

Determinants of how managers cope with organizational downsizing

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Abstract

Managers ($N = 201$) in two federal government departments undergoing downsizing participated in a longitudinal panel study examining the relationship among pre-downsizing (T1) coping resources and coping constraints and coping strategies assessed during the downsizing period (T2, T3). T2 coping constraints (work alienation, perceived lack of future career success, and perceived negative downsizing effect) mediated the relationship between T1 coping resources and T2 coping strategies. Individual-related (optimism and perceived job security) coping resources and organisation-related (perceived organisational and supervisor support and organisational affective commitment) coping resources were associated with a more favourable evaluation of the coping constraints which, in turn, influenced the use of T2 control-oriented and escape coping strategies. T2 control-oriented coping was significantly negatively related to T3 coping constraints whereas T2 escape coping was significantly positively related to T3 coping constraints. Future research should not only examine the role of coping resources in how survivors cope with organisational downsizing but also identify and examine coping constraints that may restrict or inhibit the use of certain coping strategies.