Core Self-evaluations, Intrinsic Motivation, Job Control, and Role Stressors as Antecedents for Psychological Detachment in a Changing Organization

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Abstract

Demands from work consume the resources of an employee. Replenishing these resources—the process of recovery from work—is important because insufficient recovery may result in impaired well-being. One aspect of recovery is psychological detachment: The ability to psychologically disengage from work during off-time hours. Previous research showed the positive consequences of psychological detachment in terms of well-being, job-performance, and overall life-satisfaction. Because the relevance of the consequences of psychological detachment it is important to understand the preceding factors of psychological detachment. The aim of this study is to gain more insights on the antecedents of psychological detachment. This study investigates core self-evaluations (CSE), intrinsic motivation, job control, role ambiguity, and role conflict as predictors for psychological detachment with a cross-sectional research design using questionnaires. Questionnaires consisted of four items from the recovery experience questionnaire (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007) to measure psychological detachment; the core self-evaluations scale (Pater, Schinkel, & Nijstad, 2007) to measure CSE; the motivation at work scale (Gagné, Forest, Gilbert, Aubé Morin, & Malorni, 2010) to measure intrinsic motivation; the Maastricht autonomy questionnaire (De Jonge, Landeweerd, & Van Breukelen, 1994) to measure job control; the Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman-scale (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970) to measure role ambiguity and role conflict; and the satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) and the Oldenburg burnout inventory (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003) to measure psychological well-being. Participants were 347 employees of a large semi-governmental organization in the Netherlands. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that core self-evaluations, intrinsic motivation, and role ambiguity are significant related to
psychological detachment. Psychological detachment is related negative to burnout and positive to satisfaction with life. Mediation analysis using the bootstrapping method (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) showed that psychological detachment mediates the relations between core self-evaluations, intrinsic motivation, and role ambiguity at one side and psychological detachment at the other side. The current study revealed three predictors for psychological detachment; CSE, intrinsic motivation, and role ambiguity. And it replicates positive relations between psychological detachment and well-being in terms of satisfaction with life and lower degrees of burnout. A mediating role for psychological detachment on the relation between core self-evaluations and role ambiguity was found. Interventions on personality and the redesigning of job profiles in order to reduce role ambiguity may help to increase psychological detachment.

**Keywords:** psychological detachment, core self-evaluations, intrinsic motivation, role conflict, role ambiguity, job control.