

DAILY MOOD CROSSOVER BETWEEN LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

In a group setting, a leader's mood is very salient to group members and as a result, leaders are a key source of mood contagion. Mood contagion means that one person's mood (e.g., sad) transfers to another person. Due to having greater formal authority and power, social psychologists suggest that leaders tend to display their emotions publicly, including negative emotions such as anger, contempt and disgust. Although leaders are prone to exhibiting their emotions, researchers have questioned the value of leaders displaying negative emotions, inferring that due to mood contagion, followers will exhibit negative emotions as well. Further research is needed on the impact of leader mood on followers (i.e., mood contagion) as well as the leader-follower relationship overall.

In the current study, Dr. Sun, Dr. Wayne and Dr. Liu used experience-sampling methods, collecting data through daily surveys completed by employees and their leaders of a real-estate company in China. Seventy leader-follower dyads completed 2 daily surveys during each of 10 successive work days (over 2,700 data points). The research team will use this dataset to answer the following questions:

- To what extent is there daily mood crossover between leaders and followers?
- What types of daily interactions between leaders and followers influence mood crossover?
- What are the consequences of mood crossover between leaders and followers? (Does mood crossover impact followers' work engagement or work performance)?
- What personality traits and emotion expression strategies influence mood crossover between leaders and followers?

Potential implications of the current study:

Whether a leader should express or hide one's mood in front of followers is an important managerial challenge for almost every leader. The current study will try to provide a clear direction for leaders about when and how to express mood in interactions with followers in the workplace. Data analyses are commencing and results of the study will be posted on the website after the analyses are completed.
