order to complete something?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you work under time pressure?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you have to hurry?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Emotional load				
Does your work demand a lot from you emotionally?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are you confronted in your work with things that affect you personally?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your work put you in emotionally upsetting situations?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social support				
Can you count on your colleagues when you come across difficulties in your work ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
If necessary, can you ask your colleagues for help ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
In your work, do you feel appreciated by your colleagues?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can you count on your direct boss when you come across difficulties in your work ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
If necessary, can you ask your boss for help ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
In your work, do you feel appreciated by your boss ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Variety in your work				
Is your work varied?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your work require personal input?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your work make sufficient demands on all your skills and capacities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Opportunities to learn				
Do you learn new things in your work ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your work give you the feeling that you can achieve something ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does your job offer you opportunities for personal growth and development ?	☐	☐	☐	☐

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SIMPH - 4

	always	often	some times	never
Independence in your work				
Do you have an influence on the pace of work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can you interrupt your work for a short time if you find it necessary to do so?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can you decide on your own the order in which you carry out your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participation				
Do you have a lot to say over what is going on in your work area?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can you participate in decisions affecting issues related to your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can you consult satisfactorily with your direct boss about your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problems with work				
Do you receive contradictory instructions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you have to do your work in a way which differs from the method of your choice?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you have conflict with your colleagues about the content of your tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you have conflict with your direct boss about the content of your tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ambiguities about work				
Do you know exactly what other people expect of you in your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is it clear to you exactly what your tasks are?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you know exactly what you can expect of other people in your department?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Instructions on how to complete the form

Please do not omit any questions. Respond to all the questions by *marking one response box* per question *with a cross*. On this page, you may choose from the options: '**no**' or '**yes**'.

	no	yes
Pleasure in your work		
I do my work because I have to, and that says it all.	☐	☐
Mostly, I am pleased to start my day's work.	☐	☐
I still find my work stimulating, each and every day.	☐	☐
I enjoy my work.	☐	☐
I have to continually overcome my resistance in order to do my work.	☐	☐
Recuperation needs		
I find it difficult to relax at the end of a working day.	☐	☐
Because of my job, at the end of the working day I feel rather exhausted.	☐	☐
I find it difficult to concentrate in my free time after work.	☐	☐
Generally, I need more than an hour before I feel completely recuperated after work.	☐	☐
A feeling of tiredness prevents me from doing my work as well as I normally would during the last part of the working day	☐	☐

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