Abstract

Illegitimate tasks are unreasonable and unnecessary tasks that violate an individual’s work identity and the existing literature suggests that they can be linked with various employee strains. The detrimental aspect of illegitimate tasks is mainly based on the recipients’ perception rather than on an inherent characteristic, yet prior research on illegitimate tasks fails to account for contextual factors that might affect the perception of this experience and its outcomes. In addition, behavioral outcomes within the domain of employee performance such as task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) have been largely overlooked. Using a hand-off approach, 188 participant-coworker pairs were recruited from a panel company and multi-source data were collected. Results showed that illegitimate tasks are negatively related to state self-esteem and positively related to state negative affect. Furthermore, state self-esteem was positively related to task performance. No other analyses revealed statistically significant relationships. Theoretically, the results of this study provides support for a number of tenets of the SOS model. The use of multi-source data from a panel sample provides new insight into how to obtain samples with heterogenous composition. The insights gathered from this research may be useful in increasing managers’ understanding of how individuals react, not only to their tasks but also, to tasks assigned to coworkers.

Keywords: illegitimate tasks, task performance, OCBs, perceived sharing, employee health, strain, workplace stress