

Workshy bosses breed contempt and abuse in the workforce, research shows

September 19 2018



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Workshy bosses can promote a contemptuous attitude amongst their staff—leading to anger, frustration and abuse in the workplace, new research has shown.

An international team of researchers, led by Drs Alison Legood and Allan Lee from the University of Exeter, has looked at how bad habits displayed by those in charge can affect the mentality and productivity of the workforce.

They found that managers who procrastinate when making decisions and carrying out tasks not only leave employees feeling less committed to the business, but also more likely to display abnormal and unpleasant behaviour.

Most alarmingly, this can escalate beyond taking unnecessary sick days to becoming abusive to colleagues, and stealing office supplies.

The research is published in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

Dr. Lee, a Senior Lecturer in Organisation Studies and management at the University of Exeter's Business School said: "We have found procrastination from managers can be really detrimental to their staff and companies need to take action to ensure there are better relationships between bosses and employees.

"When bosses fail to do their work, knowing this will cause problems for others, it causes their staff to become frustrated and leaves them less committed to their employer."

For the research, the team collected data from 290 employees on the impact of their leaders procrastinating, and measured how much managers procrastinated using a scale, based on questions such as: "my manager delays making decisions until it's too late".

The researchers also collected further information from 250 workers, and their 23 supervisors, in a Chinese textile manufacturing company

located in Zhejiang Province.

Staff were asked to rate their relationships with their bosses, and managers were asked to rate whether staff were deviant, and how committed they seemed to the company.

The results show when leaders procrastinate this leads to "deviant behaviour" from their staff.

The researchers, also from SOAS, University of London and Deakin University, Australia, suggest that staff should try to discover why their managers are prone to procrastination, and also take part in any decision making, to help combat the issue.

Companies could also deliver training to try to encourage better relationships between [staff](#) and [managers](#), the research suggests.

Dr. Lee said: "We found employees are less likely to be frustrated by their leaders procrastination if they had a good relationship with that leader.

"Encouraging feedback sessions, such as 360-degree feedback, may help leaders to become more aware of their own behaviour, and sharing leadership could reduce the effect of a procrastinating leader."

The research, titled "From self-defeating to other defeating: Examining the effects of leader procrastination on follower work outcomes," is published in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

More information: Alison Legood et al. From self-defeating to other defeating: Examining the effects of leader procrastination on follower work outcomes, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/joop.12205](https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12205)

Provided by University of Exeter

Citation: Workshy bosses breed contempt and abuse in the workforce, research shows (2018, September 19) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-workshy-bosses-contempt-abuse-workforce.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.