

Passive leadership and online interaction: The mediating effects of job autonomy and employee resilience

Completed Research Paper

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Abstract

With the prevalence of the Internet and mobile devices, news organizations must adapt themselves to the trend of digitalization. Social media engagement editors emerge as a new role crucial for the survival of news organizations. Engagement editors are tasked to internally facilitate the functions of marketing, content production, and data analysis. They also assume the role of “boundary spanner” for a news organization, managing online community and dealing with online audiences and their frequent toxic and aggressive behaviors. That is, engagement editors are easier than other workers to be affected by emotional stress, and thus reduce job performance. According to conservation of resource theory (COR), leadership and job autonomy both have impacts on personal resources. This research attempts to investigate whether a particular style of leadership (i.e., passive leadership) would negatively affect the engagement editors’ performance (i.e., interaction with online fans). Furthermore, how the negativity would be ameliorated by job autonomy and employee resilience. The management of engagement editors has not yet been a focus of academic studies; researchers rarely approach engagement editors from the perspective of COR. This study attempts to remedy these theoretical and practical shortcomings. We surveyed 200 news media engagement editors and used the smart PLS 3 to analyze the data. This research provides useful implication for the management of engagement editors.

Keywords: social media, online emotional labor, passive leadership, job autonomy, resilience

Introduction

Many industries have undergone huge transformation due to the advance of digital technologies. One of the changes is the emerging new role, known as the engagement editor (Powers 2015). Engagement editors are principally tasked to interact with online audience of an organization to promote their online presence, and ultimately, to increase sales revenues or profits. The market demand for engagement

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editors is getting strong. In 2014, 80% of Fortune's Top 500 companies in the US have Facebook fan pages that require social media engagement editors to manage (Barnes and Lescault 2014).

Engagement editors work at the frontline, representing organizations to interact with their clients virtually. They have to manage their feelings to express organizationally desired emotions at work, even when they encounter verbal and emotional attacks of clients (Grandey 2000). Such work thus can be emotionally exhausted and require substantial personal resources to cope with (Hoschchild 1983). Leadership can be an important source of resources that support (or deplete) engagement editors.

The literature has identified different leadership styles (Bass and Avolio 1990). Among them, passive leadership is the least studied. Passive leadership refers to a pattern of inaction and disengagement on the part of the management (Derue et al. 2011). Such practice is common in the workplace, with at least 20 percent of employees experiencing passive leadership (Aasland et al. 2010). However, passive leadership is often ignored. For example, Martinko, Harvey, Brees and Mackey (2013) identify multiple types of abusive behaviors by supervisors, but fail to recognize passive leadership as one of them. It is generally argued that passive leadership does not cause much harm to the organization, and the management does not intend to harm employees or organizations (Barling and Frone 2017). Research on passive leadership thus has long been ignored. Among the little literature, Christie and Barling (2009) found that employees who are exposed to passive leadership for a long time suffer from chronic stress, and can have difficulty regaining personal control of their work.

From the perspective of conservation of resources (COR), employees need sufficient personal resources to perform and cope with job demands and challenges (Hobfoll 2002; 2011). However, additional factors in the environment can act to facilitate or inhibit resource gain. This study aims to study how passive leadership could negatively influence emotional labors (e.g., engagement editors) and how the negativity of passive leadership can be ameliorated by other organizational and individual characteristics, i.e., job autonomy and employee resilience.

Background literature

Nowadays social media have become the most commonly used communication channels. Increasing organizations apply social media to build or maintain relationship with their clients. The news industry is no exception. News organizations use social media to build and maintain a huge base of fans or followers (Pew Research 2014). According to many studies, people, especially young people, increasingly rely on their social networks to access information and news (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, and Logan 2012; Pew Research 2013).

Technical functionalities of social media enable two-way interaction between audiences and news organizations. For example, audiences can comment, like, share, or even co-create news articles on Facebook. The use of tags not only allows the archival of specific knowledge domains, but also facilitates collective reuse of said knowledge (Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane and Azad 2013). The participatory role of audiences enabled by social media thus disrupts the long-established professional norms of journalism, such as gatekeeping and agenda-setting (Heinonen 2011). News organizations increasingly see their audiences as active participants.

Indeed, many seasoned journalists experience difficulty adapting to new practices associated with social media, such as managing online communities for effective news production and dissemination (Kenney, Gorelik and Mwangi 2000). The role of engagement editors is created to exploit social media to news organizations' benefits. Unlike traditional journalists, engagement editors mainly work virtually. Their daily job may include statistical analysis of website traffic, interaction with their digital audiences, and organization of online/offline activities to further engage their audiences (Lin 2006; Kenski and Stroud 2006; Chang 2015).

The most important task of engagement editors is to interact with fans and followers virtually. They thus often have to bear the brunt of their audience's reaction. Hoschchild (1983) argues that such workers must often stage inauthentic feelings to meet their job requirements. Phillips and Young (2009) point out that as a boundary spanner, an engagement editor must learn to please. In addition to

professional knowledge in journalism, engagement editors have to have empathy and negotiation skills to manage customer relationships (Aldoory 2005; Pieczka 2006).

Conservation of resources theory (COR)

According to COR, personal resources are required for individuals to achieve performance and cope with stressful situations (Hobfoll 1988; Hobfoll and Shirom 2001). Individuals will strive to acquire and maintain resources to meet the needs of the work. If the organization can provide more resources or support, it will help foster, enrich or protect personal resources and thus increase their work outputs. The resources may include time, physical energy, emotional energy, or attention for dealing with job requirements (Hobfoll 2002). Hobfoll (2011) argues that organizations should create the situations that lead to the gain or protection of personal resources or the avoidance of the loss of valued resources.

Passive leadership

Passive leadership refers to a lack of leadership skills, including laissez-faire and management-by-exception (Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis and Barling 2005). Passive leaders do not participate in employee goals at all, because they do not want to be responsible and evade decision-making. They only intervene with punishment or other remedial actions, when employees have deviant behavior or fail to achieve the expected results (Bass 1985). Passive leadership thus often brings about ineffective supervisor-subordinate relationship (Antonakis and House 2014).

Passive leaders ignore their responsibilities and do not empower employees (Hamidifar 2010). They avoid making decisions and ignore workplace problems, making it impossible to construct or strengthen appropriate behavior at the workplace (DeRue et al. 2011). Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008) find that passive leadership is not conducive to the clarification of employee roles, and job satisfaction. Skogstad et al. (2007) argue that passive leadership does not deal with employee issues, and it is prone to cause confusion, conflict and workplace bullying, resulting in psychological distress. Harold and Holtz (2015) point out that passive leadership tends to trigger employee uncivil behaviors. Holtz and Hu (2017) suggest that passive leadership reduces employees' trust and creates unfair feelings. Passive leadership leads to more negative outcomes, such as reduced job satisfaction and job performance (DeRue et al. 2011). In fact, passive leadership brings significant harm, especially to employees' roles and conflicts, which are not conducive to employee well-being, work attitude, and organizational commitment (Skogstad, Hetland, Glasø and Einarsen 2014; Zineldin and Hytter 2012; Buch, Martinsen and Kuvaas 2015; Judge and Piccolo 2004; Jackson, Meyer and Wang 2013). In addition, passive leadership will increase employee work pressure, leading to burnout and work fatigue.

Given the emerging role of engagement editors, no clear job descriptions and rules are developed yet. This creates stressful situations. The lack of assistance from passive leaders can further deplete engagement editors' personal resources. As engagement editors lose control of their personal resources, they will reduce interaction with fans to conserve personal resources. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Passive leadership will reduce engagement editors' online interaction with fans and followers.

Job autonomy

Job autonomy refers to the discretionary power of employees to perform tasks. That is, an employee may choose to not follow the fixed working schedule, and has the power to make decisions about how they will execute their jobs (Morgeson et al. 2005). Job autonomy is an important work characteristic that affects employee responsibility and influences work outcomes (Baillien, De Cuyper and De Witte 2011).

Job autonomy is the freedom that the organization gives employees to work. The most important thing is to let employees know that they have the right to choose. The more self-motivated employees in the workplace, the more satisfied they are with their work and the less they want to change jobs. High autonomy can reduce job uncertainty (Idaszak and Drasgow 1987), and autonomy is particularly

important in a highly variable work environment (Troyer, Mueller and Osinsky 2000). Job autonomy gives employees the freedom to decide how to present, complete tasks and how to change in the working process. Job autonomy also has a positive impact on performance, creativity and knowledge sharing (Morgeson, Delaney, Klinger and Hemingway 2005; Cabrera, Collins and Salgado 2006; Pee and Lee 2015; Llopis and Foss 2016). Job autonomy is especially effective for jobs with diverse work tasks, because it involves multiple knowledge skills and is easier to motivate knowledge-sharing behavior (Whittington, Goodwin and Murray 2004; Coelho and Augusto 2010). Creative tasks demand workers to compare and involve colleagues to participate in learning, and also requires more time and freedom for workers to engage in knowledge sharing activities. We thus hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Job autonomy will increase engagement editors' online interaction with fans and followers.

Under the passive leadership style, job autonomy seems to be even more important. Kelloway, Mullen, and Francis (2006) find that passive leadership can predict employee stress accurately. According to the demand-control-support model, healthy workplace is based on whether employee's work needs are commensurate with work control and social support. When employees face high job demands, low job control and low social support, they are strained (Karasek and Theorell 1990). Leaders have serious influence on the degree of job control that employees feel. When passive leaders are evading responsibility, they only intervene in the face of crisis, and they cannot intervene in time to let employees regain their sense of control over work and the environment. Moreover, a passive leader may not know that employees are in need of assistance, and therefore cannot provide the necessary support and may withdraw support at critical moment (Tepper 2000; Neuman and Baron 1998).

Passive leadership can create stress for employees. To cope with such stress could cause emotional exhaustion and negatively affect employee performance (Chiu and Tsai 2006). Job autonomy can be seen as a crucial organizational resource that helps alleviate the negative effects of work stress (Abraham 2000; Grandey et al. 2005; Goussinsky 2011). Job autonomy allows employees to effectively deploy and seek resources themselves. When there is low job autonomy, mistakes or errors are less tolerated (Fuller et al. 2010; Liu et al. 2011). Conversely, when employees have job autonomy (Dierdorff and Morgeson 2007), they are more likely to learn from their mistakes and errors without being punished (Liu et al. 2011). Thus, when the supervisor is passive, job autonomy not only reduces work stress, but also creates a fault-tolerant space, thereby motivating engagement editors to adapt their behaviors to interact with fans. We thus propose:

Hypothesis 3: Job autonomy will ameliorate the negative relationship between passive leadership and engagement editors' online interaction with fans and followers.

Resilience

Workplace pressure is inevitable. Some people experience major stress will cause negative effects such as emotional or job withdrawal, but some people have different reactions. Scholars have found that people with resilience characteristics, after a brief interruption in a tense situation, can return to normal and maintain improved mental health again (Freitas and Downey 1998; Rutter 1999; Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker 2000; Bonanno 2005). American Psychological Association defines resilience as "Adaptation to adversity, trauma, sources of significant stress, such as family and relationship issues, health issues or workplace and financial stress."

Resilience is a personal trait and ability. In the face of high-pressure situations, it can develop a response strategy and resist the adversity to construct the future (Chen and Lin 2004). Masten, Best and Garmezy (1990) emphasize that resilience is a dynamic process in which individuals interact with the environment. Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche and Pfefferbaum (2008) also believe that resilience is a potential outcome after stress; it is not only the psychological trait that leads to positive outcomes, but also can be altered and cultivated.

From the perspective of management, this study regards resilience as a personal trait or result, and the ability of the learning process to achieve self-development. Resilience means that in the workplace adversity, despite the disagreement, the final success can be achieved, and so resilience can lead to high

job performance (Sonnenfeld and Ward 2008). Carucci (2017) points out that resilience is the ability to adapt to complex changes, and more self-understanding would lead to higher level of resilience.

Robertson and Cooper (2015) propose a resilience model that believes that resilience can be trained, and that individuals can strengthen their self-confidence, give clear motivation to the goal, and continue to give social support resources, such as social skills and good interpersonal relationships. Eventually individuals could gain adaptability, and in the face of long working hours, poor working conditions, complex and challenging environments, have the ability to change and maintain flexibility.

Mourlane (2013) suggests that resilience includes emotional regulation, impulse control, empathy, goal setting and flexible adjustment of goals, pragmatic optimism and high self-efficacy. In the face of life's adversity, they can effectively grasp the "self" and the immediate emotional state. Present even if they encounter setbacks or find that the goals are set too high, they will adjust their goals and emotions in a timely manner. With high resilience, engagement editors not only have adaptability to the changing environment, but also has high self-efficacy; they can have empathy for fans, and the interaction is also improved. Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Engagement editors' resilience will increase their online interaction with fans and followers

Crawford, LePine and Rich (2010) clarify the relationship between demand and engagement from the theory of Job demands–resources model. They find that resources are positively related to work inputs, but work needs do not necessarily reduce work input. The key is that employees regard work needs as a challenge factor or a threat factor. If employees think that time pressure or high work responsibility will make them grow and promote professional competence, then employees will keep maintaining a high level of investment. However, if employees consider vague role conflicts, organizational bureaucracy, and conflicts as non-beneficial to professional improvement, they will reduce work commitment. Individuals' interpretation of work needs will determine the mood and strategy needed to meet the needs of the work. Employees' perception is that the challenge factor will trigger positive emotions and show problem-solving behaviors, such as developing strategies to increase efforts, and so on. On the other hand, negative emotions, such as fear, anxiety, and anger, can lead to a reduction in work commitments due to withdrawal strategies. (Erez and Isen 2002; May, Gilson and Harter 2004).

Resilience can be seen as personal resources. When supervised by passive leadership, engagement editors face the dilemma of working demand greater than resources. For people with resilience, cultivating positive emotions in response to stress can become an automated behavior. Resilient people can take initiative applying positive emotions in thinking strategies. They actively cultivate positive emotions to cope with dilemmas, repeat the same strategy, and such conscious strategizing will become an automated process (Bargh and Chartrand 1999).

Resilience is an important source of positive emotions, and individual conscious goals are frequently and consistently chosen and activated to maintain a sense of happiness (Handley, Lassiter, Nickell and Herchenroeder 2004). Thusly resilience influences thought processes and behaviors (Masten 2001; Tugade and Fredrickson 2004). The operation of emotions is long-term, and long-term use of emotions requires minimal cognitive resources to start. For people with adaptability, the initiation of positive emotions seems to be easy even in difficult situations (Isen and Diamond 1989).

Therefore, engagement editors with high resilience, although faced with passive leadership, resources continue to be lost, can automatically initiate positive emotions, can turn to other sources for resources, such as interaction with fans, improving community interactivity. Compared to low-resilience employees, coping with stress will consume more resources and reduce fan interaction to maintain personal resources, so the hypothesis is inferred as follows:

Hypothesis 5: Resilience will ameliorate the negative relationship between passive leadership and engagement editors' online interaction with fans and followers.

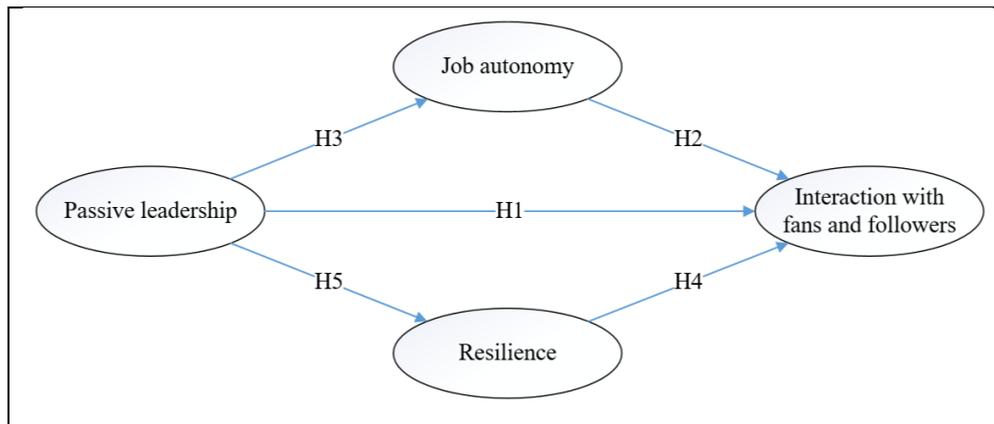


Figure 1. Research Model

Methodology

We used a survey questionnaire to collect data. We derived our measures from existing scales and adapted them to suit our research context. To better understand the work context and process of social media engagement editors, we interviewed 2 engagement editors and 3 managers in a social media news organization in Taiwan. After compiling an English version of the questionnaire, the survey items were first translated into Chinese by a researcher. The survey items were next verified and refined for translation accuracy by two bilingual scholars. The Chinese version of the draft was then pretested with 2 senior news editors for examining face and content validity, resulting in modification of the wording of some items. We operationalized all constructs using multi-item reflective measures with a five-point Likert scale anchored from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The measures are discussed below.

Passive leadership was measured by four items assessing the extent to which individual engagement editors perceive that supervisors withdraw from making decisions and managerial activities (Kelloway et al. 2006). Example items include “my supervisor spends his/her time trying to ‘put out fires’” and “my supervisor fails to intervene until problems become serious.” Job autonomy was measured by five items assessing the extent to which individual engagement editors have discretion to make decisions about their work (Breugh 1985). Example items include “I am free to decide how to go about getting my work done” and “I am able to decide for myself what my objectives are.” Resilience was measured by four items adapted from Stephens, Heaphy, Carmeli, Spreitzer and Dutton (2013). Example items include “I am getting better in my job because I can learn by making mistakes.” We assessed online interaction with fans and followers with four items adapted from Liu (2003). Example items include “The fan page I managed is effective in gathering visitor’s feedback” and “The fan page I managed facilitates two-way communication with the visitors.” Finally, we control two variables that may influence the levels of interactivity: “years in managing online communities” and “role overload”. Role overload was measure by three items adapted from Bolino and Turnley (2005), assessing the extent to which employees feel that there are too many responsibilities or activities expected of them in light of the time available, their abilities, and other constraints. Example items include “The amount of work I am expected to do is too great” and “I never seem to have enough time to get everything done at work.”

Sample and Data Collection

A cross-sectional survey was administrated to collect data from 200 social media engagement editors in 19 news organizations in Taiwan. One hundred and twenty-two responses were returned and valid for subsequent analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 61%. Tables 1 exhibits the characteristics of the sample. Of the respondents, 71% were less than 30 years old, and 70% had experiences in managing online communities for less than 3 years. Our data reflects the reality that social media engagement editing is still in its adolescence in the news industry of Taiwan. Thus, most respondents are relatively young and junior.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents (N=122)

	No.	%
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	43	35
Female	79	65
<u>Ages</u>		
20-25	43	35
26-30	44	36
31-35	22	18
36-40	6	5
40 above	7	6
<u>Year(s) of experience in managing online communities</u>		
Less than one year	24	20
1-3 years	61	50
3-5 years	26	21
5-7 years	8	7
More than 7 years	3	2

Data analysis

A PLS structural equation model (PLS–SEM) was constructed using SmartPLS Version 3.2.8 for measurement validation and hypothesis testing.

Assessment of common method variance

To assess common method variance (CMV), Harmon’s single-factor test was conducted (Podsakoff et al. 2003). As expected, four factors with eigenvalues of >1 were extracted and collectively accounted for 68.82% of the variance in the data, with the first factor accounting for 37.07% of said variance, which indicates that CMV does not influence our model seriously. Although CMV may be not serious in this study, in order to gain more precise research results, we incorporated the latent marker variable (MLMV) in our survey in order to correct for CMV when using PLS (Chin et al. 2012). This approach requires collecting multiple items that have no nomological relationship with the research items. We followed the guidelines introduced by Chin et al. (2012) and carefully select MLMV indicators. We adopted the items used to measure “trying new features” in Microsoft Office (Sun 2012) and slightly modified the targeted software to general computer software, which is more common for general users. We then conducted the construct level correction (CLC) approach to partial out the CMV effects at the structural model in our data analysis (Chin et al. 2012). CLC involves creating as many CMV control constructs as there are constructs in research model. Each CMV control uses the same entire set of MLMV items. CMV construct was modeled as impacting each model construct. Consequently, the more accurate estimates of the structural paths can be obtained (Chin et al. 2012).

Measurement model evaluation

We assessed the validity and reliability of the items and constructs according to the guidelines from Henseler et al. (2016) and Hair et al. (2017). Outer loadings for all items were higher than 0.7 and significant at 1% level except for three items (one of passive leadership, one of job autonomy, and two of resilience). We delete the items of passive leadership and job autonomy, but we delete the worse loading item (0.57) and keep the better loading item (0.617) in order to keep content validity (Hair et al. 2017). The rho_A, composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s alpha estimates, reported in Table 2, were above 0.7 for all constructs, indicating good internal consistency and the reliability of the scales (Hair et al. 2017; Henseler et al. 2016), except for resilience (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.6; rho_A = 0.63). Considering the exploration nature of this study, such values of Cronbach’s alpha and rho_A are acceptable. We further assessed the convergent validity of our constructs based on average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE of each construct exceeded the minimum threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al.

2017; Henseler et al. 2016). The combined results demonstrated sufficient convergent validity of the constructs.

Table 2. Inter-construct correlations, reliability measures, and HTMT (N=122)

Construct	Items	Cron.α	ρ A	CR.	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1. Passive leadership	3	0.9	0.9	0.94	0.84	0.92				
2. Job autonomy	3	0.84	0.88	0.9	0.75	-0.25 (0.28; [0.1, 0.49])	0.87			
3. Emotional resilience	3	0.6	0.63	0.79	0.56	-0.36 (0.32; [0.13,0.56])	0.03 (0.50; [0.29,0.65])	0.82		
4. Interaction with fans and followers	4	0.83	0.84	0.89	0.66	-0.23 (0.42; [0.22,0.59])	0.34 (0.12; [0.03,0.15])	0.31 (0.42; [0.16,0.65])	0.75	
5. Role overload	3	0.85	1	0.9	0.75	0.44 (0.50; [0.29,0.67])	-0.26 (0.32; [0.09,0.57])	-0.22 (0.17; [0.04,0.25])	0.05 (0.21; [0.09,0.37])	0.87

Note: (1) Square roots of average variance extracted are shown on the diagonal; (2) HTMT and their 95% CI are shown in parentheses (HTMT; 95% CI, two-tailed test); (3) the 95% CI of HTMT are estimated by 5,000 bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrapping with confidence intervals bias corrected (Henseler et al., 2016).

Discriminant validity is established when (1) items load more highly on the construct that they are intended to measure than on other constructs, (2) the square root of the AVE by each construct is larger than the inter-construct correlations(Hair et al. 2017), and (3) heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT) is significantly smaller than 1. Cross-loadings were computed by calculating the correlations between a latent variable’s component scores and the manifest indicators of other latent constructs (Hair et al. 2017). Without exception, all items loaded more highly on their own construct than on other constructs. As shown in Table 2, the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the correlations between the construct and other constructs, indicating that all the constructs shared more variances with their indicators than with other constructs. All HTMT values, also shown in Table 2, were significantly smaller than 1 with 95% CI, indicating clear discriminant between two constructs. Thus, our measures exhibited sufficient discriminant validity.

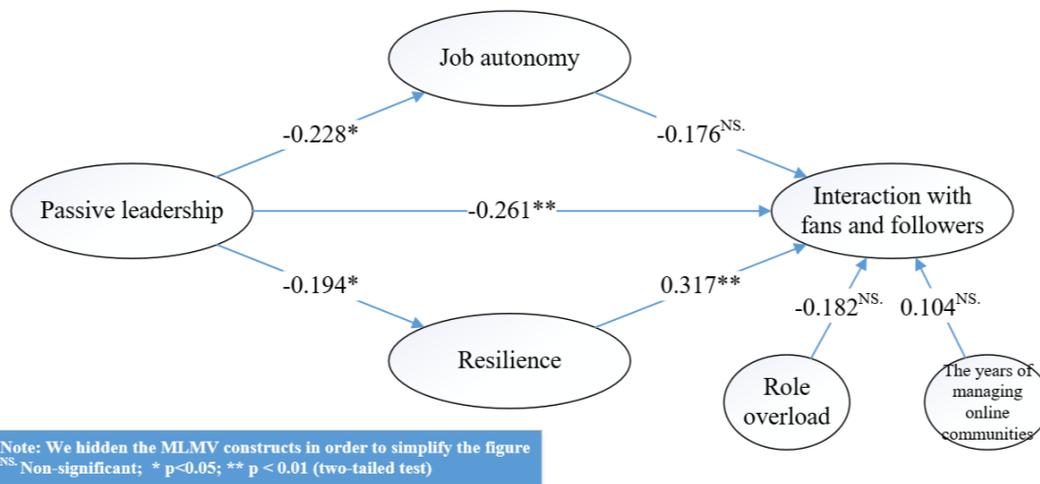


Figure. 2 Result of structural model

Structural Model

We first assessed multi-collinearity by examining each set of predictor constructs separately for each subpart of the research model (Hair et al. 2017). In our model, all the variance inflation factors (VIF) of endogenous constructs are less than 1.53 which is well below the cutoff value of 5 (Hair et al. 2017), indicating no multi-collinearity problem in our model.

To assess the significance of the path coefficients in the inner model, SmartPLS was applied to generate 5,000 samples using a bootstrapping technique with the PLS algorithm, no sign changes, a path weighting scheme, a bias-corrected and accelerated CI, use Lohmoeller settings for initial weights, and two-tailed test (Hair et al. 2017). The full model has an R2 of 23.4% for the interaction with fans and followers, 0.115 for job autonomy, and 27.6% for resilience. Figure 2 shows the result of structural model estimation.

We first examine the direct effects of our research model. The results show that passive leadership (support H1: $p < 0.01$) has significant negative effect on the interaction with fans and followers. While job autonomy fails to facilitate the interaction with fans and followers (reject H2: $p > 0.05$), emotional resilience affects the interaction with fans and followers (support H4: $p < 0.01$). Our analysis also reveals that passive leadership negatively influences both job autonomy ($p < 0.05$) and resilience ($p < 0.05$). Finally, the effects of the control variables on interactivity are insignificant (i.e., the years of managing online communities, and role overload).

To test mediating effect of job autonomy and resilience, we followed the guidelines suggested by Zhao et al. (2010) for justifying full or partial mediation and conducted the mediation regression method with bias corrected bootstrap approach for examining the significance of indirect paths. We then adopted the simple mediation model (Hayes 2013; Preacher and Hayes 2004) in order to test the indirect paths with single mediators in the model. Because these approaches are regression based, we used PLS algorithm to obtain latent variables of the research constructs as inputs for performing the mediation regression method and 5,000 resampling on SPSS macros provided by Hayes (2013). Based on these procedures, all indirect paths can be tested reliably and validly.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the mediation model. As suggested by Zhao et al. (2010), we first examined the significance of indirect effects. The results indicate that the indirect effect of passive leadership on the interaction with fans and followers through job autonomy is insignificant at $p > 0.05$ level since zero is included in the 95% confidence interval (CI). The indirect effect of passive leadership on the interaction with fans and followers through resilience is significant at $p < 0.05$ level since zero is exclude in the 95% CI. We then examined the significance of direct effect from independent variable to dependent variable with the mediator controlled in order to justify full or partial mediation (see column c' in Table 3). Consequently, resilience partially mediates the relationship between passive leadership and the interaction with fans and followers.

Table 3. Significance of single-mediator paths

Row	Path	c	α	β	c'	$\alpha\beta$	Bootstrap 95% CI	Type
1	Passive leadership -> job autonomy -> interaction	-0.36 (.00)	-0.25 (.01)	-0.06 (.49)	-0.38 (.00)	0.02	-0.03, 0.10	No mediation
2	Passive leadership -> resilience -> interaction	-0.31 (.00)	-0.23 (.01)	0.24 (.00)	-0.36 (.00)	-0.05	-0.14, -0.01	Partial mediation

Implications and conclusion

Interacting with fans is a major task of engagement editors. The results show that passive leadership reduces engagement editors' interaction with fans. Prior research focused on negative impacts of passive leadership on internal organization, such as unclear roles, employee well-being, work attitude and organizational commitment (Skogstad, Hetland, Glasø and Einarsen 2014; Zineldin and Hytter 2012; Buch, Martinsen and Kuvaas 2015). This study further indicates that passive leadership can create a spillover effect beyond organizational boundaries by reducing employees' interaction with fans and followers. This is because passive leadership inhibits employees' accessing resources to cope with work stress. In the work situation of the engagement editor, interaction with fans is a form of public discourse, and to some extent, projects the organization's position. If supervisors withdraw from their managerial duty, engagement editors would be both physically and mentally exhausted. Therefore, supervisors

should form trusting and communicative relationship with the subordinates, providing adequate support and resources.

According to COR, job autonomy can reduce the stress induced by excessive organizational control and monitoring (Holman et al. 2002). When facing abusive customers, job autonomy allows engagement editors to choose appropriate responses and reduce emotional dissonance between their real emotions and organizationally desired ones (Abraham 2000). However, our results fail to demonstrate this. We speculate that this might be due to the nature of online interaction. Online interaction is highly unpredictable and dynamic in that any missteps may incur even more attacks. Therefore, when there has been an attack occurring, the easiest way is to stop interacting to save personal resources. To prevent undesired passive reaction of engagement editors, organizations should enact control to ensure that employees self-goals are consistent with the organizational goals (i.e., saving personal resources vs. effective online interaction) (Kirsch 1997; Liu, Chua and Pavlov 2016). As such, engagement editors would not reduce interaction with fans to save personal resources, at the cost of organizational benefits.

This study demonstrates that resilience is more effective in alleviating negative impacts of passive leadership than job autonomy does. Resilient employees tend to see negative factors as challenges. They thus will strive to overcome impediments while interacting with fans. Organizations can enhance the resilience of employees through human management measures, including improving emotional management, restoring self-esteem, internal reflection and problem-solving skills (Ungar 2004).

This study has some limitations. First, this study conducted a cross-sectional survey. Our conclusion thus is only tentative. Second, this paper adopts perceptual measures that may not accurately reflect the true relationships between the constructs. We thus conducted a Harmon's single-factor test which indicates this limitation is not serious, and we also included a marker variable to partial out CMV. Third, we only study social media engagement editors in the news industry. Future studies may consider other industries with a similar focus on online customer engagement (e.g., online retailing). This may enhance generalizability of our results.

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