Overcoming the Dark Side

Consequences of Destructive Leadership, and the
Moderating Role of Hardiness

Erik Spradbrow

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study has examined if psychological hardiness, an established personal characteristic, can mitigate the consequences of destructive leadership behaviour amongst mid-level leaders in the Norwegian Armed Forces. To explore this, I have examined how destructive leadership behaviour was related to exhaustion and work engagement, and the moderating role of hardiness on these relationships. The consequences for mission command, the current leadership philosophy in the Norwegian Armed Forces, have been discussed.

Data for this study was collected from officers and civilians who attended staff courses and leadership development programmes at the Norwegian Defence University College. The study used the job demands-resources model as a basis for the research - where destructive leadership behaviour was used as a job demand; hardiness as a job resource; and exhaustion, and work engagement as dependent variables.

Findings indicated that superiors who displayed destructive leadership behaviour caused increased exhaustion, and reduced work engagement amongst the respondents. However, the analyses showed that the individuals who scored high on hardiness were less affected by the destructive behaviour that those who scored low on hardiness. This is in line with the theory of hardiness, and indicated that hardiness moderates the relationship.

The relationship between hardiness and destructive leadership behaviour has, to my knowledge, not been studied before, and this study can therefore not only be of interest to the Norwegian Armed Forces, but also for others that are researching destructive leadership behaviour. This study also added insight to recent studies on destructive leadership in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

This study indicated that hardiness can be considered as a means, either through training or selection, to counter the negative outcomes of destructive leaders, and can therefore contribute to a reduction in the negative consequences of destructive leadership.

Keywords: Destructive leadership behaviour, abusive supervision, toxic leadership, hardiness, engagement, exhaustion, JD-R, mission command, Norwegian Armed Forces, military

Sammendrag

I denne studien har jeg undersøkt om psykologisk hardførhet, en etablert personlighetskarakteristikk, kan moderere forholdet mellom destruktiv lederadferd og utmattelse, og mellom destruktiv lederadferd og jobbengasjement hos mellomledere i Forsvaret. For å undersøke dette har jeg først sett på hvordan destruktiv ledelse påvirker de ansattes grad av utmattelse og jobbengasjement. Deretter har jeg undersøkt om hardførhet påvirker disse forholdene. Konsekvensene for Forsvaret og for Forsvarets ledelsesfilosofi, oppdragsbasert ledelse, har blitt diskutert.

Datagrunnlaget for undersøkelsen er samlet inn fra offiserer og sivile som har gått stabsstudiet eller har deltatt på et lederutviklingsprogram, LUPRO, ved Forsvarets Høgskole. Studien tar utgangspunkt i jobbkrav-ressursmodellen (*job demands-resources model JD-R*) som basis for forskningsmodellen der destruktiv ledelse brukes som et jobbkrav, hardførhet som en jobbressurs og utmattelse og jobbengasjement som utfallsvariabler.

Funnene i studien indikerer at det å ha overordnede som utviser destruktiv ledelse fører til at mellomlederne både blir utmattet, og får redusert jobbengasjement. Studien viser imidlertid at for personer med høy grad av hardførhet, er disse følgene mindre enn for personer med lav hardførhet. Dette indikerer at hardførhet modererer disse relasjonene.

Forholdet mellom hardførhet og destruktiv ledelse har, så vidt jeg vet, ikke blitt studert før og denne studien kan derfor være av interesse for både Forsvaret og andre som studerer destruktiv ledelse. Studien bidrar dermed også til forskning på destruktiv ledelse i Forsvaret og indikerer at hardførhet kan sees på som et verktøy, enten gjennom trening eller seleksjon, for å redusere konsekvensene av destruktive ledere, og er dermed et bidrag til hvordan man kan håndtere destruktive ledere – et fagfelt det er lite forskning på.

Nøkkelord: destruktiv ledelse, destruktiv lederadferd, hardførhet, robusthet, jobbengasjement, engasjement, utmattelse, utbrenthet, jobbkrav-ressursmodellen, JD-R, oppdragsbasert ledelse, Forsvaret, militæret

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1 Introduction

"A diamond is just a piece of coal that handled stress exceptionally well" (Unknown).[1]

With the emerging research on the destructive, and darker side of leadership in the Norwegian Armed Forces (Andersen, 2016; Forsvaret, 2014; Platek, 2015), the outcomes and prevalence of destructive leadership in an organisation that has long traditions of leadership development is concerning. This is even more so as the catchy title "Bad is stronger than good" (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001) has become a well-used description of how destructive leadership has a stronger impact on subordinates than constructive leadership. But is bad always stronger than good in military leadership? Or are there personal characteristics amongst the officers that can reduce the impact of destructive leaders? This study will look at the outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour, and if psychological hardiness, a characteristic that predicts how individuals behave in challenging work environments (Maddi, 2004), can moderate these relationships. To relate this to the introductory quote, this study will explore whether hardiness is a characteristic that can predict if the employee will be just another piece of coal, or a potential diamond, when facing the dark sides of leadership.

The prevalence of destructive leadership has emerged through extensive research in the last three decades, and these studies indicate a proportion of leaders in many work environments who behave destructively towards employees, or the organisations interest – or both. A significant prevalence of destructive leaders has also been found in the Norwegian Armed Forces (Forsvarsstaben, 2016). Destructive behaviour by a superior creates a dysfunctional work environment, and causes a wide range of negative consequences for subordinates, including emotional exhaustion, reduced work engagement (Leary et al., 2013), stress and frustration (Ashforth, 1997). Destructive leadership can also affect the goals and interests of an organisation (Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007). While studies continue to show the destructiveness of bad leaders, it appears to be difficult to change their behaviour (Ulmer Jr et al., 2004), and it is therefore possible that a better solution than changing these, lies in

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[1] A number of internet sites attribute a similar quote to Henry Kissinger, but an exact reference for either of these quotes has not been found

attempting to increase the resilience of subordinates to reduce the consequences of this behaviour.

How people react to stressors has been shown to be related to the personal characteristics of individuals (Skomorovsky & Sudom, 2011). One such characteristic that has been found to predict how individuals behave and react, both mentally and physically, is psychological hardiness (e.g., Hystad, Eid, Laberg, Johnsen, & Bartone, 2009; Kobasa, 1979; Maddi & Harvey, 2006). The hardiness construct was found when individuals with similar personal characteristics, later defined as hardiness, experienced high degrees of stress without suffering from the same illnesses that the individuals with low hardiness experienced (Kobasa, 1979). Maddi (2002) later found that these individuals saw stressful situations as challenges, and as opportunities for personal growth. These hardy individuals attempted to actively take part and control events in their surroundings, were motivated by challenges, and were committed to their work and to life in general (Maddi, 2002). A potential value of hardiness for the Norwegian Armed Forces is that studies have shown that hardiness can be trained (Bartone & Hystad, 2010; Maddi, 2007), and that individuals with high hardiness values increase the hardiness of other individuals in an organisation (Bartone, 2006).

I will use the job demands-resources model (JD-R) as a base for the research model in this study. The JD-R model is a job-stress model that describes how personal and organisational demands, and resources lead to individual strains and well-being that affect the work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In this study I will consider destructive leadership behaviour to be a job demand, and hardiness a personal job resource. The dependent variables that will be explored are exhaustion, and work engagement.

The purpose of this study is to examine if psychological hardiness can be a characteristic that mitigates the negative effects caused by destructive leaders on mid-level leaders in the Norwegian Armed Forces. To examine this, I will look at how destructive leadership behaviour affects subordinate exhaustion and work engagement levels, and how hardiness moderates, or influences, these relationships. This will be examined in light of the impact these factors can have for the Norwegian Armed Forces, and for the leadership philosophy; mission command.

In order to assess this I will use a cross-sectional quantitative design, with data collected from officers and civilians attending staff courses, and leadership development programmes from

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2013 to 2015 at the Norwegian Defence University College. Using established scales, the respondents will rate statements that measure their own hardiness, and their perception of their previous leader's behaviour. The respondents will also rate statements measuring their own levels of exhaustion and work engagement.

Some key articles[2] and numerous meta-analyses are the starting point for this study, and these will be examined in the literature review. In addition to working out from the reference lists of these articles, searches were also conducted on EBSCO,[3] Google Scholar,[4] CRIStin[5] and PubSych.[6] As there are several definitions and names given to destructive leadership,[7] searches were conducted on the most common names of the construct.[8]

1.1 Mission command in the Norwegian armed forces

While destructive leadership can be a challenge for any organisation, the decentralised philosophy of the Norwegian Armed Forces makes the hierarchical organisation vulnerable to factors that can reduce the engagement, and well-being of its subordinate leaders. The Chief of Defence Norway's[9] principle document on leadership (2012) states that the Norwegian Armed Forces previously relied on an order based leadership philosophy, where loyalty to assigned orders was more important than individual initiative, and assessments of the situation. Mission command[10] was introduced as the Norwegian Armed Forces leadership philosophy in 1995, and acknowledges that the leaders with the best situation awareness are also best qualified to make decisions for their units based on the intentions of the order and their superiors (Forsvarssjefen, 2012).

The decentralised philosophy is based on delegating responsibility to the leader with the best overview of the situation, regardless of his or her position in the hierarchy (Forsvarssjefen, 2012). Mission command therefore relies on initiative, and on the offensive orientation of all leaders (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011), as well as the relationship between leaders, and the

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[2] These include Tepper (2000) on destructive leadership, Maddi (2002) on hardiness, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) on the JD-R model and Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1997) on exhaustion and work engagement.
[3] https://www.ebsco.com/
[4] https://scholar.google.no/
[5] CRIStin is a Norwegian data base of Norwegian publications and journals (http://www.cristin.no/)
[6] A database with contributions from Germany, France, Spain, Norway, USA and The Netherlands (https://www.pubpsych.eu/)
[7] While I will use the term destructive leadership, I use the terms used in other studies when citing these
[8] These include destructive leadership, abusive supervision, toxic leadership and petty tyranny
[9] The updated translation of the title of the commander of the Norwegian Armed Forces
[10] The Norwegian term is *oppdragsbasert ledelse* that freely translates to mission based leadership

individual engagement of leaders at all levels (Forsvarssjefen, 2012). The performance of the Norwegian Armed Forces is therefore dependent on the engagement and well-being of individual leaders, factors that destructive leadership behaviour has been shown to reduce amongst subordinates (Zhang & Liao, 2015).

If superiors create a work environment that reduces the individuals work engagement, the consequences may be that initiative is reduced amongst these subordinate leaders. This may also lead to reduced performance, or engagement, down through the chain of command, as these other subordinates depend on the vigour and initiative of their leaders. As the philosophy is based on decentralisation, its success depends on the engagement, and vigour of subordinate leaders (Shamir, 2011). This is important not only in conflicts and combat operations, but can affect the Norwegian Armed Forces in daily operations, and during normal service since the philosophy is valid in peace-time, conflict and war (Forsvarssjefen, 2012).

In order for mission command to be successful, superiors must trust their subordinates to make the right decisions (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011). Gagné and Deci (2005) found that the support given by superiors, including acknowledging the decisions of subordinates, and encouraging self-initiation, was related to employee satisfaction and positive work-related attitudes (Gagné & Deci, 2005). To successfully make and execute these delegated decisions officers need psychological robustness in order to be able to think clearly, and make good decisions in complex environments (Forsvarssjefen, 2012).

Thus; as destructive leadership behaviour can affect the trust, engagement, and well-being of subordinate leaders, this behaviour is a potential threat to the success of mission command in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

1.2 Research question

Mission command is a decentralised leadership philosophy that relies on the individual leaders making decisions based on their understanding of the situation. Having engaged and vigorous leaders at all levels is therefore essential (Forsvarssjefen, 2012). From the results of three decades of research (Tepper, 2000; Zhang & Liao, 2015), it appears that destructive leadership behaviour could potentially lead to exhaustion, and reduced work engagement of these mid-level leaders. Finding factors that can moderate this negative relationship is therefore important for the successful use of mission command.

Hardiness is a characteristic that has been shown to predict how individuals cope with stressors (Maddi, 2002), and as destructive leadership can be considered a stressor to subordinates (Tepper, 2000), hardiness appears to be a characteristic that has the potential to predict the outcomes of this behaviour. In order to examine this, the following research question is stated:

Can hardiness affect the outcomes of exposure to destructive leadership?

1.3 The significance of this study

While there is significant research on both destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness, I have not been able to find any studies that examine relationships between hardiness and destructive leadership. As hardiness is a characteristic that has been found to be trainable (Bartone & Hystad, 2010; Maddi, 2007) this study can contribute to finding ways of improving work environments where destructive leaders are present, another area of research that is not well-studied (Einarsen, Skogstad, Rørvik, Lande, & Nielsen, 2016). This is supported by a meta-analysis which found that out of 5364 studies on workplace mistreatment, only twelve looked at how to intervene with the dysfunctional relationship (Hodgins, MacCurtain, & Mannix-McNamara, 2014), and none of these included hardiness. Results from this study could therefore also be of interest for communities outside the Norwegian Armed Forces.

As mission command is vulnerable to dysfunctional leadership relations, and the reduced efficacy of individual leaders (Forsvarssjefen, 2012), it is important to find ways to reduce the impact of destructive leaders. While hardiness is not a personality characteristic that is trained in the Norwegian military academies today (Hystad, Olsen, Espevik, & Säfvenbom, 2015), this study could identify a system of training to counter the effects of destructive leaders.

The results of this study could also provide an insight on the relationship between destructive leadership, job demands and engagement. There has so far been little research that covers how job demands relate to engagement (as stated by Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010), and also how destructive leadership affects engagement (as stated by Scheuer, Burton, Barber, Finkelstein, & Parker, 2016).

A study on the outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour has been conducted on some of the respondents in this study previously with a recommendation that further research on larger

populations were required, and suggested using acknowledged models to better understand destructive leadership behaviour (Platek, 2015). This present study contributes to the previous research by using the JD-R model as a base for this study's research model, the population has more than doubled, and I will include hardiness as a job resource that could potentially mitigate the outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour.

1.4 Delimitations

This study is a cross-sectional quantitative study, and the objective is to explore the relationships between variables. The causality of the relationships, that a longitudinal or qualitative study could provide (Creswell, 2014), has not been investigated. While destructive leadership behaviour has been shown to cause a number of negative consequences (for an overview, see Zhang & Liao, 2015), this study will focus on exhaustion and work engagement, as these are two of the main outcomes in the JD-R model, and are important characteristics for leaders in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

Although the direct relationships between hardiness, and exhaustion and work engagement are interesting to examine, this study will only focus on how hardiness can be used to moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour, and the outcomes of this behaviour. This is done as the intention is to find ways that the Norwegian Armed Forces can counter destructive leadership, and not only look at the characteristics of the variables.

I have chosen to use the revised JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) as a base for the research model as it has strong empirical support (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), and includes job demands and job resources, as well as strains and motivation – the factors that are necessary to explore the relationships in this study. The JD-R model has evolved since it was presented in 2001, and recent studies have proposed further expansions (Crawford et al., 2010). However; the version from 2007 addresses the relationships that are required for this study.

This study reviews different sub-factors of destructive leadership behaviour, but this behaviour will be treated as an overall construct in the analyses. Analyses of the relationships and consequences of the different forms of destructive leadership are therefore not examined.

The respondents are both military and civilian mid-level leaders, but will be examined as one group since the principle document on leadership in the Norwegian Armed Forces states that mission command applies to all leaders in the organisation (Forsvarssjefen, 2012).

2 Literature review

This chapter will start with a description of the JD-R model; the basis for this study's research model. I will then present destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness; factors that are included in the research model as a job demand and a job resource; respectively. Following this, I will review the dependant variables: exhaustion and work engagement. The hypotheses that operationalise the research question will also be presented during this review. I will then present the research model depicting the relationships and hypotheses.

2.1 The job demands-resource model

The Norwegian Armed Forces relies on good interpersonal relationship and engaged leaders (Forsvarssjefen, 2012). For the success of mission command, a healthy work environment is therefore required. An established model for describing work environments, and the interactions between factors that affect this, is the JD-R model (figure 1). Bakker and Demerouti (2007) found that these factors, that are positively or negatively associated with job stress and motivation, can be divided into two general categories; job demands and job resources. These can in turn lead to either job strains, or motivation and engagement amongst employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model has strong empirical support, and has been used to predict numerous job demands, job resources and their outcomes (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).
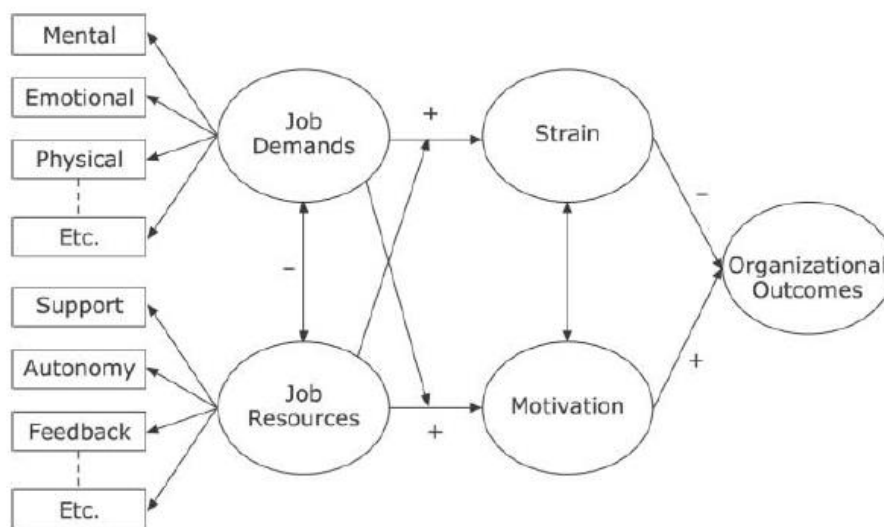
Figure 1 The Job Demands-Resource model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

Job demands require psychological efforts from employees to handle, and are therefore linked with a psychological cost (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The demands can in turn directly lead to strains such as burnout and exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). One of these job demands is negative interpersonal relations (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), and this can be caused by destructive leadership behaviour (Zhang & Liao, 2015). Destructive leadership behaviour has been found to cause strains on the subordinate. These strains include reduced motivation, well-being and job-satisfaction amongst subordinates (Einarsen et al., 2007). As the outcomes of job demands are similar, and as interpersonal relationship have been included in the JD-R model, and have been shown to be related to destructive leadership, destructive leadership behaviour will be treated as a job demand in this study.

Job demands can be further divided into challenge, and hindrance demands, based on how the demands are perceived by those experiencing them. While challenge demands can lead to positive emotions that in turn lead to active and problem-focused coping, hindrance demands can lead to emotion-focused coping, and decreased engagement (Crawford et al., 2010).

While it could be perceived that a demand is either a challenge, or a hindrance job demand, how individuals respond to a job demand is affected by both organisational and personal resources. Job resources are factors that affect how an individual perceives the work environment, including the job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources are physical, psychological or social aspects of the job such as support from colleagues, supervisory coaching and social relations in the organisation (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). These resources can stimulate personal development, growth and organisational commitment, and are directly linked to increased work engagement for employees. They can also reduce the effects of job demands, as well as the psychological costs required to counter these demands (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008). In addition to the organisational resources, job resources also include the personal characteristics of the individuals. These predict a person's ability to influence their own work environment, and are associated with resilience (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The personal resources described in the model have strong similarities with how psychological hardiness is described (Kobasa, 1979), and Bonanno (2004) found that hardiness was one of the traits that lead to resilience. This study therefore examines hardiness as a job resource.

While this shows that the model could be used to present destructive leadership behaviour, hardiness, and the outcomes of these factors, the model is significant for this study as it also describes how different processes connect these factors and outcomes. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) propose that the JD-R model consists of two different psychological processes caused by job demands and job resources; the health impairment, and the motivational process. The health impairment process describes how job demands can lead to job strains, such as burnout and exhaustion, while the motivational process describes how job resources can lead to employee motivation and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

In addition to the direct effects these processes describe, indirect effects where the two interact are also a part of the model. These effects describe job resources as a buffer on the strains caused by job demands, and that job demands interact with job resources when predicting employee engagement and motivation. By including both the direct and indirect effects, they propose that outcomes of various levels of demands and resources can be predicted as shown in figure 2 (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Figure 2 The effects of job demands and job resources on strain and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 317)

While the model is flexible as to what factors can be included as outcomes of job demands and job resources (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014), the two main outcomes that are

commonly studied are burnout/exhaustion and engagement (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; Hakanen et al., 2008; Martinussen et al., 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). As mission command relies on initiative from subordinate leaders, including the mid-level leaders in this study, having exhausted or unengaged leaders will have severe consequences for the efficacy or performance of an organisation using a decentralised leadership philosophy. In this study, work engagement will be examined as a motivational outcome. As exhaustion is considered the key aspect of burnout (Maslach et al., 1997), this study will include exhaustion, as well as engagement, as the outcome variables.

From the predictions in figure 2, the expected outcomes of the interaction between hardiness, destructive leadership behaviour, exhaustion and work engagement in this study can be described (figure 3). When low-hardy individuals are exposed to destructive leadership behaviour, they are expected to experience exhaustion and reduced work engagement (high strain, low motivation), while the individuals with high hardiness are expected to experience average exhaustion, and still be engaged in the same circumstances (average strain, high motivation).

Figure 3 The effects of destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness on exhaustion and engagement

2.2 Destructive leadership behaviour

While military leadership is, at times, conducted under extremely demanding circumstances – such as combat situations, leadership in the armed forces is mainly not conducted under incoming enemy fire, but in normal work environments. The definitions, traits and characteristics of civilian leadership, including the destructive forms, are therefore applicable when studying military leadership. For the Norwegian Armed forces, and for research on the Norwegian Armed Forces, the focus is still mainly on constructive leadership (see Forsvarssjefen, 2012). This also previously applied to the general research on leadership, although research on destructive leadership has emerged in the last three decades (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Some definitions of leadership only describe behaviour that leads to better or more efficient organisations (Skogstad & Einarsen, 2004), and that the negative behaviour of leaders is something different from leadership – implying that the term leadership is only behaviour that has a positive effect on subordinates (Schilling, 2009). These opinions are perhaps the reasons why researchers use a wide range of names for this type of behaviour, including destructive leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007), petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), toxic leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 2005) and abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000). The wide range of behaviour that can be characterised as destructive was shown by Schilling (2009) when he defined the most typical aspects of negative leadership using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study proposed eight categories[11] of destructive leadership behaviour, each with several subcategories (Schilling, 2009).

While categories of destructive leadership help to understand the types of behaviour that negatively affect subordinates, how this behaviour is conducted is also important for understanding this form of leadership. Tepper (2000) defines this behaviour to be a "sustained display of hostile and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000, p. 178).

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[11] a) Insincere leadership b) Despotic leadership c) Exploitative leadership d) Restrictive leadership e) Failed leadership f) Avoiding Leadership (active) g) Avoiding Leadership (passive) h) Laissez-faire leadership

To understand the consequences both for the subordinates, and the Norwegian Armed Forces, Einarsen and colleagues' (2007) definition is useful as it includes how these leaders affect both individuals and organisations:

> The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates. (Einarsen et al., 2007, p. 208)

This definition encompasses both organisational and interpersonal behaviour, while also showing that a leader may behave differently against the interests of these. While the definition specifies that the behaviour is required to be systematic and repeated to be considered destructive, it does not indicate that a leader is always constructive, or always destructive. On the contrary, leaders seldom behave destructively or constructively in all situations, and that the same leader therefore causes desirable as well as undesirable effects (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). As mission command is based on trust and cohesion (Forsvarssjefen, 2012), building trust can be challenging even if a leader only behaves destructively in some situations. The main factors that define the leadership culture for Norwegian mission command include cohesion, trust, responsibility, professional ability, and being a role-model (Forsvarssjefen, 2012) - factors that a destructive leader is likely to affect through his or her behaviour.

It can also be presumed that a military leader sometimes considers behaviour that can be perceived as destructive to be necessary to carry out an order or conduct a mission. Steele (2011) found that leaders who regularly behaved destructively did so regardless of whether the behaviour was perceived to be necessary based on the given situation or not.

A conceptual model that encompasses both the subordinate and organisational perspective, was proposed by Einarsen and colleagues (2007) (figure 4), and defines destructive leadership behaviour in three categories; derailed, tyrannical and supportive-disloyal leadership - in addition to constructive leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007). The names used in the categories have also been used by other researchers both before, and after the model was presented.

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                    Pro-subordinate
                       behaviour

                           |
                           |
                           |
        Supportive-Disloyal |  Constructive
           Leadership       |   Leadership
                           |
Anti-organisation _____|_____ Pro-organisation
   behaviour               |              behaviour
                           |
          Derailed         |  Tyrannical
         Leadership        |   Leadership
                           |
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                    Anti-subordinate
                       behaviour
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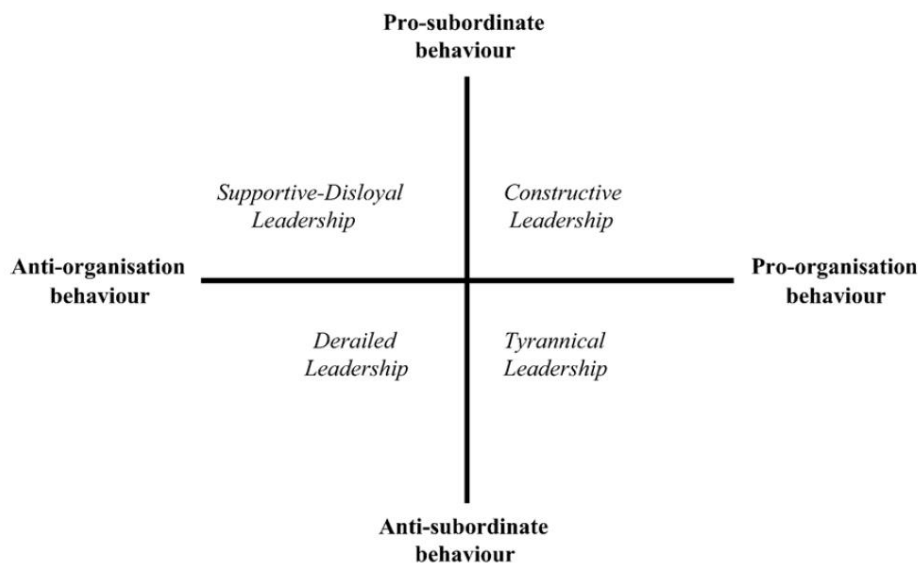
Figure 4 A model of leadership behaviour (Einarsen et al., 2007)

Supportive-disloyal leadership includes leaders who behave in accordance with the interests of the subordinates, but have separate or diverging goals from the overall organisation (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Derailed leaders show no concern for either subordinates, or the organisation (Einarsen et al., 2007), and will often use charisma or their personal status to promote own interests, or personal gain (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2010).

Tyrannical leadership describes leaders who place the interest of the organisation above the well-being of their subordinates. While these leaders have the potential to produce exceptional results, and reach the goals of the organisation, it is done at the cost of the subordinates and employees (Ma, Karri, & Chittipeddi, 2004).

The model (figure 4) describes how active destructive behaviour affects the organisation or individuals. Since mission command is based on initiative, and relies on the offensive orientation of all leaders (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011), mission command is also vulnerable to passive leaders. A passive leader is a leader who does not fulfil his or her responsibilities (Aasland et al., 2010), and who offers little or no support, or guidance, to his or her subordinates (Einarsen et al., 2007). Passive leadership, such as laissez-faire leadership[12], *can*

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[12] Laissez-faire leadership is a form of leadership where the leader does not meet the subordinates' legitimate expectations, and involves an absence of leadership (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007)

be considered as destructive leadership behaviour since the lack of engagement can affect the interests of the organisation, or other employees (Einarsen et al., 2007).

Since mission command is based on delegated responsibility, and acting on the intentions of superiors (Forsvarssjefen, 2012), a passive leader in the Norwegian Armed Forces can cause greater consequences than not just fulfilling his or her own responsibilities. The passive leader's superiors rely on the decisiveness of all their subordinate leaders (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011), and the subordinates of the passive leader also require intentions to act on. This leadership form can therefore have severe implications for the Norwegian Armed Forces, as well as for the initiative and offensive orientation of other leaders in the organisation. This is supported by a study that found that passive leadership, including laissez-faire leadership, has the potential of leading to reduced performance, quality of work and work engagement (Skogstad et al., 2007). The consequences of laissez-faire leadership for the Norwegian Armed Forces have also been shown in a recent study, where this leadership style was found to lead to reduced organisational commitment, motivation and job satisfaction, as well as increased stress, and role conflicts amongst followers (Andersen, 2016). The study also supported that passive leadership could be perceived as destructive leadership behaviour.

Several studies include passive, and laissez-fair leadership, as destructive leadership behaviour (e.g., Aasland et al., 2010; Einarsen et al., 2007; Schilling, 2009), but this view is not supported amongst all researchers. An opposing view is that passive forms of leadership behaviour should not be considered as destructive leadership, as the active forms of bad leadership are more severe, and have qualitatively different consequences for the followers (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). There is however agreement that destructive leadership behaviour, and passive leadership has negative consequences for the work environment for the subordinates. Based on the severity of passive leaders for mission command, and that both passive leadership and destructive leadership behaviour causes negative consequences for subordinate, passive leadership will be included as part of destructive leadership behaviour in this study.

The above models and definitions apply to both civilian and military leaders. Due to the extreme environments where military leadership must be applicable, and the dependency on individual leaders in mission command, military leadership may differ from civilian leadership in some aspects. A context-specific model for destructive leadership behaviour,

aimed at military personnel, was therefore developed (Larsson, Fors Brandebo, & Nilsson, 2012). By conducting a qualitative and quantitative study on Swedish military groups, Larsson and colleagues (2012) designed a model with five sub-categories of destructive leadership behaviour, [13] including passive leadership, and a short scale to measure these factors (Larsson et al., 2012).

As introduced in the first chapter, the prevalence of destructive leadership has shown that this is a wide-spread problem. A meta-analysis has shown that between 11% and 18% of employees ($N = 130\ 973$) reported to have experienced leaders who show signs of workspace bullying (Nielsen, Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2010), and an estimated 14% of all employees in the US are affected by destructive leaders (Tepper, 2007). In a Norwegian study 60% ($N = 2539$) reported to have been exposed to destructive leadership behaviour in the past six months (Aasland et al., 2010).

That the prevalence of destructive leaders amongst officers is large enough to be a concern for the Norwegian Armed Forces seems apparent through the latest Norwegian Defence Force employee survey. The survey showed that 32% of all respondents ($N = 9249$) had experienced negative leadership behaviour (Forsvarsstaben, 2016). The Norwegian results are also comparable to other armed forces, and a study on American military service members ($N = 8780$ to 9580) found that 20% viewed their leaders negatively (Steele, 2011). The discrepancy in reported numbers between studies can partly be explained by how studies are designed, but also that leadership styles vary between countries (Nielsen et al., 2010). However; even the lowest estimates show that a significant portion of leaders display destructive behaviour, and the 32% found in the Norwegian Armed Forces survey (Forsvarsstaben, 2016) is a significant amount.

In addition to the negative effects of destructive leadership behaviour mentioned, research has shown that destructive leadership leads to increased exhaustion and burnout (Tepper, 2000) and work-family conflicts (Carlson, Ferguson, Hunter, & Whitten, 2012), as well as reduced health (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012), work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010; Einarsen et al., 2016), team performance (Calheiros, 2012), job satisfaction (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Steele, 2011), psychological capital (Calheiros, 2012) and morale leading to job turnover

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[13] The categories are described as: a) arrogant and unfair b) threats, punishments and over-demands c) ego-oriented and false d) passive and cowardly e) uncertain, unclear messy (Larsson et al., 2012)

(Steele, 2011). Destructive leadership behaviour has also been found to lead to subordinates having difficulties in understanding their role and tasks in the organisation, as well as negatively affecting how subordinate leaders perceive their own leadership and their organisations team-spirit (Maddi, 2002; Schilling, 2009).

Mission command relies on active subordinate leaders who are capable of making independent decisions, and individuals with reduced levels of performance or engagement can negatively influence how mission command is executed. The review in this chapter indicates that destructive leadership behaviour can have a negative impact on this type of leadership philosophy. However; from the theory of the JD-R model, it can be presumed that job resources can influence how damaging a job demand such as destructive leadership is for the mid-level leaders in this study. Hardiness is a personal job resource that has the potential to reduce the severity of outcomes of exposure to destructive leaders.

2.3 Hardiness

In looking into the relationship between stress and health, research on personality as a factor for keeping healthy led to the development of a theory on hardiness (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi, 2002). Psychologist Suzanna Kobasa (1979) found that these personality structures could predict individual outcomes of stressful environments.

The characteristics of hardiness were later investigated in an extensive twelve year longitudinal study, which started in 1975, on 450 managers working at Illinois Bell Telephone (IBT). Psychologist Salvatore Maddi and colleagues conducted annual psychological and medical tests on the managers, but after the collapse of the company in 1981,[14] the tests also examined the effects of stress on the individuals. Two thirds of the managers in the survey showed negative stress reactions as a consequence of the company's collapse, and the reactions included suicide, divorce and physical and mental health issues. The study also showed that one third of the respondents not only coped with the collapse, and got through the hardship, but also thrived in the challenging circumstances. These managers had higher scores on hardiness, and felt enlivened, were promoted in either IBT or their new companies, and suffered fewer health issues than the managers with low hardiness scores (Maddi, 2004).

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[14] IBT reduced the number of employees from 26 000 to 14 000 in under one year, as a consequence of deregulation of the American telecom sector (Maddi, 2002).

These characteristics of hardiness have since been reproduced in numerous studies (for an overview, see Eschleman, Bowling, & Alarcon, 2010).

Hardy individuals saw that by taking control of the events, and not blaming others, or other circumstances, for their situation, they are capable of making decisions that lead to positive outcomes in stressful situations (Maddi, 2004). In addition, leaders with high hardiness levels have been found to not only resolve their own situations, but also increase the hardiness levels, and motivation of their organisations and subordinates - who in turn respond with more effective coping strategies (Bartone, 2006).

A hardy individual will see stressful and painful experiences as part of an interesting and worthwhile life, and can be described as open to challenges and changes (Bartone, 1999). These individuals take control of events in their lives in order to influence their own situation, and are committed to their work, their surroundings, people and life in general (Maddi, 2002). Leaders who scored high on stress, but low on illness showed higher values of control, commitment and challenge than leaders that scored high on both stress and illness (Kobasa, 1979). The conceptualisation of hardiness is therefore based on the these three facets: commitment, control and challenge (Maddi, 2002).

Military organisations rely on cohesion and trust, and *commitment* to the organisation and their surroundings is also a facet of hardiness that describes peoples' predisposition to taking an active part in the activities and decisions that are related to their own and their organisations situation. Individuals who are strong in commitment are engaged in interpersonal relationships, and social activities (Kobasa, 1979), and are involved in the events around them; as opposed to withdrawing from the situation and becoming isolated and detached from decisions and activities (Maddi, 2002). Committed mid-level leaders can therefore be presumed to maintain cohesion to their organisation, even when their immediate superiors behave destructively. This is an important trait for mission command that relies on committed leaders who are expected to make decisions based on the intentions of superiors, and for the greater benefit of the organisation.

Control is related to a desire to influence events involving oneself, as opposed to becoming passive, and experiencing a feeling of powerlessness (Maddi, 2002). Kobasa (1979) described control as attempting to take active measures, and influence the outcome of decisions. These individuals also have the ability to incorporate stressful events into their own long term plan,

and choose their own courses of action on how to handle stressors. The ability of an individual to cope with stressful situations is also included in control, as opposed to those who become ill, or incapacitated, by similar events (Kobasa, 1979). When faced with destructive leaders, influencing one's own work environment by actively trying to resolve the dysfunctional relationship can be a way that hardy individuals reduce the strains caused by destructive leaders.

Taking the initiative and accepting challenges, even when the option to choose an easier solution is present, is an important part of mission command, and this trait is also part of the *challenge* facet of hardiness. Individuals with high challenge scores see that the way to live an interesting life is through stressful, and potentially painful experiences, and not by choosing the easy, monotonous or routine options (Bartone, 1999; Maddi, Khoshaba, Harvey, Fazel, & Resurreccion, 2010). Scoring high in challenge is related to believing that change is normal, and that these events are an opportunity to learn and grow from the experience (Maddi, 2007). Those with low challenge scores will aim at avoiding change, threats and uncertainties (Maddi, 2002).

Hardiness has been found to be a relatively stable disposition, and a pattern of attitudes that enables people to make the most of stressful circumstances (Maddi, 2007). The disposition also provides courage to change stressors and potential personal disasters into opportunities for growth (Maddi et al., 2010). While hardiness is a stable disposition, it has been found to be a trainable attitude (Maddi, 2007), including amongst military personnel (Bartone & Hystad, 2010).

A number of studies have examined the effects of hardiness on military personnel (e.g., Bartone, 2006; Carston & Gardner, 2009). Hardiness has been shown to be a characteristic that predicts adaptivity amongst military leaders (Bartone, Kelly, & Matthews, 2013), and a trait that can predict transformational leaders (Johnsen, Eid, Pallesen, Bartone, & Nissestad, 2009). Hardiness has also been shown to be related with the perception of conducting meaningful work (Britt, Adler, & Bartone, 2001), and to buffer negative aspects of the military profession, such as preventing burnout (Lo Bue, Taverniers, Mylle, & Euwema, 2013), predicting psychological well-being (Skomorovsky & Sudom, 2011), and reducing war-related stress and other psychological combat related injuries (Bartone, 1999; Maddi, 2007).

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While Kobasa and Maddi are normally referred to as the conceptual developers of hardiness, the personality's sub-factors are based on numerous theories by existential philosophers and psychologists dating back to 1947 (Kobasa, 1979). It is therefore not surprising that hardiness has been criticised for having properties that coincide with other personality constructs - such as the *five factor model* (Maddi & Harvey, 2006). Maddi (2007) also suggests that another explanation for this criticism is that the original hardiness scale only used negatively worded statements based on opposite existing scales, and the statements were criticised for being little more than negatively worded versions of statements that measure neuroticism, one of the factors in the five factor model (Maddi, 2007). The first studies were also criticised, as the challenge sub-factor was unrelated to the other two sub-factors in some studies (Maddi & Harvey, 2006). As a new version of the scale, that specifically measured hardiness, was released shortly after the first versions, Maddi and Harvey claim that the issues were resolved (Maddi & Harvey, 2006). Sinclair and Tetrik (2000) later showed that hardiness is separable from neuroticism, and that hardiness is also a useful predictor of both health, and performance issues.

Another criticism of hardiness studies has been that a variety of scales have been used for measuring the construct; thus making comparisons difficult and unreliable (Klag & Bradley, 2004). This also appears to have improved as most studies today use versions of either the Dispositional Resilience Scale, as this study does, or the Personal Views Survey (Hystad, Eid, Johnsen, Laberg, & Thomas Bartone, 2010).

Based on this review of destructive leadership, and the characteristics of hardiness, it is expected that these factors can be considered to be a job demand and a job resource, respectively. While these have been shown to predict, and affect, a wide range of outcomes, this study will focus on exhaustion and work engagement - as stated in chapter 2.1.

2.4 Exhaustion

Exhaustion[15] is a psychological state where individuals feel a lack of energy, and that their emotional resources are depleted. This can in turn lead to frustration, as the individuals feel that they are not able to provide their previous commitment (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Exhaustion is often considered to be the core dimension of burnout, and while burnout

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[15] Both the term exhaustion and emotional exhaustion is used in studies. In this study I will use exhaustion.

consists of the three sub-dimensions: exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1997), exhaustion is referred to as the first stage of burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). People describing themselves as *burnt-out* often refer to the state of being exhausted (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Research on burnout and exhaustion started with studies on workers in the human services, but later studies have shown that this psychological state also appears in other occupational fields (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), including law enforcement (Martinussen, Richardsen, & Burke, 2007) and armed forces (Leiter, Clark, & Durup, 1994).

Maslach et al. (2001) found that exhaustion can lead to attempts to distance oneself cognitively and emotionally from one's work in order to handle the feeling of work overload (Maslach et al., 2001). This can in turn lead to reduced organisational commitment and turnover intentions (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003). While engaged individuals are more active and positive to new experiences, exhaustion can lead to health problems, absenteeism and reduced performance (Bakker et al., 2014), and is a cause of inefficacy as it is difficult to be engaged in one's work while feeling emotionally depleted (Maslach et al., 2001).

2.4.1 Destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion

Mission command in the Norwegian Armed Forces is a leader-centric philosophy that relies heavily on the individual leader's ability to take the initiative, and have good situation awareness. In the description of this philosophy; dedication and involvement are central personal characteristics for the successful implementation of mission command (Forsvarssjefen, 2012). It therefore seems plausible that leaders who suffer from reduced efficacy, involvement, or who distance themselves from their tasks, as a consequence of exhaustion caused by destructive leadership behaviour, will potentially also reduce the efficacy of their own- and supported units. As mission command relies on subordinate leaders to have sufficient psychological robustness to be able to make sound decisions in demanding environments (Forsvarssjefen, 2012), exhaustion amongst these could in turn lead to a reduction of the effectiveness of this decentralised leadership philosophy.

A number of studies have supported the relationship between job demands and burnout and/or exhaustion as stated in the JD-R model (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen et al., 2008; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Scheuer et al., 2016), and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) showed that high demands, and low job resources significantly predict burnout amongst employees.

That abusive supervision can be considered a job demand that causes exhaustion has also been shown in a recent study (Scheuer et al., 2016), and several studies have shown that destructive leadership is related to exhaustion (e.g., Carlson et al., 2012; Tepper, 2000, 2007).

Recent studies on the employees of the Norwegian Armed Forces showed a relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion (Platek, 2015), [16] and that laissez-faire leadership was related to stress (Andersen, 2016), that in turn can lead to exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001).

From these findings, and based on the JD-R mode, I expect that exposure to destructive leadership behaviour can lead to exhaustion for the mid-level leaders in this study. In order to examine this relationship amongst the leaders in this study, the following hypothesis is stated;

Hypothesis 1: *Destructive leadership behaviour leads to increased exhaustion amongst subordinates.*

2.4.2 Hardiness as a moderator on the relationship between destructive leadership and exhaustion

Mission command relies on the subordinate leader's initiative, and ability to think clearly in stressful environments (Forsvarssjefen, 2012) and exhausted leaders are not likely to take this initiative. As studies have shown that destructive leadership behaviour can cause exhaustion (e.g., Tepper, 2000), this ability can be reduced by exposure to destructive leaders. This can in turn lead to reduced efficacy of their units, and of mission command as a philosophy, as it relies on the initiative, and offensive orientation of all leaders (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011).

While destructive leadership behaviour can be considered a significant job demand, the consequences of this behaviour varies amongst those exposed to it. Individual characteristics, and coping mechanisms, can be considered as moderating factors (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012). Thus, having a trait that can moderate this relationship can be positive for both the subordinate leader's vigour, as well as for superiors and subordinates of this leader (Bartone, 2006), as the Norwegian Armed Forces is dependent on the vigour of all its leaders (Forsvarssjefen, 2012).

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[16] Although the study focuses on burnout, only the exhaustion dimension of MBI-GS was used and the results are therefore comparable.

Several studies show that hardiness is one of the characteristics that can moderate, or reduce, the chances of burnout, and thereby exhaustion (e.g.,DePew, Gordon, Yoder, & Goodwin, 1999; Henderson, 2015; Lo Bue et al., 2013; Maddi, 2004; Maslach et al., 2001). Similar results were also found in military combat operations, where hardiness predicted reduced exhaustion (Lo Bue et al., 2013). In a large study on Norwegian Defence Force employees (N = 15 410), hardiness was found to predict absence due to sickness, and that individual differences in hardiness predicted the amount of absence spells when job demands were high (Hystad, Eid, & Brevik, 2011).

The moderating effect of hardiness on the relationship between stress and burnout has also been shown, and hardiness explained 35% of the variation of burnout in one study (DePew et al., 1999). In a meta-analysis of 114 studies, Alarcon et al. (2009) found that the mean negative relationship between hardiness and exhaustion (r = -.36) was stronger than the negative relationship between exhaustion, and several other personality traits, including the five factor model, proactive behaviour, optimism and type A behaviour (Alarcon et al., 2009).

Abusive supervision has also been found to only be related to increased exhaustion, and not a job demand that could also be a challenge for some individuals (Scheuer et al., 2016). This could potentially be a finding that contradicts the theory of hardiness which describes that individual hardiness levels predicts how a stressor is perceived (Maddi, 2002).

As hardiness has been shown to moderate stressors in numerous studies, and destructive leadership behaviour can be considered one of these stressors, I expect that while the mid-level leaders with low hardiness can become exhausted due to destructive leadership behaviour, the hardy individuals can perceive this same behaviour as a challenge, or find ways to control the situation, and thus suffer from less negative consequences. This is in line with Bartone and Hystad's (2010) preposition that the hardy individuals still perceive stressors, but do not show the same symptoms, or the same decrease in performance, as the low-hardy individuals (Bartone & Hystad, 2010). To examine these relationships on the respondents in this study, the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 2: *Hardiness will moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion*

2.5 Work Engagement

While employee engagement, and work engagement are well used terms in business, and amongst consultants, few research articles explore the topic, and those that do were produced in the last 16 years (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).[17] While exhaustion can be characterised as a lack of energy that can lead to reduced commitment and efficacy, work engagement can be defined by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and has been found to include physical, cognitive and emotional engagement to work (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010).

The level of work engagement amongst employees varies based on individual perceptions of the benefits and meaningfulness of their work, and on the individual resources they perceive that they can contribute with (Kahn, 1990). Thus, work engagement is described as a positive, and work-related state of mind (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Engaged individuals are characterised as having high energy levels, a willingness to be involved in their work, while being concentrated, and feeling that one's work is significant (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). This leads to these individuals taking more initiative, and creating their own positive feed-back, as well as being energetic and enthusiastic employees who identify with their work (Demerouti, Cropanzano, Bakker, & Leiter, 2010).

Some researchers view burnout and work engagement as pair-wise opposites, antitheses or consider work engagement to be the absence of exhaustion (e.g., González-Romá et al., 2006; Lo Bue et al., 2013; Maslach et al., 1997). However; work engagement is seen by others as an independent construct that is negatively related to exhaustion and burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Work engagement is considered a persistent state of emotions, as opposed to burnout which is described as a more momentary emotion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). A recent Norwegian study showed a relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion, but not with work engagement (Platek, 2015) - implying that the two factors are separate constructs. This is also supported by other studies that indicate that the concepts can be discriminated empirically (e.g., González-Romá et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). This study therefore treats the variables as

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[17] A Google search on *employee engagement* and *work engagement* gave 645 130 hits on Google, bute only 1898 records in Google scholar (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

independent states (González-Romá et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) - potentially influenced differently by destructive leadership behaviour.

2.5.1 Destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement

For any organisation an employee's individual work engagement can affect how an organisation functions, or performs. For the Norwegian Armed Forces, that is dependent on the initiative of leaders at all levels (Forsvarssjefen, 2012), the engagement of the mid-level leaders in this study are essential. Mission command is based on the engagement, and vigour of its leaders (Shamir, 2011), and if destructive leadership behaviour is found to reduce the work engagement of subordinates, this can lead to these mid-level leaders becoming less involved, and can in turn lead to subordinates with less initiative, and who are less offensively oriented - attributes that mission command relies on (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011).

The JD-R model not only describes how job demands lead to employee strains, and job resources lead to employee engagement, but also how job demands contribute to reducing the work engagement for employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The relationship between job demands and work engagement has, not always been found to be statistically significant (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), and engagement has in some studies been shown to be exclusively predicted by job resources, and not job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Some job demands *have* been found to predict reduced work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010; Martinussen et al., 2011), but the described variation was less for engagement than the variation explained for exhaustion (Martinussen et al., 2011). This can indicate that destructive leadership behaviour will explain more of the variation of exhaustion than of work engagement; however both the relationships were still found in Martinussen et al's study.

In all, few studies have shown the relationship between job demands and engagement (Crawford et al., 2010), and the same also applies to destructive leadership and engagement (as stated by Scheuer et al., 2016).

While there are studies that have shown that destructive leadership does not reduce work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), including a recent study on Norwegian officers

(Platek, 2015), there is empirical support behind the proposal that destructive leadership behaviour *does* cause reduced work engagement (for an overview, see Zhang & Liao, 2015). Both destructive leadership behaviour and passive leadership has been found to affect work engagement (Leary et al., 2013), and abusive supervision viewed as a hindrance job demand also showed this relationship (Poon, 2011).

While destructive leadership may have a stronger impact on the subordinate exhaustion levels than on the work engagement of these, there is both theoretical (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and empirical support (see Zhang & Liao, 2015) behind that destructive leadership behaviour causes reduced work engagement. As the consequences of this reduced engagement amongst the mid-level leaders can lead to a less effective implementation of mission command, this relationship will be examined by stating the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Destructive leadership behaviour leads to reduced work engagement amongst subordinates.

2.5.2 Hardiness as a moderator on the relationship between destructive leadership and work engagement

There are few studies that have shown a relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement (Scheuer et al., 2016), and little research on how to reduce the negative outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour in general (Einarsen et al., 2016). However; the JD-R model describes that job demands affect work engagement, and job resources are expected to moderate this relationship (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). There are several reasons why I expect the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement to be moderated by hardiness.

First, individuals who score high on hardiness are assumed to have the capability of using stressful situations to enhance their own psychological growth and performance (e.g., Maddi, 2007), and job demands appraised as challenges have been found to be related to work engagement - via the potential for personal growth (Einarsen et al., 2016). Amongst military personnel, hardiness has been found to be related to feeling engaged in their mission, finding their work meaningful (Britt et al., 2001), and to be a predictor of work engagement (Lo Bue et al., 2013). With hardiness showing these characteristics, I also expect individuals with high hardiness to be able to perceive a destructive leader as a challenge that does not reduce his or

her work engagement in the same way that it potentially does for individuals with low hardiness scores, thus implying moderation by hardiness.

Second; while job demands are negatively related to work engagement in the JD-R model, this relationship is also affected by job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Recent research on job demands have shown that these can be categorised into challenge demands, and hindrance demands - that cause opposite outcomes on work engagement. While some demands such as role conflicts lead to reduced work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010), other demands, such as heavy workload or time pressure, have been shown to lead to *increased* engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2008). One explanation is that job demands can generally be separated into these two categories based on the type of demand. Crawford et al. (2010) found that challenge job demands (e.g., high workloads) increased work engagement, while those that were viewed as a hindrances (e.g., role conflicts) reduced work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). Another possible explanation for the effect the job demand causes on work engagement is by the way job resources affect the relationship between the job demand and work engagement – as described in the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). By using this perspective on this study I expect that destructive leadership behaviour will be perceived as a challenge demand for individuals with high hardiness levels, but as a hindrance demand for those with low hardiness. This would indicate that hardiness moderates the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement - in line with the research model.

Finally, while all sub-facets of hardiness are required in order for a person to be categorised as having high hardiness levels (Maddi, 2002), the commitment facet of hardiness describes individuals who are committed to all aspects of their work (Kobasa, 1979). Military organisations depend on group solidarity, and unit cohesion as well as vertical cohesion, where individuals build cohesion with their leaders, with this leaders objectives, and in turn with the objectives and goals of the higher parts of the organisation (Manning, 1994). Mid-level leaders with high hardiness (i.e., commitment) could therefore not only be expected to be committed and engaged in their work, and only relate this to their immediate superiors, but also to higher parts of the military organisation. The influence of a destructive superior on these subordinates' engagement would thus not be as significant to leaders who are strongly committed to the overall goals of their units or the Norwegian Armed Forces. For a mid-level leader with low scores on the commitment sub-facet (i.e., low hardiness), a destructive leader

could be enough to reduce the work engagement, as the subordinate does not have the same commitment to the higher goals of the organisation.

Based on the above reasons, I expect that hardiness can moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour, and work engagement for the mid-level leaders in this study and the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 4: Hardiness will moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement

2.6 A JD-R model of destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness

Building on the JD-R model, the research model for this study displays the relationship between destructive leadership, hardiness and the dependent variables: exhaustion and work engagement (figure 5). Based on the review in this chapter, and to operationalise the research question, the following relationships are expected:

Destructive leadership behaviour, viewed as a job demand, will cause exhaustion (hypothesis 1), and hardiness will moderate this relationship (hypothesis 2). I also expect that destructive leadership behaviour will lead to reduced work engagement (hypothesis 3), and that this relationship is also moderated by hardiness (hypothesis 4).
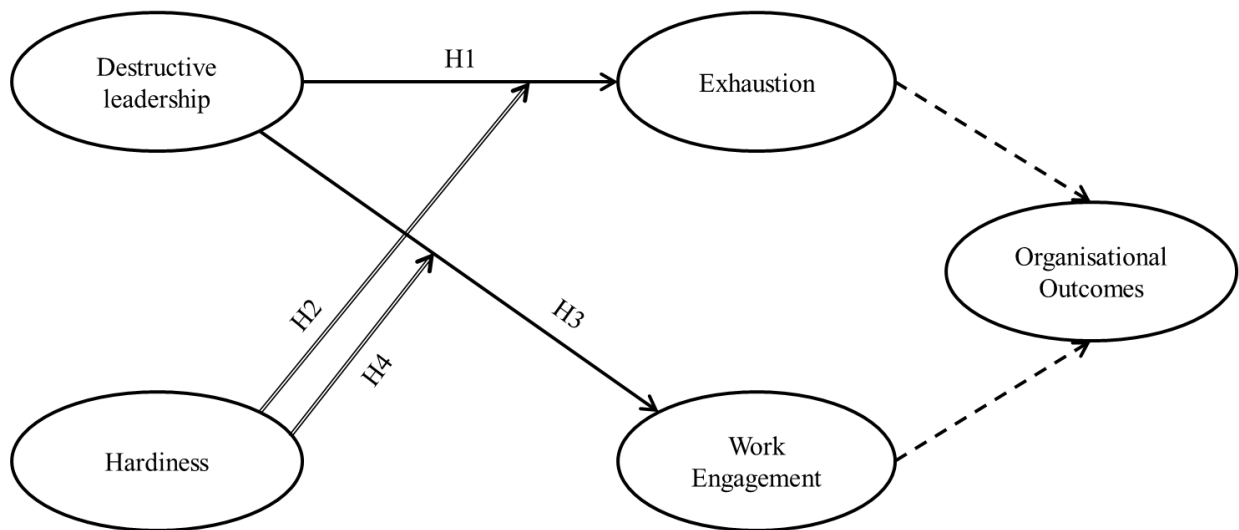
Figure 5 The research model and hypotheses. Solid lines depict direct path hypotheses and open arrows the moderation hypotheses. The dotted lines describe the effects of the dependant variables for the Norwegian Armed Forces, and on mission command as a leadership philosophy.

Note: H1 (hypothesis 1): Destructive leadership behaviour leads to increased exhaustion amongst subordinates.
H2 (hypothesis 2): Hardiness will moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion.
H3 (hypothesis 3): Destructive leadership behaviour leads to reduced work engagement amongst subordinates.
H4 (hypothesis 4): Hardiness will moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement

3 Methods

This chapter will present the participants and procedures for this study, the instruments that have been used, and the statistical procedures that were conducted to analyse the data.

3.1 Participants

The questionnaire *Pilot study related to the importance of leadership styles and identity* was submitted to three classes[18] of the staff course[19] at the Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, and two classes[20] of the mid-level Norwegian military leadership development programme (LUPRO). In total 212 military officers and civilian employees responded.

The majority of the respondents (81%) were from the three classes of the staff course. The staff course lasts for one year, and the students are from all branches, and professions in the Norwegian Armed Forces, as well as some civilian defence force employees. Although the participants are students, they all hold positions in the Norwegian Armed Forces that they normally return to after the school year. The majority of the students are majors/commanders; however some captains/lieutenant commanders and lieutenant colonels/commander senior grade[21] also attend the course. Although this study did not record work history or service time, admission to the course requires a varied service background, and many of the students are mid-level leaders in their normal jobs. 80% have experience from international deployments. The respondents were between 27 and 59 years old ($M = 41.7$, $SD = 5.07$), and 17% were women.

All answers are self-reported, and the statements are based on their experiences in their normal postings, not in their role as students. The statements regarding their exposure to destructive leadership behaviour were related to their closest superior prior to attending the courses. The respondents were informed on the scientific purpose of the study, that it was voluntary, and that it had been reported to, and approved by, the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD); the Norwegian Data Protection Official for Research. This study follows the principles of the *Declaration of Helsinki* (World Medical Association, 2013).

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[18] 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016
[19] The Norwegian name of the course is *Stabsstudiet*
[20] 2013 and 2014
[21] Commander is the navy equivalent to the army and air-force rank of major. Lieutenant commander is the navy equivalent to captain, and commander senior grade is the navy equivalent of lieutenant colonel (see https://forsvaret.no/en/ForsvaretDocuments/Norwegian%20Military%20Ranks.pdf for details).

A small number of the course participants are from the Norwegian Police Service, and specially selected foreign armed forces that Norwegian forces cooperate with. These officers are mid-level leaders in their own organisations that have comparable structures and leadership styles. The outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour are therefore assessed to be similar, and these respondents will not be differentiated from the rest of the population.

3.2 Instruments

Destructive leadership

As this study is on military personnel, destructive leadership behaviour was measured using the Destrudo-L questionnaire - the military context-specific model of Larsson et al. (2012). The scale was developed specifically for measuring destructive leadership behaviour in the armed forces (Larsson et al., 2012), and was translated to Norwegian by Rino Bandlitz Johansen in cooperation with Gerry Larsson prior to start of the data collection. The five sub-scales,[22] that include passive leadership, have been compared with the categories in the studies of Tepper (2000), Einarsen et al. (2007), Skogstad et al. (2007), and Schilling (2009), and the model corresponds well with these studies (Larsson et al., 2012). An exception was that no sub-factors of Destrudo-L corresponds with the supportive-disloyal leadership style defined by Einarsen and colleagues (2007) (Larsson et al., 2012), and this will therefore not be measured in this study.

The respondents were asked to rate 20 statements describing their previous supervisor/commander using a six-point Likert response scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 6 (fully agree). Examples of statements describing their immediate supervisors are: "Uses threats to get his/her way", "Does not show an active interest" and "Gives unclear instruction" (Larsson et al., 2012). The mean score of the 20 statements was used in the analyses, and the scale has a Cronbach's alpha[23] of .82.

Exhaustion

Exhaustion was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach et al., 1997). Although all three sub-dimensions are part of the overall burnout

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[22] a) Arrogant and unfair b) threats, punishments and over-demanding c) Egocentric and insincere d) passive and cowardly e) uncertain, unclear and messy

[23] Cronbach's alpha (α) is a way to measure if a scale consistently measures the construct it is intended for; the scale reliability (Field, 2013)

construct (Maslach et al., 2001), exhaustion is considered the core of the construct, and is a central part of the burnout process (Lee & Ashforth, 1990). Focusing on exhaustion, and not the three sub-categories is also considered to give a clearer distinction between burnout, and related concepts such as self-efficacy (Shirom (1989) as cited in Cropanzano et al., 2003). As this study is not on burnout itself, but examines the consequences of destructive leadership behaviour, and the moderation of this relationship by hardiness, only the five elements measuring exhaustion from the MBI-GS were used.

The scale is measured using a seven-point scale; ranging from 0 (never in the past year) to 6 (daily). Examples of the statements are "Working all day is really a strain for me" and "I feel burnt out from my work". The mean score was used in the analysis, and the scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .82.

Work engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement scale was used to measure work engagement. The full scale (UWES-17) has 17 statements while the short version used in this study (UWES-9) has nine statements, both scales measuring the same three sub-scales.[24] Results from comparing these two scales confirm that both scales measure the three-factor structure, and have similar internal consistencies (Nerstad, Richardsen, & Martinussen, 2010; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). In addition, the three sub-scale dimensions are shown to often correlate highly, and studies show that a one-dimensional scale using only the total score can therefore be used with good results (Nerstad et al., 2010). Therefore, UWES-9, and the total work engagement score was used in this study.

The scale uses nine self-reporting statements that are rated using a seven-point scale; ranging from 0 (never in the past year) to 6 (daily). Examples of statements are "at my job, I feel strong and vigorous", "I am full of energy in my work" and "I am proud of the work I do".

The mean score of the scale was calculated and used in the analysis and the scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .91.

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[24] a) Vigour b) dedication c) absorption

Hardiness

Hardiness was measured using the Norwegian Short Hardiness Scale (Johnsen, Eid, & Bartone, 2004) based on the Short Hardiness Scale (Bartone, 1995). The scale measures the three sub factors: control, challenge and commitment with five items each on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) and 4 (completely true). Examples of statements are "Most of my life gets spent doing things that are worthwhile" and "I enjoy challenges where I have to do more than one thing at a time". Four of the items were negatively keyed, and these were reversed prior to calculating the mean hardiness score of the 15 statements. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .68.

Although the Cronbach's alpha is slightly below.70, the value that is normally considered a threshold (Pallant, 2016), this threshold is not a benchmark that a scale must pass (John & Benet-Martínez, 2000). When dealing with psychological constructs, values lower than .70 can be are expected, and can still be used (Kline as cited in Field, 2013). As the scale is a relatively short scale measuring three separate sub-constructs, the low alpha's can be due to the statements measuring unique contents, and do not necessarily indicate that the reliability is too low (John & Benet-Martínez, 2000). The reliability for this scale is considered high enough to conduct further analysis, and classic test theory suggest that low reliability only makes finding significant relationships harder (Cohen as cited in Wittekind, Raeder, & Grote, 2010).

It is possible to single out, and measure the three separate facets of hardiness, and Sinclair and Tetrick (2000) found that information might be lost if only the total score is used, as the sub-factors account for unique variances (Sinclair & Tetrick, 2000). Hystad and colleagues (2010) found that in some studies, the sub-scales may provide more detail than hardiness as an overall factor, but that one approach does not reject the other (Hystad et al., 2010). Several studies have shown that the overall hardiness score has a better explanatory effect, and is more reliable, than the individual scores on challenge, control and commitment (Bartone et al., 2013; Hystad et al., 2015; Johnsen et al., 2004; Maddi, 2004). As this study does not look at specific activities such as combat situations, where challenge could be assessed to be the most important sub-factor, the total hardiness score will be used. This is consistent with the views of Maddi (2002), who emphasises that in order to have the existential courage that hardiness represents, a person must have high scores on all the sub-scales.

3.3 Data analyses

All data analyses were conducted with SPSS version 24. The mean scores, standard deviations and bivariate correlations for each of the variables were calculated, as well as Cronbach's alphas to assess the internal reliability of each of the scales. The strength of the relationships was assessed based on the criteria suggested by Cohen (1992) where .10 is assessed to be a small effect size, .30 a medium effect size, and .50 a large effect size.

In accordance with the recommendations from Dawson (2014), hardiness and destructive leadership behaviour were mean-centred prior to the calculation of the interaction term (Destructive leadership x Hardiness) and the regression analyses, allowing the regression coefficients of the main effects to be interpreted directly. Additionally, introducing an interaction term creates multicollinearity by definition as the interaction variables will highly correlate with the product in the interaction term. Mean-centring of the variables prior to calculating the interaction term avoids problems with nonessential multicollinearity - that can occur due to scaling (Afshartous & Preston, 2011).

In order to assess the impact of control variables, Becker et al. (2016) suggests that analyses with and without these are run. If the standardized coefficients differ by less than 0.1, the differences are negligible, and only the analyses without control variables need to be included (Becker et al., 2016). This was done in this study, with age and gender included to test for control variables, but as no coefficient changed by more than .02, control variables were assessed to be non-related to the other variables tested. Recent studies have also shown that the use of control variables with uncertain relations to the other variables can give spurious[25] relationships between the variables being examined, and that the use of control variables should only be included if the hypotheses include the variables used (Becker et al., 2016; Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). As neither the hypotheses nor the research model include other variables, and the standardized coefficient only marginally changed when control variables were used, no control variables were included in the analyses.

To assess the explained variation for the dependent variables, the increments in R^2 were calculated for destructive leadership behaviour, hardiness, and the interaction between these (Destructive leadership x Hardiness) using hierarchical regression analyses for both

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[25] Pearson (1896) defined the term "spurious correlation" as a correlation that mathematically exists although the relationship between the variables is random or uncorrelated

exhaustion and work engagement. Destructive leadership behaviour was entered in step one, hardiness in step two, and the interaction term between destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness in step three for both dependant variables.

Following these analyses, version 2.16 of the PROCESS macro by Andrew Hayes[26] was then used to further probe the interactions. The simple slopes technique was used to probe different values of hardiness (±1 *SD*) to examine the significance of the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour, and the dependant variables at these values (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006). Dawson (2014) suggests that a visual interpretation will allow for better assessments of the size and nature of the moderation. Simple slopes were therefore plotted using the outputs from the analysis and Dawson's excel spreadsheet tool for plotting[27] for both dependent variables.

Assessment on missing data

Data collection for this study has been conducted and archived by the Norwegian Defence University College since 2014. For the respondents in 2014 the response rate was 83%. While there are no technical reports on the two following subsamples, the collection method and composition of respondents were comparable, so similar response rates can be expected for the full sample.

The SPSS function *exclude cases pairwise* was used to exclude missing values without unnecessarily limiting the sample size (Pallant, 2016). This implies that cases with missing data are only excluded in the analysis of that data, and not for the other analyses.

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[26] Downloaded 12.08.2016 from www.processmacro.org
[27] Downloaded 21.10.2016 from http://www.jeremydawson.com/slopes.htm

4 Results

In this chapter I will present the descriptive statistics, and bivariate correlations between the variables in order to provide an overview of the distribution amongst, and between the variables. I will then present the results from the regression analyses that show the relationships between the independent variable, the two dependant variables and hardiness as a moderator. Simple slopes plots will also be presented for a visual interpretation of the moderations.

4.1 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations

The mean scores (M), standard deviation (SD), bivariate correlations (r) and Cronbach's alphas (α) were calculated for each of the variables as displayed in table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics, reliability and bivariate correlations

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	α
1 Destructive leadership	211	2.03	0.79					.92
2 Hardiness	213	3.20	0.29	-.14*				.68
3 Exhaustion	211	1.33	0.96	.27**	-.40**			.82
4 Work engagement	211	4.63	0.84	-.20**	.53**	-.34**		.91

Note: **p < .01; * p < .05 (2-tailed)

As hardiness correlated significantly with all dependant variables this suggests that the scale has enough reliability to indicate relationships between the variables for this study (Cohen (2003) as cited in Wittekind et al., 2010).

The results of the hierarchical moderated regression analyses for exhaustion and work engagement are reported in table 2.

Table 2

Hierarchical moderated regression analysis results

	Exhaustion			Work Engagement		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Destructive leadership	.27***	.22**	.21**	-.20**	-.13*	-.11
Hardiness		-.37***	-.37***		.52***	.51***
Destructive leadership x Hardiness			-.14*			.15*
R^2	.07***	.21***	.22*	.04**	.29***	.31*
ΔR^2		.13	.02		.26	.02

Note: The table values are standardised beta weights.
*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

4.2 Exhaustion

In support of hypothesis 1 which postulated that destructive leadership causes exhaustion for the mid-level leaders, step one of the regression analyses (table 2) showed that destructive leadership behaviour was positively, and significantly, related to exhaustion ($\beta = .27, p < .001$). Although the effect size of the relationship was small to medium, the result still indicated that destructive leadership behaviour caused exhaustion amongst the subordinates, and destructive leadership behaviour explained 7% ($R^2 = .07, p < .001$) of the variation of exhaustion.

A significant negative relationship between hardiness and exhaustion was found in step two of the regression analysis ($\beta = .37, p < .001$), indicating that hardiness predicts reduced exhaustion. Adding hardiness in this step increased the explained variance of exhaustion by 13% ($\Delta R^2 = .13, p < .001$).

Indicating support to hypothesis 2 which postulated that hardiness moderates the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion, the interaction term (Destructive leadership x Hardiness) then showed an additional, and significant 2% increase to the explained variation of exhaustion ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p < .05$) when it was added in step 3. This

significant interaction shows that hardiness moderates the relationship between these variables.

Using the PROCESS macro, the conditional effect of destructive leadership behaviour on exhaustion was calculated, and simple slopes were plotted. At one *SD* bellow the mean value of hardiness, there is a significant, and positive, relationship between destructive leadership and exhaustion ($b = 0.41$, $p = .001$). At one *SD* above the mean values of hardiness there is a non-significant relationship between destructive leadership and exhaustion ($b = 0.08$, *ns*).[28] This probing shows that for individuals with high values of hardiness, the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion becomes non-significant, showing the moderation by hardiness. The simple slopes plot of this moderation is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 Simple slopes of the moderating effect of hardiness on the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion

4.3 Work engagement

In support of hypothesis 3 which postulated that destructive leadership causes reduced work engagement for the mid-level leaders, step one of the regression analyses (table 2) showed that destructive leadership behaviour was negatively, and significantly, related to work engagement ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$). Although the effect size of the relationship was small, the result still indicated that destructive leadership behaviour caused reduced work engagement amongst the subordinates, and destructive leadership behaviour explained 4% ($R^2 = .04$, $p < .001$) of the variation of work engagement.

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[28] Non-significant (*ns)*

A positive and significant relationship between hardiness and work engagement was found in step two of the regression analysis ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), indicating that exhaustion predicts work engagement. Adding hardiness in this step increased the explained variance of exhaustion by 26% ($\Delta R^2 = .26$, $p < .001$).

Indicating support to hypothesis 4 which postulated that hardiness moderates the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement, the interaction term (Destructive leadership x Hardiness) then showed an additional, and significant 2% increase to the explained variation of exhaustion ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p = .011$) when it was added in step 3. This significant interaction shows that hardiness moderates the relationship between these variables.

Using the PROCESS macro, the conditional effect of destructive leadership behaviour on work engagement was calculated, and simple slopes were plotted. At one *SD* bellow the mean value of hardiness, there is a significant, and negative, relationship between destructive leadership and work engagement ($b = -0.38$, $p < .01$). At one *SD* above the mean value for hardiness there is a non-significant relationship between destructive leadership and work engagement ($b = 0.041$, *ns*). This probing shows that for individuals with high values of hardiness, the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement becomes non-significant, showing the moderation by hardiness. The simple slopes plot of this moderation is shown in figure 7.
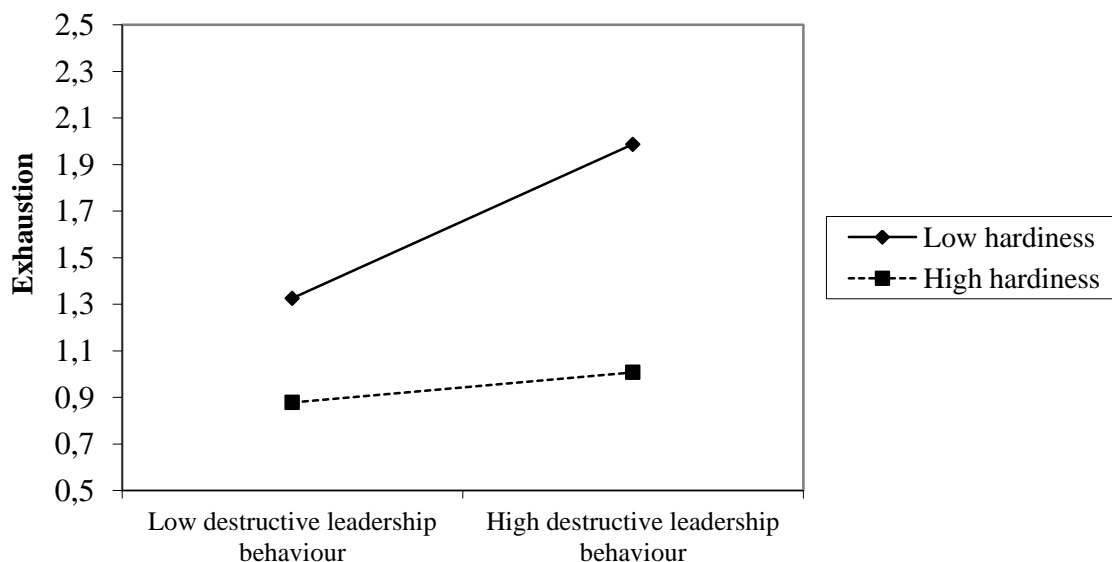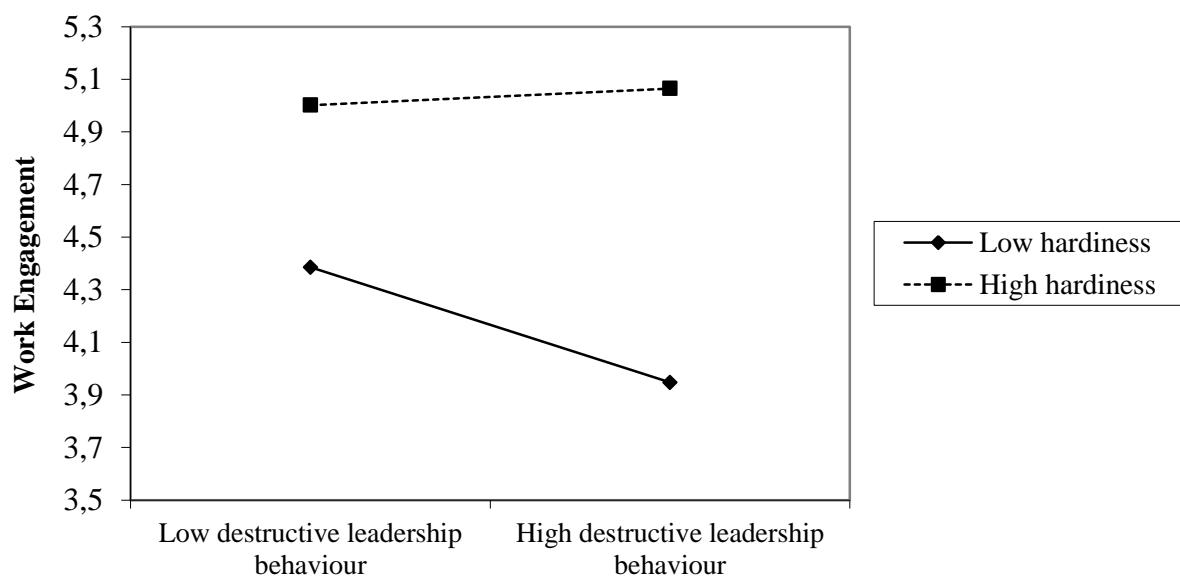

Figure 7 Simple slopes of the moderating effect of hardiness on the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement

4.4 Results and research model

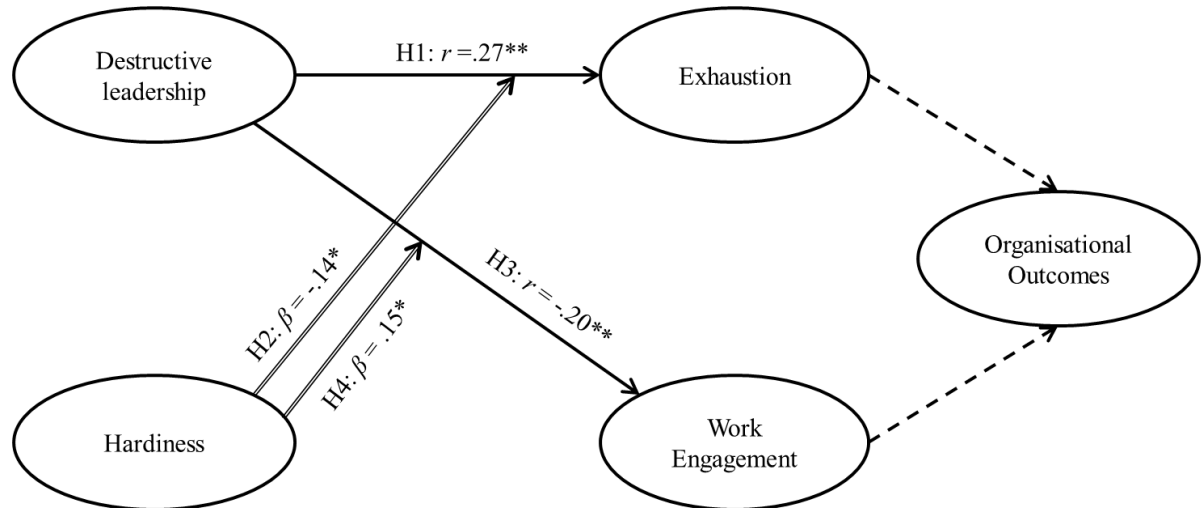The analyses indicate support to all four hypotheses. These are shown in figure 8.

Figure 8 The results depicted in the research model.
*Note: ** p < .01; * p < .05*

5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine if hardiness can mitigate the negative impact, caused by destructive leadership behaviour, on the levels of exhaustion and work engagement for mid-level Norwegian military leaders. In this chapter I will discuss the results against relevant theory and literature, as well as the implications this has for the Norwegian Armed Forces.

First, I will discuss the results related to the relationship between destructive leadership and exhaustion, and then the results from the moderation of hardiness on this relationship. I will then discuss the implications of these relationships for the Norwegian Armed Forces

Then, I will discuss the results from the analysis on the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement, before discussing the findings on how hardiness moderates this relationship, and the implications for the Norwegian Armed Forces.

This chapter will also include limitations, practical implications as well as suggestions for future research. The practical implications will be described in some detail, as I have not found the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness in other studies, and these results could be exploiting by the Norwegian Armed Forces to counter the negative effects of destructive leaders.

5.1 The relationship between destructive leadership behaviour, exhaustion and hardiness

The first hypothesis was stated to assess the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion amongst subordinates, and the results indicate support to this hypothesis and the research model. The theory behind the JD-R model suggest that job demands lead to exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and studies have shown that destructive leadership can be viewed as one of these job demands (e.g., Scheuer et al., 2016). The findings are in line with expectations, and indicate that destructive leadership behaviour leads to increased exhausting amongst the subordinates, and support previous studies on the relationship between job demands and exhaustion (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; Hakanen et al., 2008; Martinussen et al., 2007).

That destructive leadership can lead to exhaustion is hardly surprising, as the negative consequences of destructive leadership behaviour have been studied in both military and civilian organisations for 30 years, and numerous studies have shown this relationship (e.g., Carlson et al., 2012; Kanste, Kyngäs, & Nikkilä, 2007; Leary et al., 2013). Although the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion was found to be small to medium, the values are consistent with other studies (e.g., Carlson et al., 2012; Zhang & Liao, 2015), as well as the findings on a smaller sample of Norwegian officers (Platek, 2015).

A possible explanation for the relatively weak relationship could be the low mean score for both destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion. The respondents in this study can be presumed to be vigorous as they have been selected from a large number of other officers and civilian leaders, who have also been through several selection stages earlier in their careers. This could explain the low exhaustion levels amongst these selected officers. Thus I can speculate that the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion will be stronger amongst employees who have not been through similar selection processes.

I consider it more surprising that the analysis showed that only 7% of the variation of exhaustion is accounted for by destructive leadership behaviour. While one explanation can be that the respondents perceive less destructive behaviour than what is expected from the studies on the prevalence of destructive leadership (e.g., Aasland et al., 2010; Forsvaret, 2014), there are no indications of why this should be the case. Another explanation could be that there are many other factors, in addition to destructive leaders, that may contribute to exhaustion amongst officers. Factors concerning both job characteristics and organisational characteristics have been found to predict burnout and exhaustion, and examples include too much work, time pressure, role conflicts, the absence of support from superiors, reduced career opportunities and less job security (Maslach et al., 2001). In addition; the primary stressors in modern military operations include isolation, ambiguity, powerlessness, boredom and danger (Bartone, 2006) – stressor that resemble the antecedents of burnout and exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2014). While these antecedents were not measured in this study, it can be speculated that these factors and stressors also apply to mid-level leaders in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Exhaustion amongst officers might also be caused by high workloads due to the responsibilities that come with leadership at this level, such as additional administrative tasks; or work-family conflicts caused by commuting, exercises, out of country deployments or long working hours. Most of these factors are hard to improve, however; introducing

measures for reducing the impact of destructive leaders can potentially remove an unnecessary and unwelcome part of the variation of exhaustion that the 7% represent.

Even though the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion was small to medium, the significant correlation implies that even in an organisation with a strong focus on leader development and selection, destructive leaders are present, and are able to cause exhaustion amongst these respondents. That the mean score for exhaustion was low could either imply that the respondents experience few of the factors that predict exhaustion, or that a moderating factor such as hardiness exists amongst many of the respondents.

Hypothesis 2 was proposed to assess if hardiness is one of these factors that can moderate the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion. The results indicate support to the hypothesis, as well as to the JD-R model, that suggests that job resources moderate the negative effects of job demands on exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The results also indicate that a destructive leader appears to be a job demand that can be moderated by a personal characteristics, in line with the findings of Nielsen and Einarsen (2012), and that hardiness is one of these characteristics.

The analysis showed that hardiness moderates the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and exhaustion. Although I have not found studies that examine this exact relationship, the results add support to studies that show hardiness as a moderator of the relationship between stress, and burnout or exhaustion (e.g., DePew et al., 1999; Lo Bue et al., 2013; Maddi, 2004).

Although some studies have shown that hardy individuals can see stressors as challenges (e.g., Hystad et al., 2009; Maddi, 2002), Scheuer and colleagues (2016) found that abusive supervision was only related to increased exhaustion, and not a job demand that could be a challenge for some individuals. As their study did not look at possible moderators, Scheuer's findings do not indicate if characteristics, such as hardiness, moderate these relationships. Their results could indicate that job resources are not able to buffer destructive leadership behaviour, and could therefore appear to be an exception from the theory of hardiness – that hardiness predicts how individuals react to stressors.

The difference in results could also possibly be explained by the difference in respondents between this study, and theirs. This study is on a relatively homogenous population of

officers, with high mean levels of hardiness and low exhaustion scores
($M = 1.33$ $SD = 0.96$). Scheuer et al.'s (2016) study was based on randomly recruited
individuals from MTurk,[29] and while hardiness was not measured, the mean score for
exhaustion in their study ($M = 2.54$, SD $= 0.49$)[30] was significantly higher than in this study.
While MTurk is recognised as an effective way of providing participants that meet the
standards for published research, there is no way of controlling if the population is
representative for other studies (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The moderation
shown in this present study does still suggest that hardiness is an attribute that can reduce the
way stressors affect the health of the respondents (Bartone & Hystad, 2010).

5.1.1 Implications for the Norwegian Armed Forces

As initiative and the ability to make sound decisions are essential parts of mission command
(Forsvarssjefen, 2012), increased exhaustion amongst officers may lead to the leadership style
becoming less effective. Since the results indicate that destructive leadership behaviour can
lead to exhaustion, this can be a factor that can cause officers to become less effective, and
thereby distancing themselves from their work in order to handle their own personal health
issues (Maslach et al., 2001).

This study showed that destructive leadership behaviour can lead to exhaustion, and
exhaustion has been shown to indirectly predict absence frequency and duration (Bakker et
al., 2014). This implies that destructive leadership behaviour can lead to officers not being
able to conduct their jobs due to becoming absence from health issues, which in turn can lead
to reduced efficacy as others need to take over the responsibility for absent officers.

As the Norwegian Armed Forces is a hierarchical organisation, and mission command is a
leader-orientated philosophy, most leaders have several subordinate leaders. Having
exhausted leaders at any level can therefore have negative consequences for many
subordinates. However; the results indicate that hardiness can potentially reduce the amount
of exhaustions subordinates experience from exposure to destructive leadership. Lo Bue et al.
(2013) measured hardiness and exhaustion amongst Belgian service members in Afghanistan,

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[29] MTurk is an online survey service where participants choose to participate and receive a small financial
compensation (Scheuer et al., 2016)
[30] Exhaustion was measured on a four-point scale in Scheuer et al.' study while this study has a uses a seven-
point scale resulting in an even larger difference between the mean scores (on a seven point scale the mean
scores of their study would have been 4.45).

and found similar values of the relationship between these ($r = -.45$, $p < .001$) to the results found between hardiness and exhaustion in this study ($r = -.40$, $p < .001$). Military personnel with high hardiness contribute with high levels of energy, and a willingness to engage in work (Lo Bue et al., 2013). The moderation found in this study supports that hardiness can reduce exhaustion caused by the behaviour of destructive leaders, which can in turn lead to the subordinate leaders having the energy to take initiative, and think clearly in demanding situations; traits that are essential to mission command. It could also be speculated that individuals with high hardiness are better equipped to cope with behaviour that could be perceived as destructive, but that is required in extreme situations – such as in combat operations.

Hardiness has also has been shown to have positive effects on colleagues and organisations (Bartone, 2006). Thus, training or selecting hardy individuals in units with destructive leaders can potentially moderate the effects of this superior for other less-hardy colleagues, or the unit. This can reduce the impact on the effectiveness of units with destructive superiors, and increase the vigour to conduct missions even in demanding situations.

5.2 The relationship between destructive leadership behaviour, work engagement and hardiness

The third hypothesis was proposed to assess the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement. The findings indicate that this behaviour reduces work engagement, as expected, and thus supports the hypothesis, this study's research model and the JD-R model that suggests that job demands reduce work engagement. While there are several studies that have shown that work engagement is only predicted by job resources, and not job demands (Bakker et al., 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), the results indicate support to research that found that job demands also reduce work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010), and add to the limited research on this relationship (as stated by Einarsen et al., 2016).

The results support the recent findings that indicate that destructive leadership reduces work engagement (Leary et al., 2013; Poon, 2011; Scheuer et al., 2016). The results therefore suggest that the effects of destructive behaviour on these Norwegian mid-level officers are comparable to research on other groups that experience destructive leaders.

As work engagement consists of physical, cognitive and emotional engagement to work (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010), the notion of destructive leadership reducing these aspects of work engagement seems probable, and consistent with general research on the effects of destructive leadership (Zhang & Liao, 2015).

The results do not support previous research on Norwegian officers that, surprisingly, did not find that destructive leadership behaviour caused reduced work engagement (Platek, 2015). While the mean scores and standard deviations for both destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement are similar in both studies,[31] a possible explanation for the discrepancy is Platek's own assessment of a limitation in his study; the small number of respondents (N = 87-91). However, as the effect describing the relationship in my study was small (β = -.20, p < .01), and the variation of work engagement that was explained by destructive leadership behaviour was only 4%, the findings here should be treated with some care. The strength of the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement was however similar to the findings of Poon (2011), and the results are still of interest as there is little research on this relationship.

As for exhaustion, it is a perhaps surprising that the strength of the relationship was not stronger, and that destructive leadership behaviour only accounted for 4% of the variation in work engagement. It is reasonable to believe that many factors, both personal and organisational, influence the work engagement for military leaders. Organisational factors such as organisational culture, role clarity and peer group interaction have been found to be positively related to engagement amongst American military personnel (Alarcon, Lyons, & Tartaglia, 2010). According to Manning (1994), military performance, which relies on individual engagement, has been known to be heavily dependent on group solidarity and unit cohesion, as well as vertical cohesion – cohesion with the overall goals of the organisation and higher leaders (Manning, 1994). The results here could therefore imply that the mid-level leaders become more engaged by other factors than their immediate superiors. As vertical cohesion is a key attribute of mission command, where commanders are required to act on the intentions of superiors, an explanation for this result could be that these mid-level leaders are more engaged by the overall goals of the unit, or for the Norwegian Armed Forces than by their immediate superiors – especially if these are destructive.

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[31] Destructive leadership behaviour: Platek: M = 2.04, SD = 0.82, this study: M = 2.03, SD = 0.79
Work engagement: Platek: M = 4.81, SD = 0.70, this study: M = 4.63, SD = 0.84

While this study does not seek to measure how other variables affect work engagement, the diversity of the factors that could affect this are presented through these examples. Even so, the explained variation in this study implies that destructive leadership behaviour is one of the factors that reduce the work engagement for Norwegian mid-level leaders.

In support of hypothesis 4, the analysis showed that hardiness moderates the negative relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement. This is in line with expectations, and the research model. The results also support the theory of the JD-R model, where Bakker and Demerouti (2007) propose that job resources influence work engagement when job demands are high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The moderation that was shown also indicates support to the theory of hardiness – that hardiness predicts how individuals react to stressors. It appears natural that individuals who enjoy challenges, take control of their environment, and are committed to their work (Maddi, 2002), also score high on work engagement since work engagement is defined as a positive work-related state of mind and characterised by vigour, dedication and efficacy. The findings support Kobasa's (1979) proposal that hardy individuals see stressors as opportunities that can be mastered (Kobasa, 1979), and indicate that destructive leadership can be viewed as a stressors that individuals with high hardiness levels see as a challenge, and an opportunity for personal growth.

The findings could also indicate that hardiness is related to vertical cohesion (Manning, 1994), where the effect of a destructive superiors has a smaller impact than the commitment to the goals of the organisation for the individuals with high levels of hardiness. This is supported by the results, as destructive leadership explains more of the variation of exhaustion than of work engagement, indicating that there are other factors that are more important for the engagement of these officers, and it could be speculated that vertical cohesion is one of these. These results are in line with the findings of Martinussen et al. (2011), who found that job demands explain less of the variation of engagement compared to exhaustion.

The findings also add to the limited research (as stated in Crawford et al., 2010; Scheuer et al., 2016) showing that job resources moderate the relationship between job demands and work engagement. Even though the interaction term explained a small part of the variation of work engagement, the results still indicate that hardiness moderates the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement. The analyses showed that hardiness

accounted for 26% ($\Delta R^2 = .26$, $p < .001$) of the variation of work engagement. This is in line with previous research that found that hardiness predicts work engagement amongst officers in combat operations - where hardiness explained between 20% and 30% of each of the sub-factors of work engagement for Belgian service members (Lo Bue et al., 2013). As the individuals with high hardiness levels are less affected by destructive leaders, the results also supports the suggestion that hardy individuals are likely to be more actively involved in their work (Kobasa, 1979). The explained variation of work engagement is comparable to the study of Lo Bue et al (2013), but the results should be treated with some care due to the high hardiness results amongst the respondents in this study that could affect the results, and the generalisability of the findings. In this study, the mean *sum* of hardiness was high ($M = 47.94$, $SD = 4.34$) compared to Lo Bue et al.'s study (2013) ($M = 23.89$, $SD = 3.96$). A study on US Marine Corps and Navy personnel also had lower mean scores of hardiness ($M = 32.6$, $SD = 4.6$) (Taylor, Pietrobon, Taverniers, Leon, & Fern, 2013) that were consistent with another study on US officers ($M = 31.1$, $SD = 3.66$) (Easterling, 2012). A possible explanation for the high hardiness value is that the competition for attendance to the courses is hard, and that the individuals with high hardiness levels better match the selection criteria for admission.

5.2.1 Implications for the Norwegian Armed Forces

As work engagement leads to more efficiently functioning organisations (Organ as cited in Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010), and destructive leadership behaviour was shown to lead to reduced work engagement, destructive leaders can potentially lead to reduced team, or organisational efficiency. Mission command relies on initiative, and an offensive orientation from subordinates (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011). Destructive leaders who reduce the work engagement of subordinate commanders can thus reduce the efficacy both of the subordinates, and the whole organisation. As this study shows that hardiness has the ability to moderate the relationship between destructive behaviour and work engagement, the value of hardiness can be important to individual, team- and organisational engagement in organisations or units that have destructive leaders.

In operational contexts, and for mission command in general, work engagement is a requirement for the success of a military unit and for other units that rely on this (Shamir, 2011). With a destructive leader, subordinates may need to work harder, and take control and

responsibility in order to achieve success. The findings here can therefore imply that hardiness is an important characteristic, as hardy individuals will not let destructive leaders reduce their work engagement to the same degree as the less hardy individuals.

In addition to moderating outcomes of destructive leadership, hardiness could also be a moderator of behaviour that can be perceived to be destructive, but that is required under extreme conditions, such as combat operations. Steel (2011) proposed that military leaders are sometimes forced to take control, and behave in a manner that may be perceived to be destructive. This can happen with inexperienced subordinates (Steele, 2011), or in situations that are so extreme that a person with the overall responsibility feels the need to make the decisions. An implication of the findings is that a subordinate with high hardiness may also see these situations as an opportunity to learn from the experience, and be better prepared in the future. A low-hardy individual may react by becoming passive or feeling powerless, in line with the findings of Kobasa (1979).

Military organisations are both interdependent and group oriented (Bartone, 2006), and individual engagement, motivation and commitment are therefore a requirement for the armed forces to function efficiently as an organisation. Britt et al. (2001) found that for military personnel deployed to Bosnia, hardiness predicted how engaged the individuals were, and how meaningful they found their work (Britt et al., 2001).That hardiness moderates the relationship between destructive leadership behaviour and work engagement therefore indicates that hardiness is a trait that is related, not only to personal motivation and engagement, but also to the interdependency that mission command relies on. This is important in a hierarchical organisation where leaders at all levels have subordinates who learn from their superiors, and where the reduced engagement in one leader may influence several subordinates' ability to do their jobs.

5.3 Limitations of this study

The design of this study was cross-sectional, and as no previous measurements on the levels of work engagement and exhaustion for the respondents were conducted, the causality between destructive leadership behaviour, and these variables cannot accurately be assessed. In addition all measured results are self-reported. The results are therefore based on the individual's perception of the factors. Spector (1994) concludes that one of the weaknesses of cross-sectional self-report studies is that the observed correlations can have alternative

explanations, and that the design is not suitable for assessing causality. This research design is, however, useful for providing insights, and deriving hypotheses about the effects of the work environment (Spector, 1994). Since there is limited research on the relationship between hardiness and destructive leadership, and also limited research on destructive leadership in the Norwegian Armed Forces, this study can provide insight into these relationships – even though the limitations describe by Spector (1994) apply.

Another limitation of this study is related to the possibility of generalising the findings. All participants are mid-level leaders at a comparable stage of their careers, and the results may therefore not be generalizable to the rest of the Norwegian Armed Forces. Additionally, compared to the size of the Norwegian Armed Forces, this study was conducted on a fairly small population.

A further limitation of this study is related to the homogenous population. The participants have been selected on the same selection criteria, from many applicants, to participate in the courses. This could be an explanation for the high mean values of hardiness and work engagement, and low mean values of exhaustion. This indicates that the population consists of, on average, engaged, high-hardiness individuals who may not be representative to other parts of the Norwegian Armed Forces. It is therefore possible that the moderating role of hardiness, and the outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour may be different for other organisations - or other parts of the Norwegian Armed Forces.

5.4 Practical implications

While the variation that was explained by the interaction term between destructive leadership behaviour and hardiness for both exhaustion and engagement can be seen as low (Cohen, 1992), the interaction was still significant. In the opinion of Dawson (2014) an interaction effect can have significant practical implications even though the effect size is small. As the results indicate that destructive leadership behaviour will not have the same negative consequences for officers with high hardiness values as for those with low hardiness, hardiness can be considered a relevant factor that can be used for improving the negative relationships caused by destructive leadership behaviour.

5.4.1 Hardiness training

In certain circumstances, such as combat operations, behaviour that can be assessed by followers as destructive can be necessary to successfully conduct an operation and this behaviour can be the reason the leader is a good commander, or an efficient leader of the organisation (Skogstad & Einarsen, 2004) in these situations. As the behaviour can be felt as destructive, increasing hardiness amongst subordinates can potentially also increase the resilience against negative reactions to this type of behaviour.

While it can be difficult to change the behaviour of destructive leaders (Ulmer Jr et al., 2004), this study has indicated that hardiness can moderate the consequences of these leaders for the subordinates. A practical implementation of hardiness for the Norwegian Armed Forces is that studies on military personnel have shown that hardiness is a trainable characteristic (Bartone & Hystad, 2010; Maddi, 2007) that can be developed amongst adults (Maddi & Kobasa as cited in Bartone, 1999). A study found that managers were able to improve their hardiness scores through training, with the effects being measurable throughout the six-month follow-up period (Maddi, 2002). However; hardiness is an individual response pattern that is developed in youth, and these patterns are firmly established in adults. Improving hardiness involves changing individual behaviour, and is therefore not considered an easy and rapid process (Bartone & Hystad, 2010).

In addition to individual training, organisational hardiness training has also been tested with positive results. Hardiness training can change a toxic work environment into a positive environment through regular coaching sessions of the leaders (Atella, 1999). Atella's findings are also related to more recent research, that found that hardy individuals can spread hardy attitudes (Bartone, 2006), but they also present an option of training larger parts of an organisation to develop hardy work environments. Studies on both individuals (Tierney & Lavelle, 1997), and groups (Atella, 1999) show that frequent follow-up sessions were required in order for the programme to have lasting effects.

A longitudinal study showed that for hardiness to improve, it is not sufficient with general leadership education or training; or training aimed at coping with stress (Hystad et al., 2015). Although the Norwegian military academies do not focus specifically on hardiness training (Hystad et al., 2015), the school institutions have a focus on military leadership, and hardiness training could be performed by these institutions for selected groups, or individuals. An easier

solution of classroom based education, was not found to increase sustained hardiness levels (Tierney & Lavelle, 1997).

These results indicate that while hardiness is potentially trainable (Atella, 1999; Henderson, 2015; Maddi, 2007; Tierney & Lavelle, 1997), the training must be focused on developing hardiness for the people, or units, experiencing destructive leadership behaviour. Resilience training programmes aimed at reducing stress and anxiety from deployments, as well as toxic leaders have been implemented in the US army (Steele, 2011).[32] A similar training programme could be introduced to the Norwegian Armed Forces. Although there could be substantial costs involved in a hardiness, or leader development programme, the economic and psychological costs from reduced health and engagement amongst employees can potentially be more damaging to the Norwegian Armed Forces - if nothing is done. As a comparison, it is estimated that destructive leadership cost American companies more than $20 billion due to absenteeism, health care and reduced productivity (Tepper, 2007). If a Norwegian training programme is established, it should also include extensive follow-up programmes in order to sustain the increased hardiness levels (Atella, 1999; Bartone & Hystad, 2010; Tierney & Lavelle, 1997).

A simpler, and less expensive alternative of focusing on actions and techniques has also been shown to be increase hardiness (Easterling, 2012). Easterling exemplified this with a list of 19 actions describing how to improve hardiness.[33] These were actions such as prioritising to spend time with the subordinates, and sharing available information with the organisation. By focusing on these actions there was a measurable increase in the commitment facet of hardiness for the leaders. Methods such as these can be a step in the right direction for countering destructive leadership behaviour. As many employees in the Norwegian Armed Forces participate in exercises on a regular basis, these techniques could easily be tested at low cost.

5.4.2 Hardiness selection

While training is an option to improve the hardiness of individuals or organisations, an alternative is to use hardiness as a selection tool. It is hard to argue that destructive leadership

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[32] Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) is a $50 million US Army programme where 800 000 American soldiers have participated confidentially, and without the need for permission from their superiors.
[33] The list was based on "To Build Resilience: Leader Influence on Mental Hardiness" (Bartone, Barry, & Armstrong, 2009)

can sometimes be an acceptable leadership style, but some leaders have characteristics that are so beneficial to the organisation, that the consequences on the subordinates are acceptable – in given situations. This has been referred to as *the paradox of managerial tyranny* (Ma et al., 2004). For the Norwegian Armed Forces an example could be the appointment of exceptional leaders to demanding deployments in conflict areas, or to carry out orders that have been decided by political authorities, such as closing down, or relocating force elements. While the preferred solution is to have leaders who that take care of their subordinates, *and* carry out their orders, sometimes a leader is chosen due to his or her exceptional skills that relate to a particular mission or task.

In these circumstances hardiness training is possibly not an option, due to time constraints, or the ad-hoc nature of these tasks. As hardiness is measurable (Hystad et al., 2010), an alternative is to appoint high-hardiness personnel into other key positions in the organisation to raise the hardiness levels of the organisation or unit (Bartone et al., 2009). In order for hardiness to be available as a selection tool, the Norwegian Armed Forces need to establish a system for recording hardiness levels of employees.

5.4.3 Countering destructive leaders

The findings in this study indicate that destructive leadership behaviour in the Norwegian Armed Forces causes exhaustion, and reduced engagement amongst the mid-level leaders. A systematic effort to change the work environment for Norwegian officers, civilians and soldiers should be considered by the Norwegian Armed Forces. As destructive leadership behaviour is measured in the annual employee survey (Forsvarsstaben, 2016), this is a step in the right direction.

From the theory of leadership categories, I discussed that most leaders probably show behaviour in several of the leadership categories, and it can be assumed that many leaders are not purely destructive. As subordinates seldom discuss difficulties with the leaders who cause the interpersonal problems (Steele, 2011), it can be speculated that some of the behaviour that is perceived to be destructive comes from individuals who are not intentionally destructive. These individuals may be interested in attempting to improve this behaviour - if they knew that they caused job strains in their work environment. However; it has also been found that it can be challenging to have personal conversations regarding another person's destructive behaviour (Steele, 2011). The Norwegian Armed Forces have introduced tools where

subordinates, colleagues and superiors can give feedback anonymously, such as the *360MIL leadership programme* (Forsvarssjefen, 2012).[34] Participation to this programme is voluntary, and may therefore not identify the leaders who do not want to be examined. Continued work on this programme, and making attendance compulsory, can be a way of increasing the likelihood of identifying destructive behaviour, and informing leaders of behaviour that is perceived as destructive by colleagues. This is especially important for units where destructive leadership behaviour has been identified, for example through the annual survey, and can be the first step for a perceived destructive leader who is willing to attempt to change his or her behaviour.

5.5 Future research

Based on the described limitations of this study, research on a more representative population is required in order to draw general conclusions for the Norwegian Armed Forces, or civilian organisations. While the results identify interesting relationships between hardiness and destructive leadership behaviour that could be used in future research, further studies on other populations are therefore recommended.

Future research should also include different methods to further examine the hypotheses, as well as the causality of the variables (Spector, 1994). In addition to more quantitative studies, longitudinal, as well as qualitative studies are therefore required to gain a deeper understanding of the consequences of destructive leadership, and the moderating role of hardiness on these relationships. The results from this study can be used to focus this research.

Studies and surveys on the prevalence of destructive leadership behaviour amongst Norwegian officers have just started to emerge (e.g., Andersen, 2016; Forsvarsstaben, 2016; Platek, 2015), while no or little research on how to mitigate these effects has been conducted. This study can potentially contribute with further insight on the consequences of destructive leadership behaviour, as well as with findings that indicate that hardiness can moderate these relationships amongst Norwegian officers. If the Norwegian Armed Forces decide to explore the possibilities of hardiness training, considerable research should be applied prior to

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[34] This 360-degree multi-rater feedback programme collects responses from the officer him or herself, superiors, subordinates and officers at the same level. The officer is then presented with a leadership profile divided into scores on mission focus, own- and unit development as well as perceptions of the officer as a role-model.

attempting this training. Both the prevalence, and the causality of the outcome variables need to be assessed further for the individuals, or units, in order for the training to have the desired outcome (Bartone & Hystad, 2010).

The Norwegian Armed Forces annual surveys have begun measuring the prevalence of destructive leadership behaviour. This allows further research to be conducted on a much larger and diverse population, but this study indicates that research should also address the outcomes, and the effects of hardiness on this behaviour. The survey can then be used for future research into the research question of this study.

As researchers do not agree if passive leadership should be included in the definition of destructive leadership, future studies should be conducted to assess the relationship between passive- and destructive leadership. Research on the outcomes of passive leadership on the type of respondents in this study could also add comparable findings that can be useful in determining the impact of passive leadership. This could support the view that passive leadership is a part of destructive leadership (e.g., Einarsen et al., 2007), or that the effects are weaker and that it should be treated separately (e.g., Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Also; this study has not measured the sub-factor described by Einarsen and colleagues as *supportive-disloyal leadership* (Einarsen et al., 2007). While this study has looked at destructive leadership behaviour as an over-all construct, both passive, and supportive-disloyal leadership are interesting sub-factors as they could reduce the efficacy and performance of units in the Norwegian Armed Forces, and are interesting topics for future research. The moderating properties of hardiness on sub-factors of destructive leadership behaviour should also be considered for future research.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine if hardiness can mitigate the effects of destructive leadership behaviour. To do this, I examined how destructive leadership behaviour is related to exhaustion and work engagement, and also if hardiness moderates these relationships.

The results showed that destructive leaders cause negative consequences for the mid-level leaders in the Norwegian Armed Forces, including exhaustion, and reduced work engagement. These are important individual characteristics that decrease the initiative, and offensive orientation of these mid-level leaders - attributes that mission command relies on (Ben-Shalom & Shamir, 2011). Finding ways to counter this destructive behaviour is therefore important for the efficacy, and performance of the Norwegian Armed Forces.

Hardiness was found to moderate the relationships between destructive leadership behaviour, and the consequences of this behaviour. As hardiness is a trainable characteristic (Maddi, 2007), identifying these relationships is significant as hardiness can be used by the Norwegian Armed Forces to counter the negative effects of destructive leaders. Studies have shown that hardiness can be increased amongst individuals, teams and organisations (e.g., Atella, 1999), and that hardiness spreads amongst colleagues (Bartone, 2006). Hardiness training, or the selection of individuals with high hardiness levels, in environments with destructive leaders, can reduce the overall impact of destructive leaders on the work environment for both the mid-level leaders, and the Norwegian Armed Forces.

The research model, based on the JD-R model was supported as all hypotheses, and relationships, were supported by the results in this study.

Based on these results, this study has shown that the answer to the research question is that hardiness *is* a characteristic that can affect the outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour. The effects and prevalence of destructive leaders are severe, and should be a concern for the Norwegian Armed Forces, but this study has showed that hardiness is a way to counter the negative consequences caused by these leaders. The possibilities related to exploiting this characteristic should therefore be considered when attempting to find solutions for how to counter these dysfunctional leaders in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

Some of the results found here contribute to research areas that have received little attention. First, while both hardiness and destructive leadership behaviour has been thoroughly researched, this study is, to my knowledge, the first that has examined the effects of hardiness on destructive leadership behaviour. This study showed that how hardiness moderates the outcomes of destructive leadership behaviour is similar to how hardiness moderates outcomes of other stressors (e.g., Hystad et al., 2009; Lo Bue et al., 2013; Skomorovsky & Sudom, 2011). Exploring these relationships contributed to the few studies that examine how to improve work environments where there are destructive leaders (Einarsen et al., 2016).

Second, This study adds to the few studies that examine the relationship between job demands, and work engagement (as stated by Crawford et al., 2010), and the few that have examined destructive leadership behaviours relationship with subordinates work engagement (as stated by Scheuer et al., 2016).

Finally, this study is a contribution to the emerging research on destructive leadership behaviour in the Norwegian Armed Forces, and has identified practical implications that could be used to mitigate the consequences of this behaviour.

By creating hardy leaders, and increasing hardiness amongst subordinates in units that are exposed to destructive leadership behaviour, the negative consequences of destructive leadership can be reduced. To return to the introductory quote; if hardiness is exploited to counter destructive leaders, the Norwegian Armed Forces can increase the number of diamonds, and reduce the amount of coal. This will reduce the negative impact of destructive leadership behaviour on mission command, thus increasing the efficacy of this leadership philosophy for the Norwegian Armed Forces.

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