

In press in *Criminal Justice and Behavior*

**The development of prison officers' job satisfaction and its impact on depersonalization
of incarcerated persons: The role of organizational dehumanization**

Florence Stinglhamber, Nathan Nguyen, Maryse Josse, and Stéphanie Demoulin

Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium

Author Note

Florence Stinglhamber  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4013-1625>

Nathan Nguyen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6969-3894>

Stéphanie Demoulin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6903-8427>

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose. This work was supported by ARC under grant n°16/20-071 of the French Community of Belgium awarded to the first and the last author.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Florence Stinglhamber, Université catholique de Louvain, Place Cardinal Mercier, 10, L3.05.01, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. E-mail: florence.stinglhamber@uclouvain.be.

Biographical Sketches

Florence Stinglhamber is Professor of Organizational Psychology and Human Resource Management at the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium). Her main research interests include perceived organizational/supervisor support and organizational dehumanization. She is the (co-)author of a number of peer-reviewed articles published in international journals such as *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Nathan Nguyen earned his Ph.D. in Work and Organizational Psychology from the Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium). His main research interests include emotional regulation, organizational dehumanization, person-environment fit, and personality. He published his work in international journals such as *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.

After obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Nursing in 1997, **Maryse Josse** worked as a social nurse in a government health agency in Belgium. Seventeen years later, she obtained a Master's degree in economic and social policy at the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium). Since then, she has worked as a policy officer in a Belgian health insurance fund, where she currently coordinates health projects.

Stéphanie Demoulin is Professor of Social Psychology at the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium). Her main research interests include dehumanization from the victim's perspective, intergroup relations, negotiations and mediations. She is the (co-)author of a number of peer-reviewed articles published in international journals.

Abstract

This paper contributes to the literature on the antecedents and consequences of prison officers' job satisfaction. First, we argue that organizational dehumanization, i.e. employees' perceptions of being treated as tools by their organization, explains how work environment factors determine job satisfaction. Second, we propose that the role played by organizational dehumanization in the development of job satisfaction carries over depersonalization of incarcerated persons. The study ($N = 357$ Belgian prison officers) supports the mediating role of organizational dehumanization in the relationships between four work environment factors (organizational justice, appropriateness of material resources, quality of the physical environment, and perceived organizational support compared to that of the persons who are incarcerated) and job satisfaction. In addition, the findings indicate that prison officers' perception of being dehumanized by their prison trickles down in the development of depersonalized relationships with incarcerated persons and this effect is mediated by prison officers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Prison officers' job satisfaction, work environment factors, organizational dehumanization, depersonalization; incarcerated persons

The development of prison officers' job satisfaction and its impact on depersonalization of incarcerated persons: The role of organizational dehumanization

Job satisfaction (JS) is a concept studied across a variety of work contexts and the prison environment makes no exception. Research on prison officers' JS has shown that this employee attitude plays a pivotal role in penitentiary life. On one hand, a great deal of attention has been devoted to identifying its antecedents (for a review, see Lambert et al., 2002). In particular, research has provided evidence of the strong influence of factors related to prison officers' work environment (e.g., role stressors, job autonomy, etc.). What is not clear at this point, however, are the underlying mechanisms through which work environment factors operate. In the present paper, we propose that organizational dehumanization plays such a role.

Organizational dehumanization (OD) refers to the experience of an employee of being "objectified by his or her organization, denied personal subjectivity, and made to feel like a tool or an instrument for the organization's ends" (Bell & Khoury, 2011, p.170). Recent literature has shown that OD relates to a myriad of consequences, among which reduced JS. In addition, research has also established that OD varies as a function of work environment factors similar to the ones that act as antecedents to JS (Bell & Khoury, 2016; Caesens et al., 2019; Caesens et al., 2017; Taskin et al., 2019). Consequently, we argue that an important cognitive mechanism explaining the relationship between these antecedents and JS is the perception prison officers have that their penitentiary institution treats them humanely, i.e. OD. The first aim of the present paper is thus to examine the mediating role of OD between prison officers' JS and some of its work environment antecedents.

On the other hand, previous research has shown that prison officers' JS has significant consequences and is therefore of the utmost importance to correctional administrators. More precisely, scholars have reported that it affects prison functioning (e.g., turnover rate), prison

officers themselves (e.g., their health), but also their relationships with individuals who are incarcerated (for a review, see Lambert et al., 2002). In addition to examining the important role of OD in the decline of JS, we thus aim at further examining the consequences of the OD-JS link on the way prison officers relate with people in custody and, in particular, on their tendency to act with them in a depersonalized fashion. That is, we postulate the presence of a trickle process (Wo et al., 2019) whereby the dehumanizing treatment prison officers perceive they receive from their organization (i.e., OD) is reproduced on incarcerated persons (i.e., depersonalization) as a consequence of their decreased JS. Indeed, JS has been shown to inversely relate to depersonalization practices in the prison context (Lambert et al., 2015). The second aim of the present paper is thus to provide evidence for a dehumanizing trickle effect in prison context and to assess the mediating role of JS in this trickle process.

Job satisfaction of prison officers

Research on JS among prison officers began several decades ago and has grown exponentially since then (e.g., Cullen et al., 1985). Much efforts in this domain have been devoted to the identification of its antecedents. Among these, evidence was found for effects from both personal characteristics and work environment factors (Lambert et al., 2002). At the personal level, scholars have for instance shown that demographic factors such as age, race, or gender impact prison officers' JS (Bravo-Yáñez & Jiménez-Figueroa, 2011; Cullen et al., 1985; Jiang et al., 2018). However, as important as they are, these personal characteristics tend to play a lesser role in determining prison officers' JS than factors of the work environment (e.g., Griffin et al., 2010; Jiang et al., 2018; Lambert & Paoline, 2008). The latter include "the factors or characteristics that comprise the overall work conditions and situations for an employee, both tangible and intangible" (Lambert et al., 2002, p. 125). Because of their prevalent effects and because, contrary to personal characteristics, these can be acted upon, we focus, in the present paper, on work environment factors that affect JS.

Work environment factors are numerous and the concepts that have been the focus of researchers' interest are quite heterogeneous. To cite but one example, Elechi and his colleagues (2018) conducted a study on Nigerian correctional staff that simultaneously examined the relationship between JS and factors as diverse as job variety, job autonomy, supervision's quality, instrumental communication, and work overload. Although JS antecedents are numerous, research constraints prevent to examine them all in a single study. In addition, factors' importance may vary as a function of the specific national context in which research takes place. The study reported in the present paper was conducted in the context of Belgian prisons and in collaboration with union representatives of prison officers in this country. Therefore, the selection of work environment factors of interest was operated in negotiation with these field actors and includes both important work environment factors that were found to be related to prison officers' JS in the literature (i.e., dangerousness, job autonomy, and organizational justice) and factors that were identified as relevant by these actors for the specific Belgian context in which the study took place (i.e., appropriateness of material resources, quality of the physical environment, and a comparative form of perceived organizational support). Next, we define each of these factors and explain how they relate with JS in prison contexts.

Dangerousness of a job refers to a person's perception that she evolves in a work environment that puts her physical security at risk (Cullen et al., 1985; Lambert & Paoline, 2008). Dangerousness is of obvious relevance in correctional contexts as staff members, as well as individuals who are incarcerated, often face "unexpected threats of violence" (e.g., Lai et al., 2012). Some authors (Ayim Gyekye, 2005) have argued that safety at work should relate to satisfaction feelings with the job one performs and, even if some studies failed to provide evidence for this link (e.g., Cullen et al., 1993), more research has validated this

assumption showing that prison officers' perceptions of job dangerousness negatively relate to their satisfaction at work (e.g., Keena et al., 2018).

Job autonomy, or employees' perception that they dispose the freedom to make their own job-related decisions, has also been related to prison officers' JS in several studies (Elechi et al., 2018; Wright et al., 1997). Scholars have explained the job autonomy-JS relationship on several bases. For instance, Lambert, Paoline, et al. (2006) argued that job autonomy can increase prison officers' effectiveness which, in turn, influences JS through the pride it elicits. In addition, others have suggested that a lack of autonomy can be detrimental to prison officers' JS as it creates feelings of frustration and strain (Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). In any case, evidence exists that the more prison officers perceive that they benefit from job autonomy, the higher their JS.

Organizational justice is defined as employees' perceived fairness of the treatment they received from their organization (Schminke et al., 2000). Research on organizational justice has traditionally distinguished between different types of justice (i.e., distributive, procedural, and interactional justice). In correctional environments, the procedural component has been most widely investigated and displays the strongest positive and consistent relationship with JS (e.g., Lambert, 2003; Lambert et al., 2007). While the results are less clear with other types of justice, the fact remains that the more prison officers globally perceive fair treatment from their penitentiary institution, the more satisfied they are with their job. Yet, several researchers have suggested over the past two decades that when individuals form impressions of justice, they also make holistic judgments (e.g., Ambrose & Arnaud, 2005). These researchers have further suggested that considering overall fairness judgments instead of focusing on specific types of justice could provide a more complete understanding of justice in organizations. Especially when predictions are identical for the different types of justice, capturing a sense of global justice would allow scholars to better capture the depth and

richness of individuals' experiences of justice (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). In line with this, we will therefore focus in this study on the impact of overall justice on prison officers' JS.

In addition to these well-researched JS antecedents, three work environment factors were identified by prison field actors as important characteristics of the Belgian context. First, appropriateness of material resources refers to the prison officers' perception of the material resources at their disposal to do their job. In Belgium, where the study took place, prison officers regularly make the headlines to condemn and draw public attention to the conditions under which they must perform their duties (e.g., Bocquet, 2019). In the event of budget cuts, the budget for equipment (such as uniforms and protective equipment) is usually the first to be affected. To give an example, a Belgian prison officer has to wait on average 8 years to obtain uniform pants. Interestingly, appropriateness of material resources has been shown to positively affect JS in other working contexts and was thus deemed an important potential antecedent of JS to investigate among prison officers (e.g., in nursing, Gelsema et al., 2006; in education, Xiaofu & Qiwen, 2007).

Second, quality of the physical environment refers to prison officers' perception of the physical environment in which they must work. Research has shown that workspaces and their characteristics in terms of light, noise, air quality and space design have a major influence on employees' JS (Abbasi et al., 2019; Frontczak et al., 2012; Raffaello & Maass, 2002). Prisons in Belgium are often described as offering poor physical work environment (e.g., Observatoire International des Prisons – section belge, 2016). To our knowledge, no research, however, has examined the impact of the physical environment on the JS of prison officers. Hence, assessing the positive impact of the quality of the physical environment on prison officers' JS was deemed as important by both field actors and researchers.

Finally, JS has been shown to vary as a function of the organizational support employees perceive they received from their organization both in general organizational

contexts (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011) and in prison institutions (Bravo-Yáñez & Jiménez-Figueroa, 2011). Perceived organizational support is traditionally approached in an absolute sense in the literature and defined as “employees’ perceptions of the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501). In the present study, we follow a line of research that has recently emerged in the literature and that considers that social comparison processes come into play in perceptions of organizational support (Tsachouridi & Nikandrou, 2019; Vardaman et al., 2016). We therefore focus on a comparative form of support (i.e., perceived organizational support-social comparison or POS-SC), reflecting the extent to which prison officer perceived that persons who are incarcerated benefit from higher support from the penitentiary organization than themselves.

Indeed, according to the field actors who collaborated on this research, a key concern of prison officers is that people in custody might in fact benefit from more support from the penitentiary institution than they do themselves. As a matter of fact, prison policies often focus heavily on the rights and conditions of detention and when the prison environment is in the spotlight of the media, it is most often to focus on the conditions of detention of the persons who are incarcerated and less on the working conditions of their guards (e.g., “Les prisons belges”, 2021). Furthermore, when prison officers go on strike to demand better work conditions, it is first and foremost the fundamental rights of people in custody that are considered to be violated (because no minimum service was provided until 2020). Thus, the well-being at work of the prison officers and the well-being in the living conditions of the incarcerated individuals have long been in opposition in the Belgian prison system (e.g., “Les règles du service minimum”, 2020). Accordingly, we argued that prison officers should assess their own POS in light of the organizational support and concern for well-being that is

perceived to be provided to people in custody and that this POS-SC should be predictive of their JS. The more the balance is positive for prison officers, the more their JS.

Organizational dehumanization

As suggested before, researchers have devoted lots of efforts at identifying antecedents of JS in prison contexts. Yet, little is known about the cognitive mechanism(s) that relate these antecedents to their JS consequence. In the present study, OD is proposed as an explanatory mechanism for these relationships. Dehumanization occurs when a given target (i.e., an individual or a group) is perceived or treated as lacking humanness (Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). Applying this concept to the organizational domain, Bell and Khoury (2011, 2016) refer to OD as the perceived experience of an employee resulting from the feeling to be used as a tool or instrument for the organization's ends.

The hypothesized mediating role of OD in the relationships between JS and its antecedents comes from the literature in organizational psychology. In this domain, research has shown that OD varies as a function of work environment factors similar to the ones that affect JS. For instance, low levels of job autonomy, organizational justice and perceived organizational support, and physical work environment type have all been shown to influence OD (Bell & Khoury, 2016; Caesens et al., 2019; Caesens et al., 2017; Taskin et al., 2019). In addition, research also showed that OD affects many important outcomes for both the individual and the organization, including employee well-being, self-perceptions, and attitudes and behaviors at work (Caesens et al., 2019; Demoulin et al., 2021; Stinglhamber et al., 2021; Taskin et al., 2019). In particular, studies have found that OD was negatively related to JS and, importantly, that OD mediated the effects of various work environment factors on JS (e.g., Caesens et al., 2019; Caesens et al., 2017; for a review on OD, see Brison et al., 2022).

In sum, the factors that have been identified as antecedents of JS in prison contexts also tend to affect OD, and JS was found to be an important - negatively correlated - outcome of the experience of OD. Overall, this evidence suggests that OD may play a mediating role in the relationships between work environment characteristics and JS.

Hypothesis 1: OD mediates the relationships between JS and its antecedents (dangerousness, H1a; job autonomy, H1b; organizational justice, H1c; appropriateness of material resources, H1d; quality of the physical environment, H1e; and POS-SC, H1f).

The depersonalization of incarcerated persons

Establishing the existence of an OD-JS link in prison contexts is also important because of its potential effect on the way prison officers relate with people in custody. In particular, the present research examines the influence of OD and JS on prison officers' tendency to depersonalize them. Depersonalization is a subcomponent of burnout (Maslach et al., 1986) and is conceptualized, in prison contexts, as a mechanism of moral disengagement that "involves regarding the persons [...] with a level of detachment and indifference that is ordinarily reserved for inanimate objects" (Weill & Haney, 2017, p. 308). As a moral disengagement mechanism, depersonalization is often considered as a (milder) form of dehumanization (Tajfel, 1981; Tileagă, 2007). In line with this idea, depersonalization is to incarcerated persons what OD is to prison officers.

Literature in organizational contexts has shown the existence of trickle effects through which the perceptions, feelings, attitudes, or behavior of a recipient (e.g., clients) are affected by the perceptions, feelings, attitudes, or behavior of a source (e.g., the organization) via the modification of the perceptions, feelings, attitudes, or behavior of a transmitter (e.g., employees) (Mayer et al., 2009; Wo et al., 2019). In other words, trickle effects are a form of indirect social influence in which recipients are affected by a source in a social network while having no direct interaction with this source. In the present paper, we propose that

depersonalization could happen as the result of a trickle process. Specifically, if prison officers perceive that they are themselves treated in a dehumanized way by their penitentiary organization (i.e., OD), they will transfer this dehumanizing treatment on the persons they are in charge of and, thus, depersonalize them.

Furthermore, we postulate that the trickle effect from OD to depersonalization would be mediated by JS. Indeed, higher levels of JS have been associated with better relationships with individuals who are incarcerated, lower social distance from them, and higher support for a human-service orientation (Farkas, 1999; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Koracki, 1991). As a matter of fact, a recent review by Lambert et al. (2015) on the correctional staff burnout literature concludes that low JS is associated with a higher depersonalization of incarcerated persons (p. 434). At the empirical level, while some research has not found such a link (e.g., Griffin et al., 2010), others have indeed shown a significant relationship between JS and depersonalization. For instance, Roy and Avdija (2012) reported that JS had a unique effect on depersonalization when controlling for personal-level characteristics and years of service.

Showing that OD influences depersonalization of incarcerated persons via JS is important as it could help explain how organizational practices (OD) affect people in custody (depersonalized treatment) via a modification of prison officers' attitude towards their job (JS). Such a trickle effect, common in organizations, has been suggested in prison contexts at the theoretical level but never empirically tested. For instance, Kommer (1993) wrote "If it is his task to treat prisoners as autonomous human beings, it is a condition *sine qua non* that he is an autonomous human being too." (p. 144; italics in the original). In line with this proposition, we thus postulate that the OD-JS link would result in higher depersonalization. Hypothesis 2: JS mediates the positive relationship between OD and depersonalization of incarcerated persons.

Method

Study context

In order to place the current study and the results into context, it is important to provide an overview of corrections in Belgium. The Belgian correctional system is similar to that of France. Its general management is centralized at the state level while several services are assumed by regional instances. Both systems comprise two types of institutions, those for condemned individuals and those for people awaiting judgment. In addition, three types of prison regime can be identified: open (allowing important freedom to persons, based on trust and autonomy), semi-open (allowing individuals to engage work activities), and closed (strict and controlled incarceration). Incarceration rate in Belgium was 95 per 100.000 citizens at the time of the study. Importantly, overcrowding rates of prison in Belgium culminated at 121% at the time the study was conducted, implying extremely difficult detention and work conditions, for people in custody and prison officers respectively.

Participants and procedure

The data were collected by means of a paper-and-pencil survey in 15 prisons located in the French-speaking part of Belgium. The questionnaires were distributed through the union representatives of the Belgian Confederation of Christian Unions. At the end of 2017, a member of the research team attended their regional meetings to explain the purpose of the study and to ask for their help in distributing the survey. The majority of union representatives agreed to support the study and therefore distributed the questionnaires to prison officers in early 2018 (during a 3-month period). Each month, a member of the research team went to the regional meetings to collect the completed questionnaires (returned in sealed envelopes) and ask the union representatives to remind prison officers who had not yet done so to complete the survey. Of the 1500 printed questionnaires, 1270 were actually distributed and 357 prison officers from 10 different prisons completed the entire questionnaire. This resulted in a 28.11% response rate. Participants were informed their

participation was voluntary and anonymous. On average, they were 42.37 years old ($SD = 9.05$) and had been working in their current prison facility for 8.62 years ($SD = 6.09$). Overall, they had been working as prison officers for an average of 12.10 years ($SD = 7.32$). Men represented the majority of the sample (68.91%). Most sample members were graduated from college (59.72%), worked within closed institutions (29.69%), and had statutory contracts (82.63%).

Measures

All the items used in the present study, as well as their response scale, were presented in Supplemental Appendix A. Two items adapted from the three-item scale of Keena et al. (2018; $\alpha = .73$) were used to measure dangerousness. The third item, which evaluates the dangerousness of the job in comparison with other jobs, was not included in the survey as the definition of job dangerousness does not include a comparative aspect. To assess prison officers' job autonomy in the job-related decisions that they make, we relied on the three items of Fuller and colleagues' (2006) scale ($\alpha = .89$). We developed two items to capture whether prison officers perceive that they have appropriate material resources to do their job effectively ($\alpha = .92$). Although a myriad of characteristics could be investigated to measure the quality of the physical environment, we chose to focus on three features relevant to any prison: air quality, noise level, and lighting (Veitch et al., 2003; $\alpha = .75$).

As explained earlier, we relied on the concept of overall justice and thus captured a holistic justice judgment instead of measuring specific types of justice. Beyond its theoretical interest, a general measure of fairness also allows for a more parsimonious assessment of fairness by reducing the length of the survey. Specifically, we used the three items of Ambrose and Schminke's (2009) scale that are worded in the first person and thus measure how employees feel personally treated by their penitentiary institution ($\alpha = .92$). Four items from Eisenberger and colleagues' (1986) survey of perceived organization support were

adapted to assess to what extent employees perceived that their organization cares more or less about incarcerated persons than about them (i.e. POS-SC). A high score means that the balance is in favor of prison officers, while a low score indicates that welfare of individuals who are incarcerated is prioritized ($\alpha = .86$).

Prison officers' perceptions of being dehumanized by their organization (i.e., their current prison facility) were measured using the 11-item scale developed by Caesens et al. (2017; $\alpha = .93$). Their levels of JS was assessed using the four items of Eisenberger and colleagues' (1997) scale ($\alpha = .89$). Prison officers reported their extent to which they depersonalize incarcerated persons using the 5-item subscale of the burnout scale developed by Maslach and colleagues (1986; $\alpha = .69$).

Finally, demographic information (gender, age, educational level, organizational tenure, and job tenure) were collected as it has been shown that they are correlated with prison officers' work-related outcomes (Griffin et al., 2010; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2015). Gender was coded 1 for male and 2 for female. Educational level was coded 1 for primary education (elementary school), 2 for lower secondary education (middle school or junior high school), 3 for upper secondary education (high school), 4 for bachelor degree or equivalent (undergraduate/college), 5 for master degree or equivalent, and 6 for Ph.D. or equivalent.

Data analyses

SPSS 25 was first used to explore the data and compute descriptives, Cronbach's alphas and correlations. To test our hypotheses, we run path analyses using Mplus 7.4. As mediating effects were at the core of our research, we test a model where both direct and indirect paths were tested to consider potential partial mediations. The significance of the indirect effects was then tested using bootstrapping. To handle missing values (i.e., 0.5%), we relied on full-information maximum likelihood (Estabrook & Neale, 2013). To deal with control variables, we followed Becker's (2005) recommendations. We first examined the empirical

relationships between potential control variables (i.e., gender, age, educational level, organizational tenure, and job tenure) and the dependent variables (i.e., OD, JS, and depersonalization). We then controlled only for variables that show significant relationships in this first step. Proceeding this way allows us to reduce the complexity of the model tested and to maintain parsimony, in order to avoid reduced statistical power and Type II errors.

Results

Descriptives and relationships among variables

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among variables are displayed in Supplemental Appendix B. Organizational tenure was found to be negatively associated with JS, and gender was positively related to JS. We thus controlled only for these two sociodemographic variables in the subsequent analyses. Supplemental Appendix B also shows that all the work environment factors were significantly related to both JS and the presumed mediator, i.e. OD. In addition, OD was related to both JS and depersonalization, and JS was negatively related to depersonalization. Finally, at the descriptive level, Supplemental Appendix B highlights the very high level of OD that prison officers experience, with a mean of 5.26 ($SD = 1.28$) significantly differing from the mid-point of 7-point Likert-type the scale ($t(356) = 18.59, p < .001$).

Path analyses

The path model is displayed in Figure 1. First, Figure 1 shows that when the predictive effects of the different antecedents are tested together, dangerousness and job autonomy were no longer significantly related to OD. On the contrary, organizational justice, appropriateness of material resources, quality of the physical environment, and POS-SC are all significantly and negatively related to OD. In addition, our results showed that OD was negatively associated with JS. Finally, job autonomy, organizational justice, and quality of the physical environment were found to have direct effects on JS.

The results of the bootstrapping analyses are shown in Supplemental Appendix C. They indicated that the indirect effects of dangerousness and job autonomy on JS via OD were not significant (i.e., since 0 is included in the confidence interval associated with each indirect effect), while the indirect effects of organizational justice, appropriateness of material resources, quality of the physical environment, and POS-SC on JS through OD were all significant. Hypotheses 1a and 1b are therefore not supported, while Hypotheses 1c, 1d, 1e and 1f are. More precisely, OD partially mediates the relationships between organizational justice and quality of the physical environment and JS, while it fully mediates the relationships between appropriateness of material resources and POS-SC and JS.

Second, while Figure 1 shows that OD was negatively associated with JS, it also shows that JS is in turn negatively related to depersonalization of incarcerated persons. Finally, OD was found to have a direct positive effect on depersonalization. The results of the bootstrapping analysis showed that the indirect effect of OD on depersonalization via JS was significant (see Supplemental Appendix C). Overall, these findings indicated that JS partially mediates the OD-depersonalization relationship, hence supporting Hypothesis 2.¹

Discussion

JS is of paramount importance in all kinds of jobs, but perhaps even more so for prison officers who face a particularly stressful and demanding work environment. Research on prison officers' JS indeed showed that this job attitude plays a pivotal role between work environment factors on one hand and important outcomes on the other. In an effort to contribute to this literature on the antecedents and consequences of prison officers' JS, our goal here was to examine the role that OD might play in these relationships. Beyond identifying what triggers JS, the current study examined why antecedents of prison officers' JS lead to this general positive feeling towards work and how this determines the treatment prison officers provide to people in custody.

Our results show that, as hypothesized, OD is a relevant cognitive mechanism that fully or partially explains the relationships between JS and four of the six antecedents included in the present study, namely, organizational justice (partial mediation), appropriateness of material resources (full mediation), quality of the physical environment (partial mediation), and POS-SC (full mediation). The fact that mediations are only partial for both organizational justice and quality of the physical environment suggests that other mechanisms than OD are at stake. In line with studies by Lambert and colleagues (Lambert, 2003; Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2006), one could argue, for instance, that stress reduction can also play a crucial role in the penitentiary context.

Aside from the results that are in line with our assumptions, other findings indicate a lack of support for two other mediations that were hypothesized. First, although job autonomy is significantly correlated with OD, it no longer relates to it when other antecedents are considered. On the contrary, far from passing through OD, job autonomy instead exerts a direct influence on JS. Although in contradiction with previous research findings on OD (Caesens et al., 2019), these results can perhaps be explained by the particular organizational setting studied here. Job autonomy may be viewed by prison officers as a job characteristic over which the organization has little discretionary control, which may explain why it does not impact their JS through their perception of OD.

Second, our findings do not support the mediating role of OD in the relationship between dangerousness and JS. Although dangerousness is significantly correlated with both OD and JS, it does not show any significant link with these two variables once considered in conjunction with the other antecedents of JS included in the present study. Other findings in the literature point to the inconsistent relationship between dangerousness and JS (Lambert et al., 2002). Although more research would be needed to further explore the conditions under which a relationship exists, one could argue that, because dangerousness is an integral part of

prison officers' job, it may be less considered by prison officers as an indicator of the employee-employer relationship and, consequently, may be less likely to affect their OD when considered in presence of other, more influential, antecedents.

Having examined the mediational role of OD between JS and its antecedents, the present study also investigated the potential trickle effect of OD on depersonalization of incarcerated persons (see also Weill & Haney, 2017) via a reduction of prison officers' JS. In line with our hypothesis, our results show that the higher the OD, the less prison officers feel satisfied with their job, and the more they finally tend to treat incarcerated individuals impersonally, that is as objects rather than as persons. The latter finding was previously theorized (Kommer, 1993) but never empirically tested. The present study thus underlines the importance of adequate organizational and work practices at the destination of prison officers, as these indirectly influence people in custody via a modification of prison officers' attitude towards their job.

Although the depersonalization of incarcerated persons in this study is the result of a negative process and represents, in itself, a negative response by prison officers to their decreased JS, the possibility that dehumanization of people may also occur as a self-protective mechanism should not be overlooked. Indeed, parts of the duties of prison officers include punishment and control, which can be extremely stressful. As a result, prison officers may distance themselves from individuals who are incarcerated, and hence dehumanize them, in order to reduce the stress they experience in carrying out their duties. Similar processes of dehumanization have indeed been evidenced in stressful medical contexts (e.g., Triffaux et al., 2019; Trifiletti et al., 2014). In line with this argument, Griffith (2014) has recently discussed the necessary dehumanization of people in custody to enable prison staff carrying out the death penalty. Examining the other determinants of depersonalization of incarcerated persons, beyond the trickle effect highlighted here, would therefore be an interesting line of

research for the future. In any case, on top of being morally and ethically problematic, this depersonalizing treatment could have important social consequences. For instance, recidivism is not solely determined by individual characteristics of criminals, it is even more the product of incarceration itself (Cullen et al., 2011) and of the various experiences that people have faced while in prison, among which depersonalizing treatments could be central (see also, Weill & Haney, 2017).

As a whole, results of the present study stress the crucial role OD plays in prison contexts. In addition to showing that OD is an important mechanism in the work environment factors-JS relationships and in the rise of depersonalization of incarcerated persons, our research further indicates that OD is a relevant topic in itself in the correctional context. Indeed, our findings highlight that prison officers feel highly dehumanized by their institutions. This average level of OD ($M = 5.26$) is much higher than what was usually found in studies that have looked at the dehumanization experienced by other types of workers (M s ranging from 3.07 to 4.14 on a 7-point Likert-type scale with employees originating from a variety of jobs and organizations; Caesens et al., 2019; Caesens et al., 2017; Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2019; Demoulin et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021; Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2020, 2021; Stinglhamber et al., 2021; Taskin et al., 2019; Tseng, 2020; and M s of 3.10 and 3.72 on a 5-point Likert-type scale with employees working in hotels and with nurses, respectively; Sarwar et al., 2021; Sarwar & Muhammad, 2020). Although this result is extremely worrying, it is unfortunately in line with the extremely difficult conditions that prison officers encounter in carrying out their work in Belgium. The regular strike movements that they engage in to underline their unfavorable working status and to demand better conditions are evidence of these difficulties encountered in the profession.

Limitations and perspectives for future research

Although this study has many strengths and adds undeniable value to the literature on attitudes and behaviors of prison officers, it also has some weaknesses that need to be acknowledged. The first limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the methodological design that has been adopted. This does not allow cause-and-effect relationships to be established. Of course, we relied on theory to develop our hypotheses. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude that some relationships go in the opposite direction to the ones that were hypothesized. For example, one may reasonably assume that prison officers' OD is also a precursor of their perception of the work environment factors. Conducting longitudinal studies with repeated measures would undoubtedly be the best way to address this limitation.

The second limitation of this study is that we only used self-reported measures to capture the different constructs included in our model. While it is not relevant to use hetero-reported measures for most of the concepts used in our study because of their personal and introspective nature (such as OD or JS), it may be relevant to measure depersonalization of incarcerated persons by surveying them directly. Replicating the study using such a measure to test the trickle effect would therefore be very relevant and interesting. This is all the more true since Wo et al. (2019) suggested that, although studies relying on a single individual to assess all steps involved in trickle effects embrace the notion of indirect influence as expected, they are nonetheless problematic. When all responses come out of the mind of a single respondent, the data "cannot provide strong evidence of the actual indirect transmission of an effect" (p. 2267).

The third limitation is related to our response rate which, although not anomalous (e.g., Baruch & Holtom, 2008), is quite low. We cannot rule out that this may have introduced some bias in our results. It is indeed possible that there is a difference between respondents and non-respondents either through a self-selection effect or through a selection effect due to

the survey distribution procedure. Unfortunately, we have no way of verifying this as we have no information on non-respondents.

The fourth limitation is that this study relies on a unique Belgian dataset, so that the generalizability of our findings may be questionable. As previously explained, some of the independent variables were indeed chosen on the basis of the characteristics of the Belgian prison context. Our findings may not be equally relevant in all national contexts. While POS-SC is the most predictive determinant of JS via OD in our study, the results may indeed highlight the predictive power of another antecedent variable in another country depending on its public policies. It would therefore be interesting to assess whether the theoretical model tested in this study is also relevant in other prison contexts and, more generally, in other organizational contexts where service to third parties is at the center of the activity.

The fifth limitation is related to the nested nature of the data. Our data are indeed not independent since prison officers working in the same prison share background characteristics and are exposed to the same management practices/policies and prison environment. Because of the small number of prisons (i.e. 10 prisons located in the French-speaking part of Belgium), we did not take into consideration this group structure in the main analyses we performed and are limited in the tests we can use to assess the impact of this structure on our findings (see our attempt in Endnote 1). Collecting data from other prisons and then being able to perform a more refined analysis, based on the changing characteristics from one prison to another, would be something valuable to do in the future.

Sixth, we made choices in the selection of the variables included in the model in order to keep the model manageable in terms of questionnaire length and statistical analyses. In doing so, we automatically excluded other relevant variables. In order to have a more complete picture of the studied phenomena, it would be particularly interesting to include other antecedents also known to affect prison officers' JS, such as participation in decision

making and quality of supervision (Lambert et al., 2002). Similarly, it may be relevant to examine the impact of OD on other outcomes (e.g., subjective well-being indicators: psychosomatic strains or depression of prison officers) and to take interest in the moderators that could buffer or strengthen some of the relationships tested in this research. In particular, social support from colleagues could be an interesting moderator to consider, as has been done in prior studies on OD (Caesens et al., 2019).

Finally, we have shown that treatment of people in custody by prison officers consisted in treating them impersonally, as if they were objects. According to Haslam's bidimensional model (2006), dehumanization occurs when a given target (i.e., an individual or a group) is perceived or treated as lacking one of the two facets of humanness. First, mechanistic dehumanization refers to the denial of human nature characteristics and assimilates individuals to robots or objects. Second, animalistic dehumanization emerges when targets are deprived from those uniquely human features that distinguish human beings from animals, thereby assimilating individuals to unevolved non-human, animal species (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). According to this model, depersonalization of incarcerated persons is close to mechanistic dehumanization. Yet, research has shown that those people, and more broadly criminals, are considered by lay people and prison workers alike as subhuman savages and stereotyped with animal- or demon-like characteristics (Vasiljevic & Viki, 2013). Dehumanizing treatments of individuals who are incarcerated could therefore also come close to the other form of dehumanization envisaged by the Haslam model, i.e. animalistic dehumanization. Future research should thus consider these two types of depersonalization. In the same vein, while we focused in the present research on the mechanistic form of OD because of its prevalence in organizational settings (Bell & Khoury, 2011), several scholars have suggested that the animalistic form might also arise in organizations (Bell & Khoury, 2016; Caesens et al., 2017). Assessing whether prison officers

feel that they are infantilized or treated as immature or under-evolved beings by their institution and whether this form of dehumanization explains the antecedents-JS relationships differently would definitely be a plus in future studies in correctional contexts.

Practical implications

The results of this study allow us to draw useful lessons for the prison environment. The results highlight four levers on which one can act to reduce OD and ultimately increase JS and decrease depersonalization of incarcerated persons. Among these four levers, two seem to have a particularly important influence and should therefore be the priority of any prison, namely organizational justice and POS-SC. First, there are many benefits to being diligent about justice, so we can only advise managers of penitentiary institutions to pay particular attention to their justice strategies. Treating staff fairly in the procedures, policies, and outcomes that are distributed, but also in the interactions that are established with them, is undeniably a priority. For example, giving prison officers the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes or acting with transparency and consistency during such processes are ways to treat staff fairly.

Second, despite the frequent spotlight on the detention conditions, it is important that prison officers do not feel that their employer is more concerned with the well-being of the recipients of their services than with their own. Taking care of its personnel at least as much as its incarcerated persons is thus another way for penitentiary institutions to prevent prison officers from feeling mistreated, with the expected detrimental effects on JS and prison officers-people in custody relationships. For example, offering personalized developmental opportunities and providing favorable job conditions on a voluntary and discretionary basis are key general ways to foster this feeling of being supported by the prison. More specifically, as this study also indicates, fighting to provide them with the basic and sufficient equipment to perform their job in the expected conditions of execution and ensuring that the

physical environment is more pleasant are undoubtedly two good avenues that any manager of penitentiary institution can follow. Our results suggest that such an organizational culture of justice and care for prison officers will not only benefit prison officers, but will ultimately benefit the recipients of their services, who will be less depersonalized as a result. In other words, good treatments of prison officers should be considered as a win-win solution that not only improves the well-being of the staff, but also contributes to the well-being of the individuals who are incarcerated.

Conclusion

Overall, our findings indicate that OD acts as an important explanatory mechanism between JS and its antecedents and as the starting point of a trickle effect to depersonalization of incarcerated persons through a decreased JS. The important role of OD in the development and consequences of JS is accompanied by a significant concern related to the particularly high level of felt dehumanization among prison officers. Future studies should focus on identifying levers that specifically contribute to OD in correctional contexts. This is all the more important as research indicates that the implications of OD may be broad, going beyond the well-being of the focal employees who feel dehumanized to also affect the well-being of those around them (beneficiaries/service users but also family/friends, colleagues, etc.) and the effectiveness of their institution or organization (for a review on OD, see Brison et al., 2022).

References

- Abbasi, M., Yazdanirad, S., Habibi, P., Arabi, S., Fallah Madvari, R., Mehri, A., Poursadeghiyan, M., Ebrahimi, M. H., & Ghaljahi, M. (2019). Relationship among noise exposure, sensitivity, and noise annoyance with job satisfaction and job stress in a textile industry. *Noise and Vibration Worldwide*, 50, 195–201.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0957456519853812>
- Ambrose, M. L., & Arnaud, A. (2005). Distributive and procedural justice: Construct distinctiveness, construct interdependence, and overall justice. In J. Greenberg & J. Colquitt (Eds.), *The handbook of organizational justice* (pp. 59–84). Erlbaum.
- Ambrose, M. L., & Schminke, M. (2009). The role of overall justice judgments in organizational justice research: A test of mediation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94, 491–500. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013203>
- Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. S. (2008). *Mostly harmless econometrics*. Princeton University Press.
- Ayim Gyekye, S. (2005). Workers' perceptions of workplace safety and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*, 11, 291–302.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10803548.2005.11076650>
- Baruch, Y., & Holtom, B. C. (2008). Survey response rate levels and trends in organizational research. *Human Relations*, 61, 1139–1160.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708094863>
- Becker, T. E. (2005). Potential problems in the statistical control of variables in organizational research: A qualitative analysis with recommendations. *Organizational Research Methods*, 8, 274–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428105278021>
- Bell, C. M., & Khoury, C. (2011). Organizational de/humanization, deindividuation, anomie, and in / justice. In S. W. Gilliland, D. Steiner, & D. P. Skarlicki (Eds.), *Research in*

social issues in management: Emerging perspectives on organizational justice and ethics (pp. 167–197). Information Age Publishing.

Bell, C. M., & Khoury, C. (2016). Organizational powerlessness, dehumanization, and gendered effects of procedural justice. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 31, 570–585. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-09-2014-0267>

Bocquet, V. (2019, December 12). Grève des prisons : A Jamioulx, trop de détenus et pas assez de gardiens, de matériel et de budget [Prison strike: In Jamioulx, too many inmates and not enough guards, equipment and budget]. *Telesambre*.
<https://www.telesambre.be/greve-des-prisons-jamioulx-trop-de-detenus-et-pas-assez-de-gardiens-de-materiel-et-de-budget>

Bravo-Yáñez, C., & Jiménez-Figueroa, A. (2011). Psychological well-being, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction amongst Chilean prison employees. *Revista Española de Sanidad Penitenciaria*, 13, 91–99. <https://doi.org/10.4321/s1575-06202011000300004>

Brison, N., Stinglhamber, F., & Caesens, G. (2022). Organizational dehumanization. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of I/O Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.902>

Caesens, G., Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2019). Abusive supervision and organizational dehumanization. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 34, 709–728.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-018-9592-3>

Caesens, G., & Stinglhamber, F. (2019). The relationship between organizational dehumanization and outcomes: The mediating role of emotional exhaustion. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 61, 699–703.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000001638>

Caesens, G., Stinglhamber, F., Demoulin, S., & De Wilde, M. (2017). Perceived

- organizational support and employees' well-being: The mediating role of organizational dehumanization. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 26, 527–540. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2017.1319817>
- Cullen, F. T., Jonson, C. L., & Nagin, D. S. (2011). Prisons do not reduce recidivism: The high cost of ignoring science. *Prison Journal*, 91, 48S–65S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885511415224>
- Cullen, F. T., Latessa, E. J., Kopache, R., Lombardo, L. X., & Burton, V. S. (1993). Prison warden's job satisfaction. *The Prison Journal*, 73, 141–161.
- Cullen, F. T., Link, B. G., Wolfe, N. T., & Frank, J. (1985). The social dimensions of correctional officer stress. *Justice Quarterly*, 2, 505–533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418828500088711>
- Demoulin, S., Nguyen, N., Chevallereau, T., Fontesse, S., Bastart, J., Stinglhamber, F., & Maurage, P. (2021). Examining the role of fundamental psychological needs in the development of metadehumanization: A multi-population approach. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60, 196–221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12380>
- Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J., Armeli, S., & Lynch, P. (1997). Perceived organizational support, discretionary treatment, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 812–820. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.5.812>
- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchinson, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 500–507. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781784711740.00037>
- Eisenberger, R., & Stinglhamber, F. (2011). *Perceived organizational support: Fostering enthusiastic and productive employees*. American Psychological Association.
- Elechi, O. O., Lambert, E. G., & Otu, S. (2018). Exploring the effects of work environment variables on the job satisfaction of Nigerian correctional staff. *Criminal Justice*

- Studies*, 31, 160–177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2018.1437035>
- Estabrook, R., & Neale, M. (2013). A comparison of factor score estimation methods in the presence of missing data: Reliability and an application to nicotine dependence. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 48, 1–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00273171.2012.730072>
- Farkas, M. A. (1999). Correctional officer attitudes toward inmates and working with inmates in a “get tough” era. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27, 495–506.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352\(99\)00020-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352(99)00020-3)
- Frontczak, M., Schiavon, S., Goins, J., Arens, E., Zhang, H., & Wargocki, P. (2012). Quantitative relationships between occupant satisfaction and satisfaction aspects of indoor environmental quality and building design. *Indoor Air*, 22, 119–131.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0668.2011.00745.x>
- Fuller, J. B., Marler, L. E., & Hester, K. (2006). Promoting felt responsibility for constructive change and proactive behavior: exploring aspects of an elaborated model of work design. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27, 1089–1120.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.408>
- Gelsema, T. I., Van Der Doef, M., Maes, S., Janssen, M., Akerboom, S., & Verhoeven, C. (2006). A longitudinal study of job stress in the nursing profession: Causes and consequences. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 14, 289–299.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2934.2006.00635.x>
- Griffin, M. L., Hogan, N. L., Lambert, E. G., Tucker-Gail, K. A., & Baker, D. N. (2010). Job involvement, job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and the burnout of correctional staff. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 37, 239–255.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854809351682>
- Griffith, A. R. (2014). *A closer evaluation of capital punishment: Viewing executions through*

the lens of former prison employees [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Texas A&M University.

<https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/153803/GRIFFITH-DISSERTATION-2014.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1>

Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10, 252–264. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1003_4

Haslam, N., & Loughnan, S. (2014). Dehumanization and inhumanization. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 399–423. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115045>

Hepburn, J. R., & Knepper, P. E. (1993). Correctional officers as human services workers: The effect on job satisfaction. *Justice Quarterly*, 10, 315–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829300091841>

Jiang, S., Lambert, E. G., Liu, J., & Zhang, J. (2018). An exploratory study of the effects of work environment variables on job satisfaction among Chinese prison staff. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62, 1694–1719. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17691533>

Keena, L. D., Lambert, E. G., Haynes, S. H., May, D., & Buckner, Z. (2018). Examining the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction among Southern prison staff. *Corrections*, 5, 109–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23774657.2017.1421053>

Kommer, M. M. (1993). A Dutch prison officer 's work : Balancing between prison policy , organisational structure and professional autonomy. *Netherlands Journal of Social Science*, 29, 130–146.

Koracki, L. (1991). An era of change: Evolving strategies of control in the bureau of prisons. *Federal Prisons Journal*, Summer, 2, 24–31.

Lai, Y.-L., Wang, H.-M., & Kellar, M. (2012). Workplace violence in correctional institutions in Taiwan: A study of correctional officers' perceptions. *International*

Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 36, 1–23.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2011.644083>

Lambert, E. G. (2003). The impact of organizational justice on correctional staff. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 31, 155–168. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352\(02\)00222-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352(02)00222-2)

Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., & Allen, R. I. (2006). Correlates of correctional officer job stress: The impact of organizational structure. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30, 227–246. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02885893>

Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., & Barton, S. M. (2002). Satisfied correctional staff: A review of the literature on the correlates of correctional staff job satisfaction. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 29, 115–143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854802029002001>

Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., & Griffin, M. L. (2007). The impact of distributive and procedural justice on correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 35, 644–656.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2007.09.001>

Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., Griffin, M. L., & Kelley, T. (2015). The correctional staff burnout literature. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 28, 397–443.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2015.1065830>

Lambert, E. G., & Paoline, E. A. (2008). The influence of individual, job, and organizational characteristics on correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. *Criminal Justice Review*, 33, 541–564.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016808320694>

Lambert, E. G., Paoline, E. A., & Hogan, N. L. (2006). The impact of centralization and formalization on correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment: An exploratory study. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 19, 23–44.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14786010600615967>

Les prisons belges parmi les plus surpeuplées d'Europe [Belgian prisons among the most overcrowded in Europe]. (2021, April 8). *Le Vif*.

<https://www.levif.be/actualite/belgique/les-prisons-belges-parmi-les-plus-surpeuplees-d-europe/article-news-1412661.html>

Les règles du service minimum sont désormais de mise dans les prisons [Minimum service rules now in place in prisons]. (2020, February 24). *RTBF*.

https://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail_les-regles-du-service-minimum-sont-desormais-de-mise-dans-les-prisons?id=10440358

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., Leiter, M. P., & Schwab, R. L. (1986). *Maslach burnout inventory*. Consulting Psychology Press.

Mayer, D. M., Kuenzi, M., Greenbaum, R., Bardes, M., & Salvador, R. (Bombie). (2009).

How low does ethical leadership flow? Test of a trickle-down model. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 108, 1–13.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.04.002>

Nguyen, N., Dao, Q. A., Nhan, T. L. A., & Stinglhamber, F. (2021). Organizational dehumanization and emotional labor: A cross-cultural comparison between Vietnam and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 52, 43–60.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022120972183>

Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2020). Workplace mistreatment and emotional labor: A latent profile analysis. *Motivation and Emotion*, 44, 474–490.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-019-09803-8>

Nguyen, N., & Stinglhamber, F. (2021). Emotional labor and core self-evaluations as mediators between organizational dehumanization and job satisfaction. *Current Psychology*, 40, 831–839. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9988-2>

Observatoire International des Prisons - section belge (2016). *Notice 2016*.

<https://www.oipbelgique.be/files/uploads/2020/02/Notice-2016.pdf>

- Raffaello, M., & Maass, A. (2002). Chronic exposure to noise in industry: The effects on satisfaction, stress symptoms, and company attachment. *Environment and Behavior*, 34, 651–671. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916502034005005>
- Roy, S., & Avdija, A. (2012). The effect of prison security level on job satisfaction and job burnout among prison staff in the USA: An assessment. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 7, 524–538.
- Sarwar, A., Khan, J., Muhammad, L., Mubarak, N., & Jaafar, M. (2021). Relationship between organizational dehumanization and nurses' deviant behaviors: A moderated mediation model. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 29, 1036–1045. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.13241>
- Sarwar, A., & Muhammad, L. (2020). Impact of organizational mistreatment on employee performance in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33, 513–533. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-01-2020-0051>
- Schminke, M., Cropanzano, R. S., & Ambrose, M. L. (2000). The effect of organizational structure on perceptions of procedural fairness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 294–304. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.85.2.294>
- Steiner, B., & Wooldredge, J. (2015). Individual and environmental sources of work stress among prison officers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 42, 800–818. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854814564463>
- Stinglhamber, F., Caesens, G., Chalmagne, B., Demoulin, S., & Maurage, P. (2021). Leader–member exchange and organizational dehumanization: The role of supervisor's organizational embodiment. *European Management Journal*, 39, 745–754. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2021.01.006>
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cup

Archive.

- Taskin, L., Parmentier, M., & Stinglhamber, F. (2019). The dark side of office designs: towards de-humanization. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 34, 262–284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12150>
- Tileagă, C. (2007). Ideologies of moral exclusion: A critical discursive reframing of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanization. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 46, 717-737. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466607X186894>
- Triffaux, J. M., Tisseron, S., & Nasello, J. A. (2019). Decline of empathy among medical students: Dehumanization or useful coping process? *Encephale*, 45, 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.encep.2018.05.003>
- Trifiletti, E., Di Bernardo, G. A., Falvo, R., & Capozza, D. (2014). Patients are not fully human: A nurse's coping response to stress. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 44, 768–777. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12267>
- Tsachouridi, I., & Nikandrou, I. (2019). Integrating social comparisons into perceived organisational support (POS): The construct of relative perceived organisational support (RPOS) and its relationship with POS, identification and employee outcomes. *Applied Psychology*, 68, 276–310. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12161>
- Tseng, S. T. (2020). *When resource precedes human in human resource management: Organizational dehumanization and the roles of HR attributions and supervisor bottom-line mentality* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Akron.
- Vardaman, J. M., Allen, D. G., Otondo, R. F., Hancock, J. I., Shore, L. M., & Rogers, B. L. (2016). Social comparisons and organizational support: Implications for commitment and retention. *Human Relations*, 69, 1483–1505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715619687>
- Vasiljevic, M., & Viki, G. T. (2013). Dehumanization, moral disengagement and public

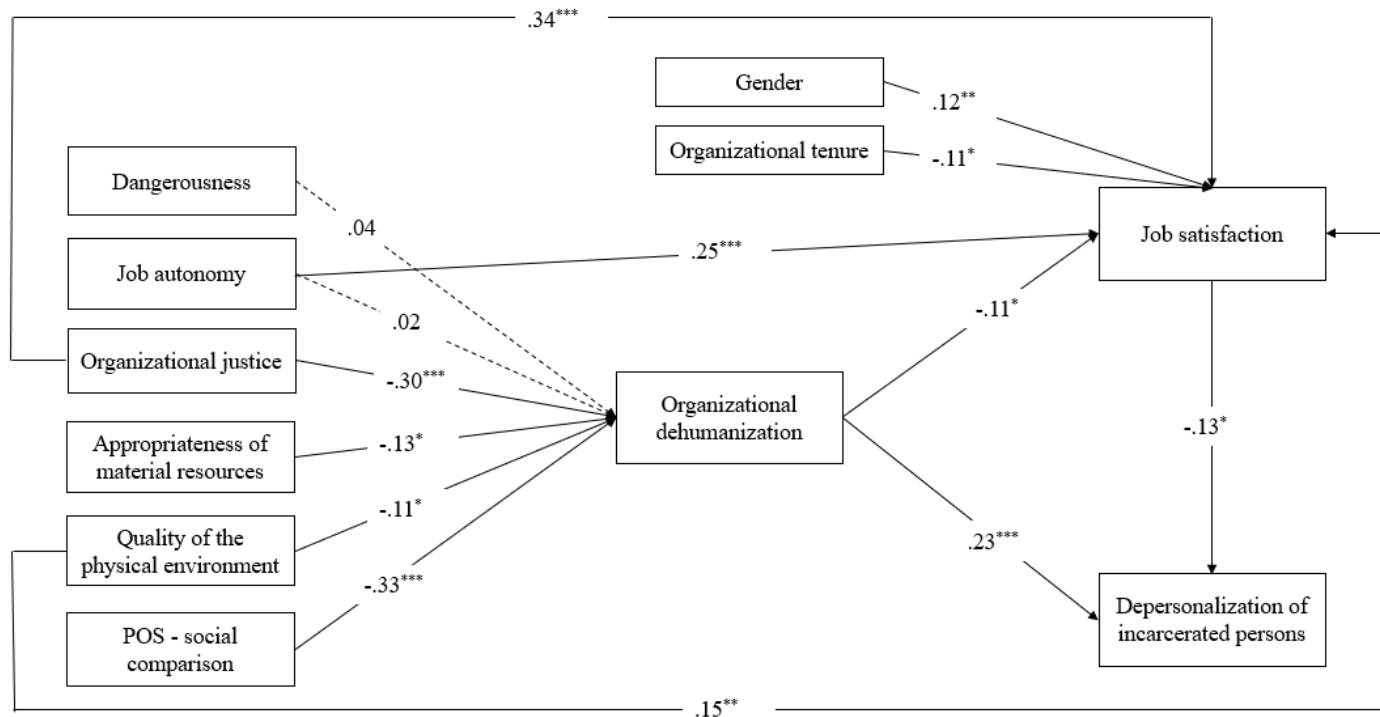
- attitudes to crime and punishment. In P. G. Bain, J. Vaes, & J.-P. Leyens (Eds.), *Humanness and dehumanization* (pp. 129–146). Taylor & Francis.
- Veitch, J. A., Charles, K. E., Newsham, G. R., Marquardt, C. J. ., & Geerts, J. (2003). Environmental satisfaction in open-plan environments : 5. Workstation and Physical Condition Effects. *NCR Institute for Research in Construction*.
<https://doi.org/10.4224/20378817>
- Weill, J., & Haney, C. (2017). Mechanisms of moral disengagement and prisoner abuse. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 17, 286–318.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12142>
- Whitehead, J. T., & Lindquist, C. A. (1986). Correctional officer job burnout: A path model. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 23, 23–42.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427886023001003>
- Wo, D. X. H., Schminke, M., & Ambrose, M. L. (2019). Trickle-down, trickle-out, trickle-up, trickle-in, and trickle-around effects: An integrative perspective on indirect social influence phenomena. *Journal of Management*, 45, 2263–2292.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318812951>
- Wright, K. N., Saylor, W. G., Gilman, E., & Camp, S. (1997). Job control and occupational outcomes among prison workers. *Justice Quarterly*, 14, 525–546.
- Xiaofu, P., & Qiwen, Q. (2007). An analysis of the relation between secondary school organizational climate and teacher job satisfaction. *Chinese Education and Society*, 40, 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932400507>

Endnote

¹ Note that our data are unlikely to be independent across observations. The responses of prison officers in the same prison can indeed be correlated because prison officers working in the same prison share background characteristics and are exposed to the same management practices/policies and prison environment. This clustering of our data by prison may have an impact on standard errors. Therefore, clustered standard errors were computed using the “complex samples” menu in SPSS 27 Premium. The results of these additional analyses showed that all effects of the path analysis are confirmed after correction of the standard errors, with the exception of the association between job satisfaction and depersonalization of incarcerated persons which became non-significant. These results should, however, be interpreted with caution because the asymptotic approximation relevant for clustered data usually relies on a large number of clusters. Thus, clustered standard errors are unlikely to be reliable with few clusters, as it is the case in this research (e.g., Angrist & Pischke, 2008).

Figure 1

Standardized coefficients for the path model



Note. The paths involved in the full mediation effects that were hypothesized are shown, whether they are significant (solid lines) or not (dashed lines). For clarity purposes, the other paths, which thus involve partial mediation effects, are shown only when they are significant. POS = perceived organizational support.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Supplemental Material

Appendix A – List of the used items

Unless otherwise specified, participants rated the following items on a 7-point scale ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “7” (strongly agree).

Dangerousness

1. *I run the risk of being assaulted or exposed to traumatic events*
2. *I run the risk of being injured, becoming sick or putting my health at risk while doing my job*

Job autonomy

1. *I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job*
2. *I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work*
3. *I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job*

Organizational justice

1. *Overall, I'm treated fairly by my prison*
2. *In general, I can count on this prison to be fair*
3. *In general, the treatment I receive around here is fair*

Appropriateness of material resources

1. *I have the right materials (equipment, tools, etc.) to do my job effectively*
2. *I have enough materials (equipment, tools, etc.) to do my job effectively*

Quality of the physical environment

1. *I am incommoded by bad air quality (bad smell, dust, humidity, etc.) (R)*
2. *My workplace is too noisy (R)*
3. *I am annoyed by bad lighting (too much, not enough, reflects, etc.) (R)*

Perceived organizational support-social comparison

1. *My prison cares about my well-being*

2. *My prison shows concern for me*
3. *My prison tends to take my complaints into account*
4. *Help is available from my prison when I have a problem*

Participants rated these items on a 5-point scale ranging from “1” (Comparatively to incarcerated persons, my organization cares much less) to “5” (Comparatively to incarcerated persons, my organization cares much more).

Organizational dehumanization

1. *My prison makes me feel that one worker is easily as good as any other*
2. *My prison would not hesitate to replace me if it enables the company to make more profit*
3. *If my job could be done by a machine or a robot, my prison would not hesitate to replace me by this new technology*
4. *My prison considers me as a tool to use for its own ends*
5. *My prison considers me as a tool devoted to its own success*
6. *My prison makes me feel that my only importance is my performance at work*
7. *My prison is only interested in me when it needs me*
8. *The only thing that counts for my prison is what I can contribute to it*
9. *My prison treats me as if I were a robot*
10. *My prison considers me as a number*
11. *My prison treats me as if I were an object*

Job satisfaction

1. *All in all, I'm very satisfied with my current job*
2. *In general, my job measures up to the sort of job I wanted when I took it*
3. *If a good friend of mine told me that he/she was interested working in a job like mine I would strongly recommend it*

4. *Knowing what I know now, if I had to decide all over again whether to take my job, I would*

Depersonalization of incarcerated persons

1. *I feel I treat some incarcerated persons as if they were impersonal objects*
2. *I have become more callous toward people since I took this job*
3. *I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally*
4. *I don't really care what happens to some incarcerated persons*
5. *I feel incarcerated persons blame me for some of their problems*

Note. (R) = reverse-coded items.

Appendix B – Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations among variables

	Median	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Dangerousness	6.50	6.25	1.07	(.73)													
2. Job autonomy	4.00	3.87	1.59	-.22**	(.89)												
3. Organizational justice	3.33	3.45	1.48	-.15**	.44**	(.92)											
4. Appropriateness of material resources	2.00	2.61	1.64	-.24**	.28**	.44**	(.92)										
5. Quality of the physical environment	2.67	3.00	1.50	-.35**	.26**	.20**	.37**	(.75)									
6. POS – social comparison	1.75	1.81	0.71	-.18**	.32**	.61**	.36**	.23**	(.86)								
7. Organizational dehumanization	5.55	5.26	1.28	.20**	-.29**	-.58**	-.42**	-.30**	-.58**	(.93)							
8. Job satisfaction	3.75	3.83	1.64	-.20**	.45**	.44**	.41**	.36**	.54**	-.44**	(.89)						
9. Depersonalization	4.40	4.34	1.28	.13*	-.09	-.20**	-.18**	-.22**	-.14**	.24**	-.22**	(.69)					
10. Gender	-	-	-	.01	.00	.03	.05	.01	.00	-.09	.15**	-.02	-				
11. Age	42.00	42.37	9.05	-.06	.04	-.05	.06	.06	.06	.02	-.03	-.11	-.17**	-			
12. Educational level	3.00	2.92	1.00	.04	-.12*	-.10	-.10	-.06	-.03	.03	-.09	.09	.10	-.21**	-		
13. Organizational tenure	7.50	8.62	6.09	-.14*	.03	-.04	-.08	-.07	-.02	.04	-.13*	-.02	-.16**	.45**	-.01	-	
14. Job tenure	11.00	12.10	7.32	-.11*	.03	-.03	.05	.02	.04	-.00	-.09	-.06	-.26*	.60**	-.09	.64*	-

Note. $N = 357$ (excepted for autonomy, organizational justice, and POS – social comparison, $n = 356$; appropriateness of material resources, gender, and educational level, $n = 355$; job satisfaction, and depersonalization of incarcerated persons, $n = 354$; job tenure, $n = 340$; age, $n = 339$; organizational tenure, $n = 316$). Cronbach's alphas are indicated on the diagonal. Gender was coded 1 for male and 2 for female. Educational level was coded 1 for primary education (elementary school), 2 for lower secondary education (middle school or junior high school), 3 for upper secondary education (high school), 4 for bachelor degree or equivalent (undergraduate/college), 5 for master degree or equivalent, and 6 for Ph.D. or equivalent. POS = perceived organizational support. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Appendix C - Bootstrapping direct and indirect effects and 95% confidence intervals for mediating effects

Model pathways	Direct	Standard	95% CI		Indirect	Standard	95% CI	
	effect	error	Lower	Upper	effect	error	Lower	Upper
1. Dangerousness → OD → JS	-.02	.07	-.12	.16	-.01	.03	-.08	.05
2. Job autonomy → OD → JS	.26	.05	.16	.35	.01	.02	-.04	.02
3. Organizational justice → OD → JS	.29	.06	.19	.44	.07	.02	.03	.12
4. Appopr. material resources → OD → JS	.10	.05	-.01	.20	.04	.02	.01	.09
5. Quality physical environment → OD → JS	.13	.05	.04	.26	.05	.02	.01	.10
6. POS-SC → OD → JS	.17	.13	-.08	.44	.21	.05	.12	.33
7. OD → JS → DP	.22	.06	.09	.31	.06	.03	.01	.12
7. Dangerousness → OD → DP	.05	.07	-.08	.19	.01	.01	-.04	.02
8. Job autonomy → OD → DP	.00	.06	-.09	.10	-.00	.01	-.01	.03
9. Organizational justice → OD → DP	-.06	.07	-.07	.19	-.07	.02	-.12	-.03
10. Appopr. material resources → OD → DP	-.04	.05	-.13	.06	-.02	.01	-.05	-.00
11. Quality physical environment → OD → DP	-.10	.05	-.20	.01	-.02	.01	-.05	-.01
12. POS-SC → OD → DP	-.18	.13	-.43	.06	-.11	.05	-.23	-.03

Note. $N = 326$. Each effect is performed while controlling for other predictors. OD = organizational dehumanization; JS = job satisfaction; POS-

SC = perceived organizational support - social comparison; DP = depersonalization of incarcerated persons.