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Managing rule perceptions through leadership behaviours: An analysis on the extent to which leadership behaviours can mitigate the negative relationship between red tape and job satisfaction

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Citation

Dijk, L. van. (2022). *Managing rule perceptions through leadership behaviours: An analysis on the extent to which leadership behaviours can mitigate the negative relationship between red tape and job satisfaction.*

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Managing rule perceptions through leadership behaviours

*An analysis on the extent to which leadership
behaviours can mitigate the negative relationship
between red tape and job satisfaction*

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MPA: Public Management & Leadership

7 June 2022

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Word Count (including references and appendix): 16656

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Topic Introduction

Rules and procedures are needed in governmental organisations to implement political decisions in a neutral way (De Koster, 2016). Civil servants have to abide by a certain amount of rules, which makes the functioning of the government more structured and less arbitrary. Given that civil servants work in this structured executive apparatus, citizens' uncertainty regarding the functioning of their public institutions is reduced (Groeneveld, 2016). It is the rules that civil servants have to work with that, amongst others, increase citizens' trust in their government (Groeneveld, 2016). Likewise, rules have been put into place in order to guide public employees in their daily activities which reduces their respective uncertainty in decision-making (Bernards et al., 2021). Sometimes, employees indeed perceive rules as useful for their daily activities and for the effective implementation of ideas that will help society. Such effective rules are so-called 'green tape' (DeHart-Davies, 2009) or 'white tape' (Bozeman, 1993). However, sometimes rules remain in place whereas they do not help employees to achieve their goals (Van Loon et al., 2016; Bozeman, 1993). This is when rules start to become "a compliance burden" without any legitimate reason and turn into 'red tape' (Bozeman, 1993, p.283). Red tape is an issue that especially civil servants often struggle with and that has detrimental consequences for their well-being. Amongst other factors such as performance, red tape deteriorates employees' overall job satisfaction (Blom et al., 2021). Although the consequences of red tape are multiple, this thesis is interested in the relationship between red tape and employee job satisfaction in particular, because low levels of job satisfaction can have "very serious consequences" (Rainey & Cook, 2014, p.322). Firstly, individual employees' levels of job satisfaction relate to their "life satisfaction, general stress levels and physical health" (Gruneberg, 1979, as cited in Rainey & Cook, 2014, p.323). It is argued to relate even to employees "actually quitting" their job – i.e. to employees' turnover intention (Rainey & Cook, 2014, p.320). Secondly, individual job satisfaction is related to individual performance. Although there is a debate in the literature on the extent to which this is true, scholarly literature does show that "satisfied individuals perform their tasks more efficiently and more effectively" (Aristovnik et al., 2018, p.130). Job satisfaction is even found to be a driver of performance (Hsieh, 2016). Given that employee job satisfaction relates to many individual-level as well as organisational-level variables, it is a pertinent dependent variable to analyse. Therefore, this thesis is interested in how organisations can prevent red tape from becoming such a large

burden that civil servants can merely complain about ‘the bureaucracy’ in their work and might even resign because of it.

One might argue that in order to prevent red tape from becoming too much of an issue for employees’ job satisfaction, public organisations should just remove the ‘bad rules’. Although organisations could work on improving rules and possibly abolishing some rules, other rules in public organisations are indispensable because they guarantee important public values, such as accountability and restricting the government from having excessive “power over private citizens” (Bozeman, 1993, p.283). Therefore, public employees will always have to cope with a certain amount of rules that they perceive as red tape despite the important purposes that these rules serve. This will negatively relate to their job satisfaction, as chapter 2 will explain in more detail. An approach that helps to deal with this puzzle is to look at red tape as *employee perceptions* (Kaufmann et al., 2019; Van Loon et al., 2016; Moynihan et al., 2012). The scholarly literature discussed in chapter 2 emphasises that it is not the amount of written rules that count for perceptions of red tape, but rather employees’ perceptions of rules in general (Kaufmann & Feeney, 2012). Accordingly, an answer to the puzzle described above should be found in changing employee perceptions of rules rather than (only) changing the rules themselves.

A recent study by Van Loon & Jakobsen (2021) looked at the extent to which institutional reform (in their case, a change in performance regimes) could result in a shift in the extent to which employees perceived rules as red tape. However, they did not find any support for this and concluded that “it is very hard to change local practices and perceptions through institutional reform” (Van Loon & Jakobsen, 2021, p.14). They did conclude that managerial practices might provide for different rule perceptions and that more research into this topic is needed (Van Loon & Jakobsen, 2021). As one of few studies, Moynihan et al. (2012) found that characteristics of transformational leadership influence perceptions of red tape through a set of indirect mechanisms, such as communication and goal clarity. Given that prior research suggests that it is not institutional reforms but managerial practices that more evidently change employee perceptions, this thesis will examine the extent to which specific leadership behaviours can mitigate the negative relationship between perceptions of red tape and employee job satisfaction. Employees might perceive some rules as red tape, but might start to see them differently after their manager has communicated the rules’ purposes or supported employees in a different way. Employees might then experience rules as less burdensome and more useful which, in turn, could result in higher levels of job satisfaction. Indeed, a meta-

analysis on red tape by Blom et al. (2021) suggests that it is public managers' leadership behaviour that could moderate the negative relationship between red tape and other variables such as job satisfaction. This thesis will answer this call by Blom et al. (2021) by firstly looking at two specific dimensions of red tape and their relationship to job satisfaction. It is the burden of red tape as well as the lack of functionality of red tape that will be considered as independent variables as key works on red tape accentuate these two characteristics (Van Loon et al., 2016; Bozeman, 1993). The thesis will then link one moderating leadership behaviour to one of the two red tape dimensions. It is supporting leadership behaviour that will be related to the burden of red tape and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour that will be examined in the context of red tape's lacking functionality. This moderation analysis will be the main novel contribution of this thesis to the academic literature.

1.2 Purpose and Research Question

The two specific leadership behaviours that have been selected for this thesis as possible moderating variables are supporting leadership behaviour and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour. These two specific leadership behaviours are each expected to mitigate one of the two dimensions of red tape examined by this study: supporting leadership behaviour will alleviate red tape's burden on employees and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour will allow employees to understand red tape's functionality and purposes. These behaviours have been selected for a number of reasons. Firstly, supporting leadership behaviour is part of Yukl's (2012) meta-category 'relations-oriented leadership', which is "most strongly associated to subordinate job satisfaction" (Yukl et al., 2019, p.779). Moreover, amongst the relations-oriented behaviours, supporting leadership behaviour is one of the variables that is most positively related to job satisfaction (Yukl et al., 2019). As supporting leadership behaviour aims at taking employees' needs and problems seriously and giving them the required support and consideration, it is expected that supporting leaders will help employees to cope with red tape when its burden becomes too much. This leadership behaviour will thus alleviate red tape's burden. Secondly, encouraging innovation leadership behaviour aims at intellectually stimulating employees and making them look at problems from a different perspective (Yukl, 2012). When employees are encouraged to think more outside the box and look at issues such as red tape from a different perspective, it is expected that they will better understand the rules' purposes, which shifts their perspective on these rules. Encouraging innovation leadership behaviour will affect employees in such a way that they will not perceive rules as useless anymore but as rules that actually guarantee essential public values, such as

accountability or equity. In other words, this behaviour will cause a cognitive shift at the address of employees. Chapter 2 gives a more in-depth explanation of these relationships.

All things considered, this thesis will take the following research question as its guide:

“To what extent can supporting leadership behaviour and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour mitigate the negative relationship between dimensions of red tape and employee job satisfaction?”

The thesis’ analysis will be two-fold. First, it will examine how red tape affects job satisfaction through two dimensions: red tape’s burden and lack of functionality (Van Loon et al., 2016). When public employees perceive rules as burdensome, this means that they have to spend time on dealing with these rules, whereas they would rather invest their time and energy in helping others (Van Loon, 2016; Bozeman, 1993). Furthermore, when employees perceive that rules are lacking functionality, this means that employees believe that the rules miss a clear purpose or function (despite the fact that rules could, in fact, have a function such as serving purposes of accountability) (Kaufmann et al., 2022; Van Loon, 2016). The consequence of this is that employees perceive their work as meaningless and purposeless, resulting in lower levels of job satisfaction. Chapter 2 will explain these causal mechanisms in more detail.

Second, the thesis will contribute to the academic literature mainly by analysing the extent to which two leadership behaviours each moderate one of the two mechanisms, which is an attempt that has been called for by the literature (Blom et al., 2021; Van Loon & Jakobsen, 2021). The thesis will base itself on relevant literature, but as this moderation analysis has not been conducted before, there is no research that empirically shows that the moderating mechanisms take place in the way that this thesis will theorise them. In other words, the main contribution of this thesis to the academic literature takes a very novel approach.

1.3 Scientific and Societal Relevance

This thesis’ research is relevant in two ways. Firstly, it contributes to the public administration literature on red tape as, to the best of the author’s knowledge, it is the first study to analyse the moderating role of leadership behaviours in the negative relationship between dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction. Secondly, the thesis provides practical insights for public managers who are interested in how their behaviours can keep employees more satisfied when they are faced with a large amount of red tape.

The current thesis is situated in the vast public administration literature on red tape and its consequences. Despite the existence of this strand of literature, a recent meta-analysis by Blom et al. (2021) showed that studies on red tape and its consequences have presented mixed results, which means that it is still an interesting research topic that needs more attention. For example, red tape negatively relates to employee job satisfaction and innovation culture, but not really to performance (Blom et al., 2021). When it comes to the relationship between perceptions of red tape and job satisfaction, several studies have shown that perceptions of red tape are negatively associated with job satisfaction (Steijn & Van Der Voet, 2019; Kjeldsen & Hansen, 2018; Quratulain & Khan, 2015; Giaouque et al., 2012; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005), but some studies did not find a correlation (Cantarelli et al., 2016). DeHart-Davis et al. (2015) found that qualitatively ‘good rules’ are positively associated with job satisfaction, indicating that rule attributes matter in employees’ job satisfaction. When it comes to the underlying mechanisms between red tape and job satisfaction, DeHart-Davis & Pandey (2005) have explained how feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness play a large role in this negative relationship, where Steijn & Van Der Voet (2019) argue that red tape hinders employees in, amongst others, goal attainment, which decreases their job satisfaction as well. Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth analysis of the two dimensions of red tape selected for this study and the two coherent causal mechanisms.

The main contribution of this thesis to the academic literature, however, is an analysis of the extent to which leadership behaviours can moderate the aforementioned negative relationship. Earlier research has pointed out how moderators of red tape are at an early stage (Blom et al., 2021). Moreover, Van Loon & Jakobsen (2021) have pointed out that changing perceptions of red tape is a matter of managerial practices, whereas a study on ‘managing perceptions of red tape through leadership behaviours’ has only marginally been studied (Moynihan et al., 2012). This thesis will act upon these calls by the literature and broaden the current knowledge on moderators of red tape’s negative consequences by including leadership behaviours into the analysis. By doing so, the thesis aims at instigating more researchers to examine the role of leadership behaviours in relation to red tape. The novel approach that this thesis takes, combines two important strands within the public administration literature, namely the one on red tape and job satisfaction as well as the one on leadership behaviours.

Not only is this research contributing to the academic literature, it is also useful for public managers themselves for several reasons. Keeping valuable and hard-working employees satisfied is important for retaining a stable workforce. Furthermore, employees’ job

satisfaction should be of interest to any public manager as it affects other important individual-level variables such as employee well-being, their turnover intention and even their performance, as explained in section 1.1. Also, rules cannot be abolished, but they do relate employees' job satisfaction. It is, therefore, up to managers to make rules bearable for their employees. This thesis aims at helping public managers with keeping their employees' job satisfaction levels stable in light of the high levels of red tape that employees sometimes perceive. Moreover, the moderating variables that this thesis examines are actual leadership behaviours measured by survey statements that directly reflect on managers' behaviours. Managers can, therefore, easily implement the findings of this thesis by adopting the specific leadership behaviours that possibly mitigate the negative relationship between dimensions of red tape and employee job satisfaction. This thesis, thus, provides managers with information on how their behaviours can improve their employees' job satisfaction. The author hopes that managers will be able to use this thesis as a practical guide.

1.4 Roadmap

In the next chapter, the thesis will proceed by explaining the relevant literature on the key variables of this study: employee job satisfaction, the two dimensions of red tape and the two leadership behaviours. Chapter 2 will also justify why the thesis examines these five variables as well as how they are linked to each other. Chapter 3 explains the thesis' methodology. Chapter 4 contains the results of the quantitative analysis which includes the testing of the thesis' hypotheses made in chapter 2. Chapter 5 contains the conclusion as well as a discussion of the results.

Chapter 2: Theory

This chapter introduces the main concepts of this thesis. Furthermore, it explains the relationship between the two dimensions of red tape (red tape's burden and lack of functionality) and job satisfaction by looking at two different causal mechanisms: a motivational one and a cognitive one. Section 2.3 will then explain how the selected leadership behaviours each relate to one of the two mechanisms.

2.1 Job Satisfaction

A recent meta-analysis on job satisfaction by Cantarelli et al. (2016) concludes that the public administration literature is falling behind compared to other academic fields when it comes to a definition and measurement of the concept of job satisfaction. A definition of job satisfaction, borrowed from the field of psychology, for example is “a pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p.1304). Another definition, brought forward by Kim (2004, p.246), is “an affective or emotional response toward various facets of one’s job.” Although these two definitions overlap, they are not exactly the same. The first definition emphasises a positive state, whereas the second definition seems to look at a certain kind of response towards one’s job, be it positive or negative. Next to these two definitions, Rainey & Cook (2014) explain how different measurements of job satisfaction in empirical studies point at different definitions of the concept, instigating even more variation. For the sake of clarity and workability, this thesis chooses the definition by Rainey & Cook (2014, p.320), namely “how an individual feels about his or her job and various aspects of it (Gruneberg, 1979), usually in the sense of how favourable – how positive or negative – those feelings are.” This definition comprises the emotional aspect (Kim, 2004) as well as the positive or negative state (Locke, 1976) towards one’s job. In the remaining of this thesis, degrees of satisfaction will therefore be considered as degrees of positive feelings regarding one’s job in general.

Antecedents of job satisfaction are diverse, such as employees’ public service motivation (Homberg et al., 2015), job design (such as autonomy), job context (such as leadership behaviour) and external factors (such as pay) (Cantarelli et al., 2016). Furthermore, DeHart-Davis et al. (2015) analysed the relationship between good rules, i.e. green tape, and employee job satisfaction. Wright & Davis (2003) analysed antecedents of job satisfaction specifically in the public sector context that deserve some attention here. They distinguished between job characteristics and job context. When it comes to job characteristics, Wright &

Davis (2003) speak, amongst others, about routineness, job specificity and feedback. Routineness refers to the degree that employees find their daily work predictable and repetitive (Wright & Davis, 2003). The more employees find their work diverse, the higher their job satisfaction (Wright & Davis, 2003). Job specificity refers to the degree to which they find their work clear and unambiguous. When employees perceive their task and their role as clear, their level of job satisfaction increases (Wright & Davis, 2003). Degrees of feedback given by employees' supervisors or co-workers also positively relate to job satisfaction as it gives employees more information regarding their job. Feedback is, therefore, also positively associated with job specificity (Wright & Davis, 2003). Public sector related factors that influence employee job satisfaction are organisational goal conflict, goal ambiguity and procedural constraints. Firstly, public organisational goals can be conflicting as public organisations have to provide services that have to ensure equity and accountability as well as efficiency and effectiveness (Wright & Davis, 2003). When these goals are perceived as conflicting, employees experience more confusion as to what goal they have to prioritize, which results in lower job satisfaction (Wright & Davis, 2003). Moreover, when goals are perceived as ambiguous, then employees find it hard to understand what the organisational goals are and in what direction the organisation is heading (Wright & Davis, 2003). This also negatively relates to job satisfaction (Wright & Davis, 2003; Hsieh, 2016). Furthermore, the public sector is known for so-called "procedural constraints" which refers to the degree to which employees "feel constrained by organisational rules" (Wright & Davis, 2003, p.76). At their origins, rules have been established to guide public employees in their daily work (Bernards et al., 2021). However, if rules "hinder or diverge from assigned performance objectives", then employees become uncertain and confused regarding what to do (Wright & Davis, 2003, p.76). This means that their levels of job specificity will decrease, which, in turn, will decrease their job satisfaction (Wright & Davis, 2003). This discussion brings the thesis to its main independent variables, namely the perceived burden and lack of functionality of red tape.

2.2 Dimensions of Red Tape

2.2.1 Red Tape: A Definition

When it comes to red tape, the most widely-used definition has been formulated by Bozeman (1993, p.283) who stated that red tape are "rules, regulations, and procedures that remain in force and entail a compliance burden for the organization but have no efficacy for the rules' functional object." Drawing on this definition, one can make important nuances. Not

all rules are red tape. It is only when they do not serve any purpose anymore and become a burden for the organisation that one can speak of red tape. Quratulain & Khan (2015, p.309) add that red tape comes into existence “when rules become the ends rather than the means to achieve organizational objectives.” Red tape rules just exist, without any legitimate purpose in the present time. Red tape has also been measured as the extent to which rules cause administrative delays (Pandey & Scott, 2002). Another study by Van Loon et al. (2016) defined red tape in relation to employees, using the concept of “job-centred red tape”. In their view, red tape constitutes of rules that “employees perceive as burdensome” and does not help to achieve the goal that it was initially created for – i.e. it “lacks functionality” (Van Loon et al., 2016, pp.663-664). Bozeman (1993, p.284) also indicated how “a rule may be red tape for one stakeholder but quite useful for another.” Over the years, many studies have underscored that this so-called subject-dependency of red tape is crucial when studying red tape (Kaufmann et al., 2019; Brewer & Walker, 2010; Pandey & Scott, 2002; Rosenfeld, 1983; Buchanan, 1975). Therefore, this thesis will use the job-centred definition of red tape by Van Loon et al. (2016). Another argument for measuring *perceptions* of red tape can be found when looking at the differences between objective formalization, subjective formalization and perceptions of red tape. Objective formalization refers to “how many written rules are in existence”, whereas subjective formalization refers to employees’ perception of the amount of written rules (Kaufmann & Feeney, 2012, pp.1197-1200). Kaufmann & Feeney (2012) find that the amount of perceived written rules is positively related to the objective amount of written rules. Perceptions of red tape, however, are related to these two concepts in a different way. Unlike the relation between objective and subjective levels of formalization, objective formalization does not predict perceptions of red tape (Kaufmann & Feeney, 2012). In other words, a higher amount of written rules does not predict a higher amount of rules perceived by employees as burdensome and dysfunctional. Although formalized rules are needed for perceptions of red tape to exist, there is no correlation between the two. However, Kaufmann & Feeney (2012) did find a correlation between subjective formalization and perceptions of red tape. This means that when employees perceive a higher amount of written rules, they will also perceive higher amounts of red tape (Kaufmann & Feeney, 2012). This underscores how measuring individual perceptions tells more about the relationship between dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction than merely measuring the objective amount of rules. Moreover, the degree to which rules are burdensome or lacking functionality depends on the individual. The red tape dimensions will, therefore, be regarded as employee perceptions.

2.2.2 Dimensions of Red Tape and Job Satisfaction

Perceptions of red tape have been found to negatively affect job satisfaction (Steijn & Van Der Voet, 2019; Giaque et al., 2013; Feeney, 2012; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005). This thesis will examine this relationship by looking at two specific dimensions of red tape. Red tape is both burdensome and lacking functionality and these two aspects generate two distinctive causal mechanisms – a motivational one and a cognitive one.

The perceived burden of red tape for employees has been pointed out by several authors discussed in section 2.2.1 (Van Loon et al., 2016; Bozeman & Feeney, 2011, Bozeman, 1993). Employees have to comply with red tape, which costs them a lot of energy – hence the term “compliance burden” (Bozeman, 1993, p.283). This burden weighs heavily on employees’ daily activities, which affects their motivation to go to work. Steijn & Van Der Voet (2019) as well as Giaque et al. (2013) explain this relationship more in-depth by drawing on the job demands-resources model (JDR-model) by Bakker et al. (2007). The JDR-model describes how employees face two sets of factors in their daily work that influence their level of work engagement. On the one hand, there are job demands, which are also called stressors (Bakker et al., 2007). These aspects of the job require employees’ energy and effort and are “associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (e.g., exhaustion (...))” (Bakker et al., 2007, p.275). These aspects make employees’ work more difficult and can cause strain. Job resources, on the other hand, boost employees’ energy and buffer the negative consequences of job demands (Bakker et al., 2007). Examples are salary or supervisor support (Bakker et al., 2007). Although Bakker et al. (2007) focus on job demands and resources with regard to work engagement as a dependent variable, they highlighted how earlier studies already related these demands and resources to employees’ job satisfaction as well. When it comes to red tape, recent studies explained how it should be categorised as a job demand that affects job satisfaction negatively. More precisely, red tape has made public work “more demanding” (Burton & Van Den Broek, 2009, in: Steijn & Van Der Voet, 2019, p.66) and even “damaging to public employees’ well-being at work” (Giaque et al., 2013, p.73). Job resources are, therefore, needed to keep employees satisfied and motivated and prevent them from experiencing too much strain that could lead to problems such as burn-outs (Bakker et al., 2007). Furthermore, red tape also falls under the category of “hindrance stressors”, which are job demands that “thwart goal attainment” (Dawson et al., 2016, p.411). Red tape costs public employees a lot of time which hinders them from achieving their goals. Moreover, this hindrance effect of red tape becomes more interesting when one takes into account public employees’ levels of

prosocial motivation – i.e. the motivation to do good for others (Steijn & Van Der Voet, 2019). In general, public employees experience an incongruence between their will to do good for others (their prosocial motivation) and the public sector work context if red tape is high (Quratulain & Khan, 2016). In other words, public employees want to do good for others but red tape, a characteristic of the public sector work context, hinders them from doing so. Employees with high levels of prosocial motivation will thus experience red tape as a burden to a higher extent, because they experience an increased degree of incongruence between their values and the organisational context. High levels of prosocial motivation (a well-known aspect of public sector workers), therefore, lead to an exacerbated negative relationship between the burden-dimension of red tape and employee job satisfaction (Steijn & Van Der Voet, 2019). In sum, one dimension of red tape is that it is a burden for employees which causes employees' job demands to weigh more heavily than their resources. This makes employees feel demotivated to go to work and feel less satisfied with their job. In this way, red tape's characteristic of being a burden to employees negatively relates to job satisfaction through a motivational mechanism.

The second aspect of perceived red tape is its lack of functionality, which sets another mechanism in motion, namely a cognitive one. This aspect can best be explained by first looking at the exact opposite, namely rules that have “understandable purposes” (DeHart-Davis, 2009, p.373). DeHart-Davis (2009) makes a distinction between good, effective, rules and bad, ineffective, rules, based on several criteria. Apart from criteria such as consistency and valid means-ends, one criterion for employees to distinguish good rules from bad rules is the extent to which they find rules to have understandable and clear purposes (DeHart-Davis, 2009). When employees are unable to understand a rule's purpose, then the rule will be considered as a bad rule instead of a good rule. Moreover, when rules have “obscured purposes”, then employees will perceive the rules as red tape (Kaufmann et al., 2022, pp.6-7). This aligns with the job-centred definition of red tape theorised by Van Loon et al. (2016) who argued that the perceived lack of functionality is an essential part of measuring red tape. Consequently, when employees have to work with rules that, in their eyes, lack functionality, they will be unable to understand how their daily activities contribute to larger organisational values – i.e. to “the bigger picture” (Kaufmann et al., 2022, p.6; DeHart-Davis, 2009). When employees lose track of the bigger picture, their work will seem meaningless which results in alienation from their work (Kaufmann et al., 2022; DeHart-Davis, 2009). Kaufmann et al. (2022, pp.6-7) explained how this, in turn, results in increased levels of job dissatisfaction and

turnover intentions for employees. In sum, the perceived lack of functionality of red tape results in employees having to work with rules that they do not understand, which leads to feelings of purposelessness and meaninglessness. This is how red tape's perceived lack of functionality leads to lower levels of job satisfaction through a cognitive mechanism.

All in all, there are two dimensions of red tape, instigating two distinct negative causal mechanisms. Firstly, the burden of having to comply with red tape requires a lot of energy and effort from employees. This hinders them from achieving their goals, such as helping citizens. This creates frustration and makes employees feel less motivated to go to work, resulting in lower levels of job satisfaction which sums up the motivational mechanism. Secondly, red tape's characteristic of lacking functionality results in employees having to work with rules which they find hard to understand. This causes employees to find their work purposeless and meaningless. Through this cognitive mechanism, the red tape's lack of functionality results in lower levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, this thesis will first test the following hypotheses:

H1a: The perceived burden of red tape is negatively related to employee job satisfaction.

H1b: The perceived lack of functionality of red tape is negatively related to employee job satisfaction.

The two dimensions of red tape will be measured by two different sets of items allowing the thesis to analyse the relationships between the two dimensions of red tape on the one hand and job satisfaction on the other hand. Moreover, given that the two selected leadership behaviours are each expected to moderate one specific relationship, the conducted moderation analysis allows the thesis to reflect on the two distinct causal mechanisms. This chapter will now turn to the theoretical underpinnings for the selection of the leadership behaviours.

2.3 Leadership Behaviour

Recent research has pointed out that moderators of red tape should be put high on the public administration research agenda (Blom et al., 2021). This thesis will attempt to answer this call by examining the role of leadership behaviours as they are deemed to influence perceptions of red tape (Van Loon & Jakobsen, 2021; Moynihan et al., 2012). Although leadership behaviours have been related to perceptions of red tape, there has, to the best of the author's knowledge, not been any research yet on the moderating role of leadership behaviour in the red tape-job satisfaction relationship. Moreover, this research aims to deepen the

literature by looking at specific leadership behaviours and relating them to specific dimensions of red tape. This thesis, therefore, contributes to the long traditions of both the red tape literature and the leadership behaviour literature. Analysing how leadership behaviours can mitigate the negative relationship between dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction is of capital importance given the detrimental relationship between low levels of employees' job satisfaction and their respective well-being and performance. Section 2.2.2 explained how the burden of red tape instigates a motivational mechanism and the lack of functionality of red tape a cognitive one. The leadership behaviours that this thesis examines – supporting leadership behaviour and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour – each relate to one specific dimension and coherent mechanism. Supporting leaders will be able to alleviate red tape's burden, whereas leaders who encourage their employees to innovate will improve employees' understanding of red tape's purpose and meaning. The last sections of this chapter will discuss these relationships in more detail.

2.3.1 Supporting Leadership Behaviour

Supporting leadership behaviour is one of four specific behaviours that are part of the meta-category of “relations-oriented leadership” (Yukl, 2012, p.71). In general, relations-oriented leaders want to improve the relationship between themselves and employees (Yukl, 2012). Supporting leadership specifically consists of “showing positive regard” and helping employees that have to “cope with stressful situations” (Yukl, 2012, p.71). When employees are facing stress or low degrees of motivation, supporting leaders will listen and try to help their employees where possible (Yukl, 2012). Moreover, supporting leaders will express their confidence that employees “can perform a difficult task” (Yukl, 2012, p.72). Leaders who adopt this behaviour will, therefore, communicate to their employees that they are able to cope with the burden of red tape, thereby alleviating the stress and pressure associated with it. The moderating role of this leadership behaviour can best be understood by drawing on the JDR-model again. The burden of red tape is, as section 2.2.2 explained, a major demand for public employees. When the burden of such a job demand is not being considered by supervisors, employees will feel less motivated to go to work, because this burden requires a lot of energy and inhibits employees from achieving their goals (Bakker et al., 2007; Dawson et al., 2016). The support that supervisors and managers give their employees, however, fits in the JDR-model as a resource, which “reduce[s] job demands” (Bakker et al., 2007, p.275). In other words, when employees are faced with the burden of red tape, supervisory support serves as a buffer that mitigates the negative consequence of this aspect of red tape (Bakker et al., 2007).

The motivational causal mechanism, presented in section 2.2.2, does therefore not take place, or at least to a lesser extent because of the intervening support provided by public managers. Indeed, supporting leadership is considered as a “major motivator” (Bakker et al., 2007, p.276). Hence, the negative relationship between the burden of red tape and job satisfaction is mitigated by supporting leaders because they provide employees with the support and confidence they need when faced with the burden of red tape. In turn, employees will stay motivated to go to work and the motivational mechanism between red tape’s burden and employee job satisfaction is weakened.

H2a : The negative relationship between the burden of red tape and employee job satisfaction is mitigated by supporting leadership behaviour.

2.3.2 Encouraging Innovation Leadership Behaviour

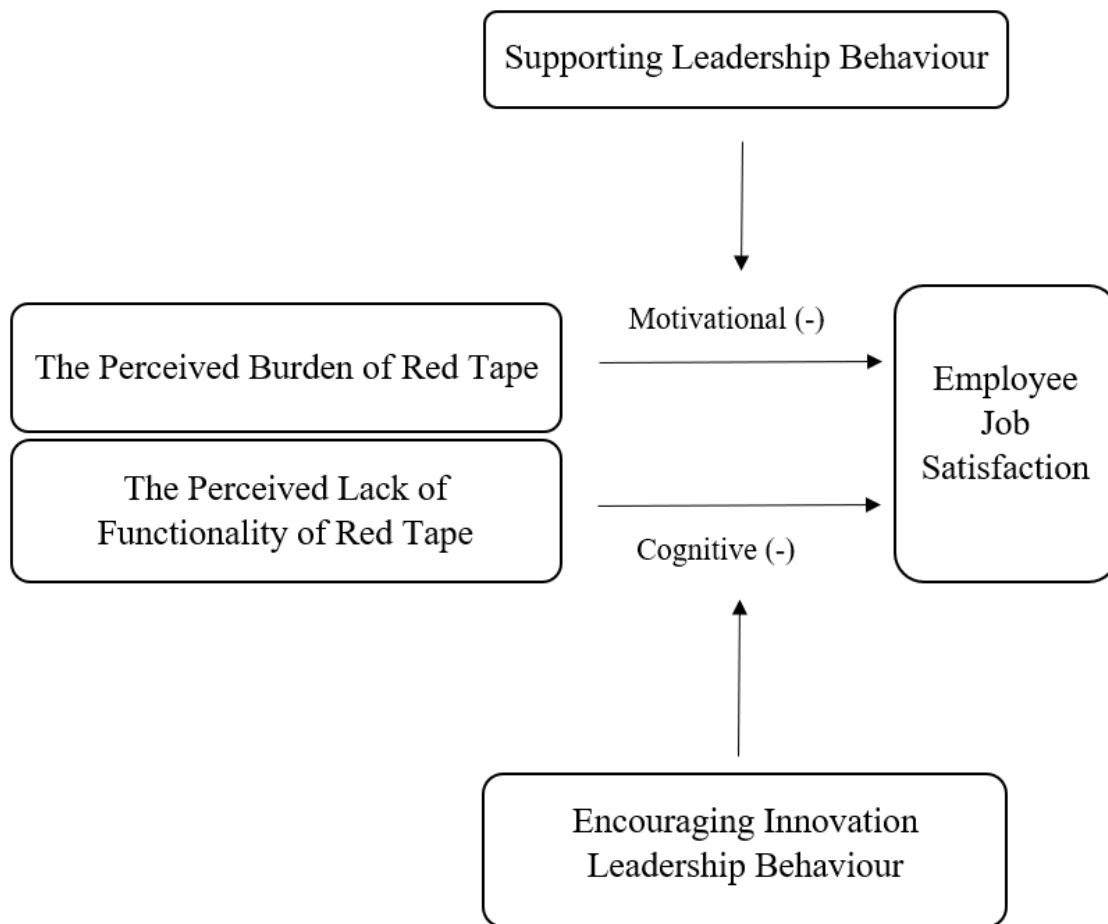
Encouraging innovation is one of the change-oriented leadership behaviours, along with advocating change, envisioning change and facilitating collective learning (Yukl, 2012). In general, change-oriented leadership behaviours aim to encourage and facilitate “emergent change processes” (Yukl, 2012, p.72). Specifically, public managers that encourage innovation instigate team members to come up with “novel ideas” (Yukl, 2012, p.73). This means that leaders encourage employees to “look at problems from different perspectives” and to “think outside the box” (Yukl, 2012, p.73). Moreover, it entails the provision of “opportunities and resources to develop new products” and the appreciation of employees’ “innovative proposals” (Yukl, 2012, p.73). One aspect of encouraging innovation that is relevant for the current relationship is intellectual stimulation (Yukl, 2012). Intellectual stimulation means that leaders ask employees for their new ideas and “analyse problems from new perspectives” (Bellé, 2014, p.110). Although this definition is close to the concept of encouraging innovation, the latter is a broader concept as it also entails providing employees with resources they need when developing their new ideas and appreciating their new ideas. Intellectual stimulation, however, mainly focuses on stimulating employees to come up with new ideas and think about problems in a different way (Bellé, 2014). Encouraging innovation is related to red tape’s lack of functionality. As explained in section 2.2.2, employees perceive rules as red tape when they find it hard to understand what the purposes of these rules are. Although these rules might serve important purposes that are unrelated to employees’ performance, such as accountability, they can still be perceived as red tape by employees when they do not understand the rules’ purposes (Van Loon et al., 2016). Moynihan et al. (2012) explain how intellectual stimulation influences employees’ understanding of organisational goals. Likewise, it is expected that intellectual

stimulation directly influences the lack of functionality-aspect of employee perceptions of red tape. The reason for this is that employees are stimulated to look at red tape from a different perspective – i.e. employees are encouraged to challenge their old assumptions and perceptions on red tape (Wright et al., 2012). When intellectually stimulated, employees will understand the rules' purposes better and therefore the rules will have more functionality in their eyes. This instigates a change in the minds of employees as they will not perceive these rules as red tape anymore but start to perceive them as “good rules” that serve important public sector values (DeHart-Davis, 2009, p.373). When employees understand the rules that they work with, they will have more purpose and meaning in their work, which means that the cognitive mechanism, as described in section 2.2.2, will be weakened. Another, indirect, way in which encouraging innovation mitigates the negative relationship between perceptions of red tape and job satisfaction is through the increase of goal clarity. Moynihan et al. (2012) explain how intellectual stimulation influences employees' understanding of organisational goals. When employees understand goals better and know how to reach them in better ways, they do not have to consult rules anymore. In turn, when employees do not ‘see’ the rules, they will not perceive red tape, which automatically takes the sting out of the cognitive mechanism (Moynihan et al., 2012). In this direct and indirect way, encouraging innovation weakens the negative relationship between the lack of functionality-dimension of red tape and job satisfaction. The last hypothesis that this thesis will test is therefore:

H2b: The negative relationship between the lack of functionality of red tape and job satisfaction is mitigated by encouraging innovation leadership behaviour.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model that encompasses all variables and the links between them.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In order to examine the proposed relationships, this thesis conducted a quantitative analysis using data from a survey held amongst employees working in the Dutch social welfare domain. The survey was held by a research project called *Teamwerk in de Wijk* (Van Zijl et al., 2021). A large-N quantitative analysis is fitting because this thesis wants to show “general relationships between variables” (Toshkov, 2016, p.256). Although it is not possible to speak of ‘pure causal relationships’, the used statistical method allows the thesis to show the extent to which there are correlations between the selected variables. Another advantage of a statistical method is that it can show whether relationships are either weak or strong (Toshkov, 2016). Furthermore, the quantitative analysis will allow the thesis to draw conclusions that are generalisable to the larger population of Dutch social welfare workers. The negative relationship between both the burden and the lack of functionality of red tape on employee job satisfaction has been tested through a multiple regression analysis run with SPSS. The moderating role of the leadership behaviours has been analysed with two interaction analyses.

The sample at hand is derived from neighbourhood teams working in the social welfare domain which is a fitting context for this research for several reasons. All neighbourhood teams have direct supervisors that they work with, allowing the thesis to look at the extent to which leadership behaviours relate to employee outcomes. Moreover, the daily “performance objectives” in the social welfare are rather practical (such as providing physical or mental care to citizens) and are, therefore, sometimes far removed from bureaucratic objectives such as accountability (Wright & Davis, 2003, p.76). This discrepancy between the daily objectives of employees and the bureaucratic objectives of some rules make the social welfare domain an excellent case for examining perceptions of red tape. Indeed, the research project *Teamwerk in de Wijk* concluded, amongst others, that practitioners should pay more attention to how rules are perceived by employees (Van Zijl et al., 2021). Some rules simply cannot be removed because they ensure important values such as “equal treatment or privacy” and the way in which social welfare workers and supervisors deal with rules should, therefore, be put high on the agenda by practitioners and policy advisors (Van Zijl et al., 2021, p.27). Furthermore, the survey asked employees about their perceptions of their supervisor’s leadership behaviour as opposed to supervisors rating their own leadership behaviours. This is an important distinction as the public administration literature has underscored that employee outcomes, such as satisfaction and performance, depend on employee perceptions and not on supervisors’ own

ratings or intentions (Jacobsen & Andersen, 2015). The dataset will, therefore, allow the thesis to make just observations regarding the role of the leadership behaviours in the negative relationship between dimensions of red tape and employee job satisfaction.

3.2 Data Collection

As mentioned above, this thesis makes use of a dataset that was generated by a long-term research project called *Teamwerk in de Wijk* (Van Zijl et al., 2021). The main aim of this project has been to analyse the functioning and performance of Dutch social welfare teams since the Dutch government decided to decentralise the social welfare domain in 2015 (Van Zijl et al., 2021). The researchers of this project distributed a survey amongst 87 neighbourhood teams in five municipalities (Van Zijl et al., 2021). Only teams of which at least 30% of the members responded to the survey were taken into account in order to guarantee that their analysis would show a representative image of the teams (Van Zijl et al., 2021). 70 teams passed this criterion (Van Zijl et al., 2021). This meant that, eventually, the responses of 844 individual employees made it to the dataset. Respondents were asked to reflect on several aspects of their work. These reflections included but were not limited to their overall job satisfaction, their perceptions of rules and their team leader's behaviours. Furthermore, respondents were asked to provide answers to some general questions regarding their gender, age, and tenure. As nine respondents did not report their age and two respondents gave invalid responses (such as a negative amount of years for the 'tenure' variable, or an answer of '5' for their age), the final dataset for this thesis consisted of 833 respondents.

3.3 Measurement

Respondents had been asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements related to this thesis' main variables using a five- or ten-point Likert-scale. For the sake of clarity, all statements have been translated to English by the author here. Appendix 1 contains the Dutch versions of these items.

3.3.1 Job Satisfaction

The independent variable of this thesis has been measured using a single ten-point item, as used by Lee & Sabharwal (2016): "Taking everything into account, I am satisfied with my work." By rating this item, respondents could indicate their overall level of positive feelings towards their work, which is the essence of job satisfaction, as explained in section 2.1. This is, therefore, a valid measure of employee job satisfaction.

3.3.2 *The Burden and Lacking Functionality of Red Tape*

The burden of red tape has been operationalised using four items, based on Van Loon et al., 2016:

“The rules and procedures that I have to deal with in my work...

1. Cause a lot of work pressure.
2. Take a lot of time to comply with.
3. Cause a lot of delay.
4. Create a lot of frustration.”

The degree to which rules are perceived as lacking functionality has been operationalised using three items (in bold) taken from a list of five green tape items (DeHart-Davis, 2009):

5. Are inconsistent.
- 6. Provide insufficient support in daily work.**
- 7. Are unclear.**
8. Have not been formally written.
- 9. Are useless.”¹**

Items 6, 7 and 9 represent the concept of ‘lacking functionality’, whereas items 5 and 8 represent other dimensions of green tape, namely consistency and formalisation respectively (DeHart-Davis, 2009). Consistency and formalisation are theoretically related to, but distinct from ‘a lack of functionality’, which is the reason that item 5 and 8 have not been included in the analysis (DeHart-Davis, 2009). A factor analysis for items 5 till 9 shows that all items correlate with each other (Table 1) and that the underlying factor (in this case, green tape) explains a fair amount of the variance in these items (Table 2). The sampling adequacy was verified using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure, which generated a score of .842, which is a “meritorious” score (Field, 2018, p.798). Only one factor passed Kaiser’s criterion of having an eigenvalue of over 1 (3.202). In table 1, the correlations of the items that are theoretically closest to the red tape dimension of ‘lacking functionality’ are highlighted. Table 2 shows the degree to which the factor explains the variance in the five items. All items are influenced by the ‘green tape’-factor, but the theoretical underpinning from DeHart-Davis (2009) shows that

¹ Items 5 till 9 have been reverse coded. Appendix 1 contains the original Dutch versions.

functionality/understood purposes, consistency and formalisation are three separate rule attributes.

Table 1: Correlation matrix for the green tape items

<i>The rules and procedures that I have to deal with in my work...</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Are inconsistent.	1				
2. Provide insufficient support in daily work.	.696**	1			
3. Are unclear.	.637**	.753**	1		
4. Have not been formally written.	.390**	.456**	.522**	1	
5. Are useless.	.470**	.531**	.559**	.429**	1

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Factor Matrix

<i>The rules and procedures that I have to deal with in my work...</i>	Factor 1
Are inconsistent.	.748
Provide insufficient support in daily work.	.863
Are unclear.	.872
Have not been formally written.	.571
Are useless.	.645

This thesis expects that the higher the respondents' scores on the selected seven items are, the lower will be their overall job satisfaction. A principal axis factor analysis with oblique rotation was conducted in order to show that these seven items reflect two different dimensions of red

tape, namely the burden and lack of functionality of red tape. Table 3 shows the correlation matrix for items 1 till 7. Table 4 shows the pattern matrix and Figure 3 shows the coherent factor plot after oblique rotation (direct oblimin).

Table 3: correlation matrix of the two dimensions of red tape.

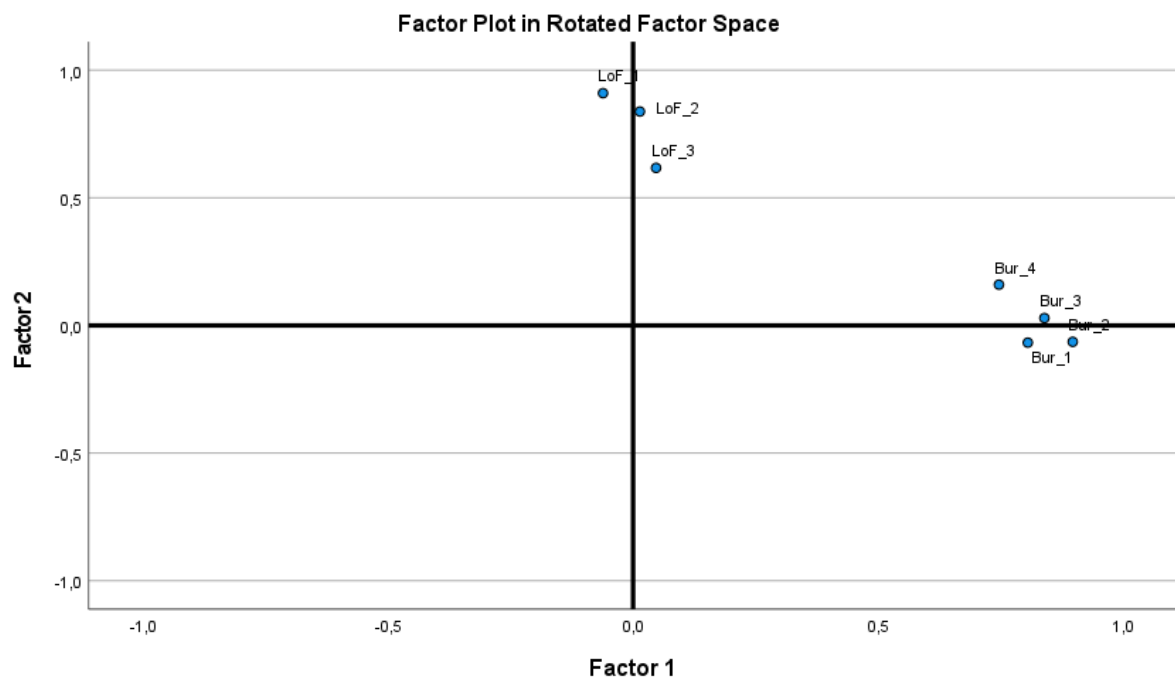
<i>The rules and procedures that I have to deal with in my work...</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Cause a lot of work pressure.	1						
2. Take a lot of time to comply with.	.731**	1					
3. Cause a lot of delay.	.625**	.744**	1				
4. Create a lot of frustration.	.614**	.650**	.723**	1			
5. Are unclear.	.119**	.156**	.205**	.306**	1		
6. Provide insufficient support in daily work.	.185**	.192**	.249**	.333**	.753**	1	
7. Are useless.	.134**	.175**	.228**	.290**	.559**	.531**	1

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Pattern matrix of the two dimensions of red tape.

<i>The rules and procedures that I have to deal with in my work...</i>	Factor 1	Factor 2
Cause a lot of work pressure.	.806	-.067
Take a lot of time to comply with.	.897	-.064
Cause a lot of delay.	.840	.029
Create a lot of frustration.	.747	.160
Are unclear.	-.061	.910
Provide insufficient support in daily work.	.014	.838
Are useless.	.047	.617

Figure 2: factor plot after oblique rotation (direct oblimin) for the red tape dimensions.



Note: Factor 1 (horizontal axis) = The Burden of Red Tape. Factor 2 (vertical axis) = The lacking functionality of Red Tape; Bur_1 = Cause a lot of work pressure. Bur_2 = Take a lot of time to comply with. Bur_3 = Cause a lot of delay. Bur_4 = Create a lot of frustration. LoF_1 = Are unclear. LoF_2 = Provide insufficient support in daily work. LoF_3 = are useless.

The sampling adequacy was verified using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure, generating a score of .793, which is a “middling” score (Field, 2018, p.798). Two factors had initial eigenvalues over Kaiser’s criterion of 1: factor 1 had a score of 3.489 and factor 2 had a score of 1.821. Therefore, two factors have been retained. The correlation matrix shows that the burden-items (items 1 till 4) correlate with each other (in bold). The lack of functionality-items (items 5 till 7) correlate with each other as well. Table 2 shows how the seven items substantially load on their respective factors, as they had loadings of over .4 (Field, 2018). Items 1 till 4 highly load on factor 1 (the burden-dimension of red tape) and items 5 till 7 load highly on factor 2 (the lacking of functionality-dimension of red tape). The factor plot graphically shows how the items cluster on the two separate factors. Both dimensions had high reliabilities. The items used for the burden-dimension had a score on Cronbach’s alpha of .895 and the lack of functionality-items held a Cronbach alpha score of .828.

3.3.3 Leadership Behaviours

The survey measured the leadership behaviours with three five-point items for each behaviour, in line with Yukl’s (2012) definitions:

Supporting leadership behaviour:

“My supervisor...

1. Pays attention to the needs of individual employees.
2. is concerned with the members of the team.
3. Supports members of the team in case of a difficult task.”

Item 1 captures the aspect of listening to individuals’ needs, where item 3 covers the aspect of providing support to members when they are faced with a difficult task.

Encouraging innovation leadership behaviour:

“My supervisor...

1. Speaks of the importance of innovation for the team’s success.
2. Encourages members of the team to achieve the team’s goals in a better way.

3. Encourages members of the team to improve performance in an innovative way.”

The items focus on the extent to which leaders encourage employees to find new ways of working, which inherently involves new ways of thinking (items 1 and 3). Item 2 measures the extent to which leaders emphasise how organisational goals can be achieved in a better way (item 2).

A principal axis factor analysis with oblique rotation was run in order to show that the leadership behaviours are different and that employees perceive these behaviours as two distinct aspects of their manager’s leadership style.

Table 5: Correlation matrix of the leadership behaviours.

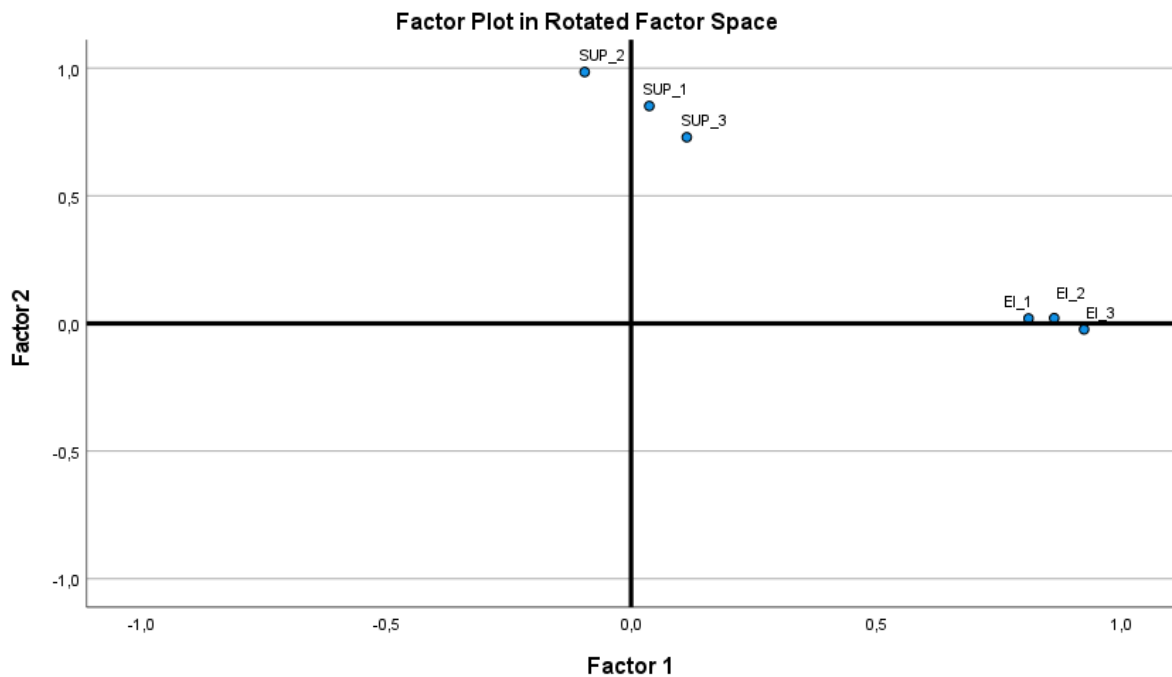
<i>My Supervisor...</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Pays attention to the needs of individual employees.	1					
2. is concerned with the members of the team.	.807**	1				
3. Supports members of the team in case of a difficult task.	.704**	.736**	1			
4. Speaks of the importance of innovation for the team’s success.	.494**	.452**	.496**	1		
5. Encourages members of the team to achieve the team’s goals in a better way.	.529**	.488**	.514**	.722**	1	
6. Encourages members of the team to improve performance in an innovative way.	.518**	.481**	.523**	.748**	.799**	1

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Table 6: Pattern matrix of the leadership behaviours.

My Supervisor...	Factor 1	Factor 2
Pays attention to the needs of individual employees.	.037	.852
is concerned with the members of the team.	-.095	.985
Supports members of the team in case of a difficult task.	.114	.729
Speaks of the importance of innovation for the team's success.	.811	.020
Encourages members of the team to achieve the team's goals in a better way.	.864	.021
Encourages members of the team to improve performance in an innovative way.	.925	-.023

Figure 3: Factor plot after oblique rotation (direct oblimin) for the leadership behaviours.



Note: Factor 1 (horizontal axis) = encouraging innovation leadership. Factor 2 (vertical axis) = supporting leadership. SUP_1 = Pays attention to the needs of individual employees. SUP_2 = is concerned with the members of the team. SUP_3 = Supports members of the team in case of a difficult task. EI_1 = Speaks of the importance of innovation for the team's success. EI_2 = Encourages members of the team to achieve the team's goals in a better way. EI_3 = Encourages members of the team to improve performance in an innovative way.

The sampling adequacy was verified as KMO's measure was .844, which is a "meritorious" score (Field, 2018, p.798). Two factors had initial eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1:

factor 1 had of 4,006 and factor 2 had a score of 1,013. The correlation matrix shows that all six leadership items correlate with each other to a considerable extent. The items that cluster on one factor, however, had much higher correlations (in bold). Furthermore, the supporting leadership items load highly on factor 2 (the supporting leadership factor), where the encouraging innovation items load highly on factor 1 (encouraging innovation) (in bold). The factor plot after rotation in figure 3 shows how the two sets of items each cluster on one specific factor. The reliability of the supporting leadership items was high, as Cronbach's alpha was .898. The reliability of the encouraging innovation items was high as well, given that they scored a .903 on Cronbach's alpha.

3.3.4 Control Variables

Respondents' age, gender, tenure in the social welfare domain, and highest completed educational level have been controlled for in this analysis. The inclusion of these variables is essential because this will allow the thesis to rule out any confounding variables that could be a "distortion" to the 'pure' relationships that this thesis wants to analyse (Bernerth et al., 2018, p.132). For example, there is a possibility that women perceive rules less as a burden than men, or that older employees understand rules' purposes better, which could, in turn, influence their job satisfaction. Furthermore, the degree to which employees perceive rules as burdensome or lacking functionality could heavily depend on the amount of time that they have been working in the social welfare domain (tenure). Furthermore, it could be that a higher education allows an employee to understand rules better, resulting in lower degrees of perceived lack of functionality. Although employees without any age or gender do not exist in the real world, it is important to control for these four variables in order to analyse valid relationships unhindered by extraneous variables that have been unaccounted for in the theoretical framework of this thesis (Bernerth et al., 2018). Moreover, a two-fold regression analysis consisting of one analysis excluding control variables and one analysis including control variables will show the degree to which these four control variables influence the relationships examined by this thesis.

Respondents could report their exact age; their gender was measured using numbers, where 1 = male, 2 = female, 3 = other. Dummy variables were created in order to integrate this item into the regression analysis adequately. Respondents could report their tenure by inserting the exact number of years that they have been working in the social welfare domain. Respondents could report on their highest completed educational background by selecting one of the following options: 1 = primary school or lower secondary education, 2 = secondary education,

3 = lower professional education, 4 = higher professional education/university of applied sciences, 5 = university degree, 6 = doctorate degree. Dummy variables were created in order to adequately calculate with this item.

3.4 Analysis Strategy

The hypotheses have been tested with a statistical method using SPSS. Firstly, the items described above were computed into single variables in order to regress the independent variables on the dependent variable. For example, the ‘burden’-items were computed into one variable called ‘the burden of red tape’, and the supporting leadership behaviour items were computed into one variable called ‘supporting leadership behaviour’. Hypotheses 1a and 1b were tested using a multiple regression analysis. Both ‘the burden of red tape’ as well as ‘the lack of functionality of red tape’ were regressed on ‘job satisfaction’. Section 4.2 shows the results of this analysis. Conclusions for these two hypotheses were based on the coefficients of the regression analysis. These results are accompanied by graphical representations of the coefficients for clarification purposes. Hypotheses 2a and 2b were tested through a moderation analysis. For each hypothesis, an interaction variable was made. The interaction variables consist of the mean-centred independent variable multiplied by the relevant mean-centred leadership behaviour. In the moderation analysis, variables have been mean-centred as the presence of multiple ‘normal’ predictors would make the coherent coefficients uninterpretable (Field, 2018). The reason for this is that when one would like to single out the relationship between one independent variable and the dependent variable in the presence of other independent variables, one would assume that the coefficients of the other independent variables are zero (Field, 2018). In reality, however, all independent variables have some relationship to the dependent variable. Mean-centring is a useful way of overcoming this issue. It also reduces the risk of multicollinearity. Therefore, in order to test the moderating role of, for example, supporting leadership behaviour in the negative relationship between the burden of red tape and job satisfaction, an interaction variable of ‘the burden of red tape (mean-centred) x supporting leadership behaviour (mean-centred)’ was created. Along with the mean-centred red tape variable and the mean-centred leadership variable, this interaction variable was regressed on job satisfaction for both hypotheses. Section 4.3 shows the results of this analysis. Conclusions were made based on the coefficients of the interaction variables. These results are followed by graphical representations in order to clarify the conclusions.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

With regards to this study's validity, a few observations can be made. The relationship between the two dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction has been explained through a motivational and a cognitive mechanism. Although the theoretical framework in chapter 2 has made these mechanisms plausible ways of looking at the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, this thesis does not measure the relevant intermediate concepts such as meaningfulness for the cognitive mechanism. This means that the empirical analysis of this thesis is not able to test the extent to which the theoretically argued causal mechanisms remain valid in practice. The factor analyses for the two dimensions of red tape do show that the used items measure two distinct concepts, namely the burden and the lack of functionality of red tape. The conducted multiple regression analysis, therefore, does show the extent to which two different dimensions of red tape regress on job satisfaction. The way in which the red tape dimensions relate to job satisfaction, however, has not been tested by this thesis. Furthermore, the leadership behaviours have each been measured with three distinct items. The factor analysis for these moderating variables showed that the two sets of three items each measured a different leadership behaviour. However, relevant intermediate concepts for the moderating mechanisms, such as increased levels of goal clarity at the address of employees, have not been taken into the analysis either. In sum, the main concepts of this thesis have all been measured with valid items, but the validity of the theorised mechanisms cannot be tested with the current operationalisation.

There are also some important remarks regarding this study's reliability. The items that are used for the operationalisation of the main theoretical concepts have been derived from the research project *Teamwerk in de Wijk*. The researchers of this project based their items on peer-reviewed academic literature, such as Van Loon et al. (2016), Yukl (2012) and DeHart-Davis (2009). The measures used in this thesis, therefore, have reliable sources. Furthermore, a reliability check has been carried out by this thesis using SPSS. Each set of items (regarding, for example, a red tape dimension or a leadership behaviour) had a score higher than .7 on Cronbach's alpha. This means that, for example, if someone perceives rules as burdensome, this person will score high on all four burden-items. Likewise, if two people perceive rules as burdensome to the same extent, they will rate the four 'burden'-items equally high. Moreover, the research design of this thesis is deemed to be a reliable way to empirically test the hypotheses. The number of survey respondents used for this thesis is 833, which is a fair number to work with. The respondents were, however, all working in the social welfare

domain, which means that results cannot be generalised to other parts of the public sector. Nevertheless, the survey statements are general, which means that any researcher who wants to analyse the current hypotheses in other domains of the public sector is able to do so using this thesis' items. Lastly, given that this thesis makes use of an existing dataset as well as of the well-known statistical programme SPSS, any researcher in possession of the dataset can replicate the analysis carried out by this thesis.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter contains the results of the statistical analysis. Section 4.1 will treat the descriptive statistics of the independent variables, the dependent variable and the moderating variables. Section 4.2 contains the regression analysis that has been conducted in order to test hypotheses 1a and 1b. Hypotheses 2a and 2b have been tested by conducting two separate interaction analyses (one for each hypothesis). These results are presented in section 4.3.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of this thesis.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics & Correlations (N = 833).

	Means	S.D.	Min	Max	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1 Job Satisfaction	4.21	.86	1	5	1								
2 Burden of Red Tape	3.57	.92	1	5	-.188**	1							
3 Lack of Functionality of Red Tape	2.65	.88	1	5	-.346**	.286**	1						
4 Supporting Leadership Behaviour	4.28	.86	1	5	.277**	-.053	-.289**	1					
5 Encouraging Innovation Leadership Behaviour	3.95	.93	1	5	.251**	-.017	-.334**	.603**	1				
6 Gender (1 = Female)	.89	.32	0	1	-.002	-.048	-.012	.007	.069*	1			
7 Age	41.8	11.24	20	66	.000	.083**	.044	-.078*	-.111*	.168**	1		
8 Education (1 = Higher Professional Education)	.78	.41	0	1	-.046	.150**	.024	-.014	.023	.006	-.048	1	
9 Tenure	13.89	10.2	0	48	-.044	.063*	.074*	-.028	-.061*	-.093**	.756**	.017	1

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

Some findings deserve special attention here. Firstly, the mean level of job satisfaction is rather high, with a score of 4.21. The standard deviation is .86, meaning that most of the scores are between approximately 3.4 and 5. Taking into account that respondents could rate this item on a scale from 1 till 5, it is safe to conclude that the overall job satisfaction of the respondents in this sample is rather high. The mean level of the burden-aspect of red tape is rather high as well with a score of 3.57 on a scale from 1 till 5. Again some variation exists, some people only give their perceived level of burdensome rules around 2.6 where others give it around 4.4. This finding means that respondents perceived their rules as rather burdensome. The level of perceived lack of functionality of red tape is somewhat lower with a mean score of 2.65. Some employees perceived rules as more functional than others, given the standard deviation of .88. This finding suggests that employees perceived their rules as lacking functionality, but this level is relatively lower than the extent to which they perceive rules to be burdensome. The levels of perceived supporting leadership as well as perceived encouraging innovation leadership were both rather high, with respective mean scores of 4.28 and 3.95. Therefore, respondents perceived that their managers behaved in a rather supportive way and their leaders encouraged them to innovate their daily practices. This condition is important given the moderation analysis that this thesis will conduct in section 4.3. Furthermore, 89% of the respondents reported that they were female, which is a large majority of the respondents. The mean respondent was around 41 years old. Moreover, the dummy variable for education indicates that 78% of the sample reported that they completed 'higher professional education' as their highest completed educational level. Also, the average amount of years that respondents had worked in the social welfare domain was almost 14 years. A large variation was found here, given that some respondents had been working in this domain for less than a year, whereas some respondents had been working in this domain for almost 50 years. When it comes to the correlations amongst the control variables, some are self-evident such as the fact that someone's tenure correlates with someone's age. The bivariate correlations shows that both dimensions of red tape negatively correlate with job satisfaction (in bold). Both leadership behaviours positively correlate with job satisfaction (in bold as well).

4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

In this section, hypotheses 1a and 1b are tested with a multiple regression analysis. First, the two independent variables are regressed on the dependent variable without taking into account the control variables. Then, the same regression will be conducted whilst controlling for age, gender, education and tenure. The hypotheses will be tested by looking at the unstandardised coefficients. Furthermore, the results will be clarified with two scatter plots, one for each hypothesis.

Table 8 shows the results of a multiple regression analysis without control variables. The burden of red tape has an unstandardized b -value of $-.091$, with a t -value of -2.879 that is significant. The lack of functionality of red tape has an unstandardized b -value of $-.311$, which had a t -value of -9.416 that was significant. This model had an R^2 of $.129$, which means that these two independent variables explained around 12,9% of the variance in job satisfaction.

Table 8: regression of the two red tape dimensions on job satisfaction, excluding control variables (N = 833).

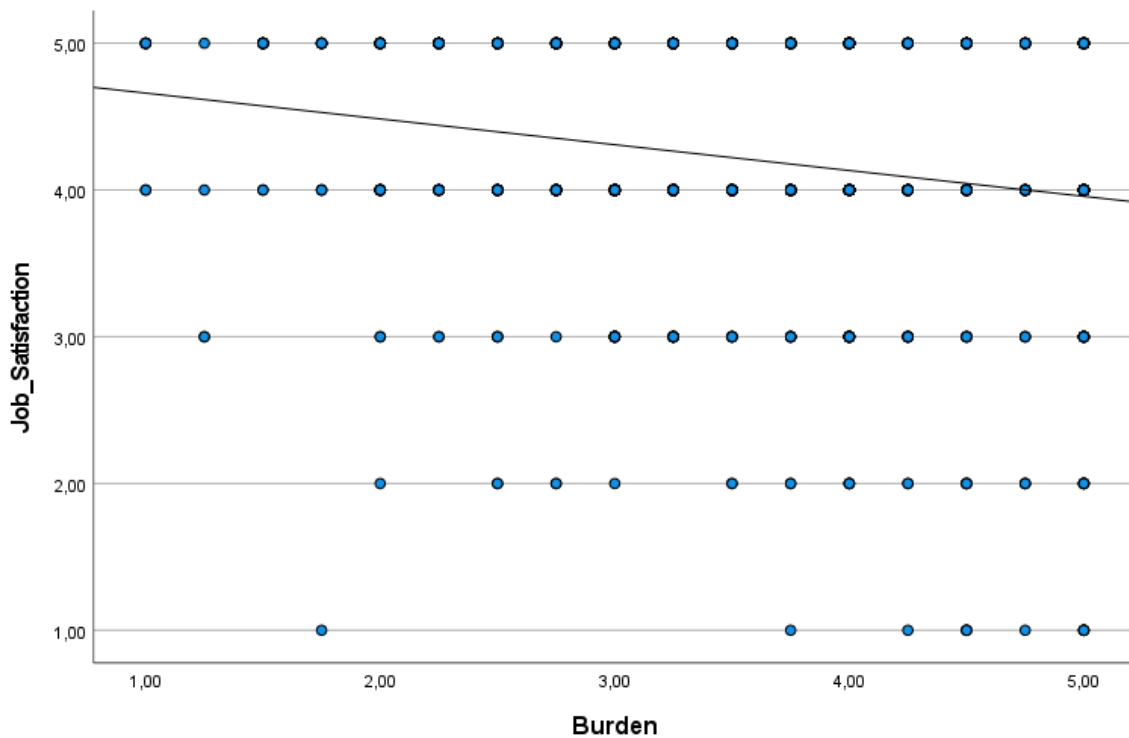
	b	Standard Error	β	t	p	Confidence intervals: lower bound	Confidence intervals: upper bound	R^2
(constant)	5,359	.125		43,037	<.001	5.114	5.603	
The Burden of Red Tape	-.091	.032	-.097	-2.879	.004	-.153	-.029	.129
The Lack of Functionality of Red Tape	-.311	.033	.318	-9.416	<.001	.376	-.246	

Table 9 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis taking into account the presence of the four selected control variables. This model is accompanied by two scatter plots. Figure 4 shows the scatter plot for the relationship between the burden dimension of red tape on job satisfaction. Figure 5 shows the scatter plot for the relationship between the lack of functionality dimension of red tape on job satisfaction.

Table 9: regression of the two red tape dimensions on job satisfaction, including control variables (N = 833).

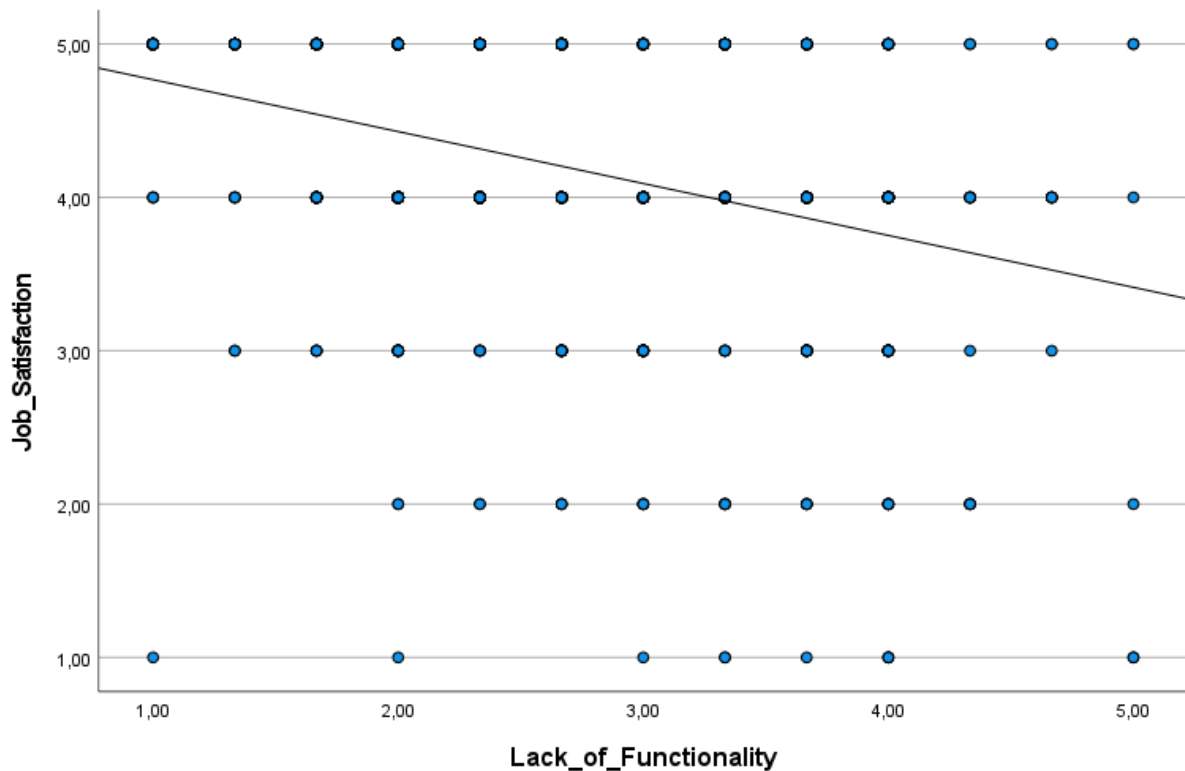
	b	Standard Error	β	t	p	Confidence intervals: lower bound	Confidence intervals: upper bound	R ²
(constant)	5.240	.204		25.639	<.001	4.839	5.641	
The Burden of Red Tape	-.091	.032	-.097	-2.823	.005	-.154	-.028	.132
The Lack of Functionality of Red Tape	-.309	.033	-.316	-9.318	<.001	-.374	-.244	
Gender	-.012	.089	-.004	-.129	.897	-.187	.164	
Age	.006	.004	.074	1.461	.144	-.002	.013	
Education	-.039	.069	-.019	-.571	.568	-.174	.096	
Tenure	-.006	.004	-.071	-1.413	.158	-.014	.002	

Figure 4: Scatter plot for the relationship between the burden of red tape and employee job satisfaction (N = 833).



Note: R² = .035

Figure 5: Scatter plot for the relationship between red tape's lacking functionality and employee job satisfaction.



Note: $R^2 = .120$

Table 9 as well as figures 4 and 5 show the main results for testing hypotheses 1a and 1b. When taking into account the presence of the control variables, the *b*-values of the regressions remain almost the same as the *b*-values shown in table 8. To be more precise, this complete model shows that the burden-dimension held a *b*-value of -.091 and the lack of functionality dimension had a *b*-value of -.309. The *t*-value for the burdendimension was -2.823, with a *p*-value of .005. The *t*-value of the lack of functionality dimension was -9.318, with a *p*-value lower than .001. The overall reported R^2 is .132. This means that these variables accounted for around 13.2% of the variance in employee job satisfaction.

The fact that the *b*-values remained similar means that the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable were unhindered by the control variables. This allows the thesis to adequately test hypotheses 1a and 1b. The relationship between the perceived burden of red tape and employee job satisfaction is tested by looking at the coefficient of the burden dimension. Table 9 shows that for every unit increase in the burden dimensions, job satisfaction decreases by .091. This *b*-value shows that there is a negative relationship between the perceived burden of red tape and employee job satisfaction. Figure 4

shows the coherent scatter plot for this relationship. The downward slope illustrates the negative b -value. Given these results, hypothesis 1a is supported by the data. In order to examine the relationship between red tape's lack of functionality and employee job satisfaction, the thesis looks at the coherent b -value. For every unit increase in the perceived lack of functionality of red tape, employee job satisfaction decreases by .309. This negative coefficient is relatively larger than the b -value of the burden dimension. It seems, therefore, that the perceived lacking functionality of red tape relates to employee job satisfaction to a larger extent than the perceived burden of red tape. This discrepancy is also indicated by the fact that the R^2 of this second relationship (.120, Figure 5) is relatively larger than the R^2 of the first relationship (which is .035, Figure 4). Figure 5 shows the scatter plot for the relationship between the lack of functionality of red tape and job satisfaction. This graph has a downward slope as well. These results indicate that there is a negative relationship between the perceived lack of functionality of red tape and job satisfaction. Hence, hypothesis 1b is supported by the data.

4.3 Moderation Analysis

In this final section of the results chapter, hypotheses 2a and 2b are tested through a moderation analysis. First, the leadership behaviours will be added to the earlier presented model to show how they regress on job satisfaction (table 10). Then, each hypothesis will be tested by adding an interaction variable. Table 11 and figure 6 will show the results that serve as the basis for testing hypothesis 2a. Table 12 and figure 7 will be used to test hypothesis 2b.

Before testing hypotheses 2a and 2b, it is worthwhile to first take a closer look at the intermediate step of adding the leadership behaviour into the model. Table 10 shows this new model. When it comes to the independent variables, their coefficients remain approximately the same with significant t -values. The main additional results that table 10 shows, are the coefficients for the leadership behaviours. Supporting leadership behaviour has a b -value of .159 with a coherent t -value of 3.984 that is significant. This positive coefficient allows the thesis to make the preliminary conclusion that in this sample, there is a positive relationship between perceived supporting leadership behaviour and employee job satisfaction. The b -value of encouraging innovation leadership behaviour is positive as well, with a score of .074. The coherent t -value is 1.961 with a p -value of .050. This means that when employees perceive encouraging innovation leadership behaviour from their manager, their job satisfaction increases with .07. Hence, there is a positive relationship between encouraging innovation leadership behaviour and employee job satisfaction.

Table 10: regression of red tape dimensions and leadership behaviours on job satisfaction, including control variables (N = 833).

	b	Standard Error	β	t	p	Confidence intervals: lower bound	Confidence intervals: upper bound	R ²
(constant)	4.024	.275		14.624	<.001	3.484	4.564	
The Burden of Red Tape	-.104	.032	-.111	-3.302	.001	-.166	-.042	.173
The Lack of Functionality of Red Tape	-.234	.035	-.239	-6.724	<.001	-.302	-.166	
Supporting Leadership Behaviour	.159	.040	.160	3.984	<.001	.081	.238	
Encouraging Innovation Leadership Behaviour	.074	.038	.080	1.961	.050	.000	.148	
Gender	-.018	.088	-.007	-.210	.834	-.190	.153	
Age	.008	.004	.110	2.225	.026	.001	.016	
Education	-.033	.067	-.016	-.492	.623	-.165	.099	
Tenure	-.008	.004	-.094	-1.922	.055	-.016	.000	

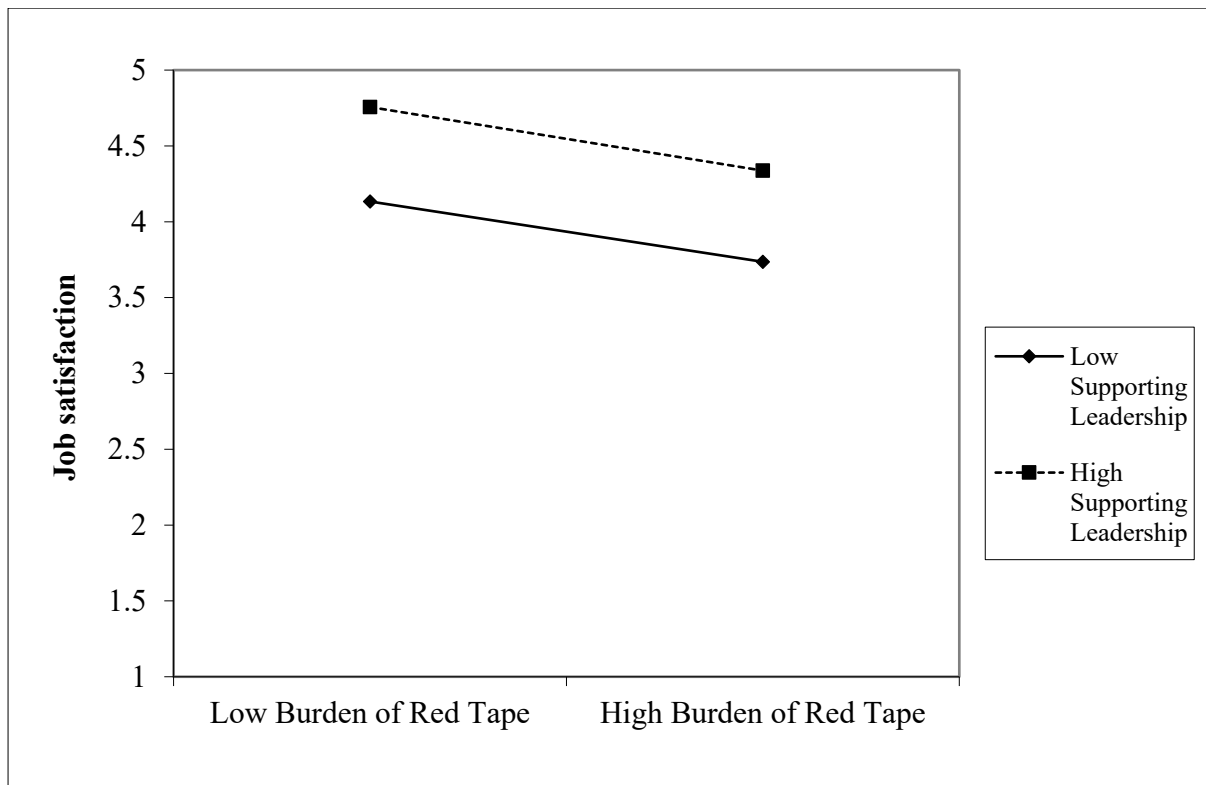
Hypothesis 2a will be tested by adding an interaction variable (burden of red tape x supporting leadership behaviour) to the model presented in table 10. Table 11 shows the results that are, as explained in section 3.4, mean-centred. This interaction model accounts for 11,5% of the variance in job satisfaction, as R^2 is .115. The coefficients of the mean-centred independent variable (burden of red tape) and moderating variable (supporting leadership behaviour) are close to their respective coefficients observed in the regression model presented in table 10. In order to test hypothesis 2a, the thesis looks at the coefficient of the mean-centred interaction variable (burden of red tape x supporting leadership behaviour). This coefficient has a value of -.004 which is close to zero. This is visually represented in figure 6. This figure contains two graphs. One graph showing results when supporting leadership is low and one graph showing results when supporting leadership is high. Given that the burden of red tape negatively relates

to job satisfaction, their slopes are both downward. The near-to-zero coefficient of the interaction variable is reflected in the fact that the slopes of the two graphs are almost identical. Furthermore, the coefficient of the interaction variable has a *t*-value of -.141 and a *p*-value of .888. This means that the coefficient of the interaction variable is insignificant. Hypothesis 2a is, therefore, not supported by the data.

Table 11: interaction analysis of the burden of red tape and supporting leadership behaviour with job satisfaction as dependent variable, control variables included (N = 833).

	b	Standard Error	β	t	p	Confidence intervals: lower bound	Confidence intervals: upper bound	R ²
(constant)	3.961	.174		22.276	<.001	3.619	4.303	
The Burden of Red Tape (mean-centred)	-.164	.031	-.176	-5.272	<.001	-.226	-.103	.115
Supporting Leadership (mean-centred)	.274	.033	.275	8.331	<.001	.210	.339	
Burden x Supporting Leadership (mean centred)	-.004	.030	-.005	-.141	.888	-.062	.054	
Gender	-.006	.090	-.002	-.063	.950	-.183	.172	
Age	.010	.004	.128	2.494	.013	.002	.017	
Education	-.015	.069	-.007	-.214	.831	-.151	.121	
Tenure	-.010	.004	-.122	-2.420	.016	-.019	-.002	

Figure 6: Interaction plot for the burden-supporting leadership interaction.

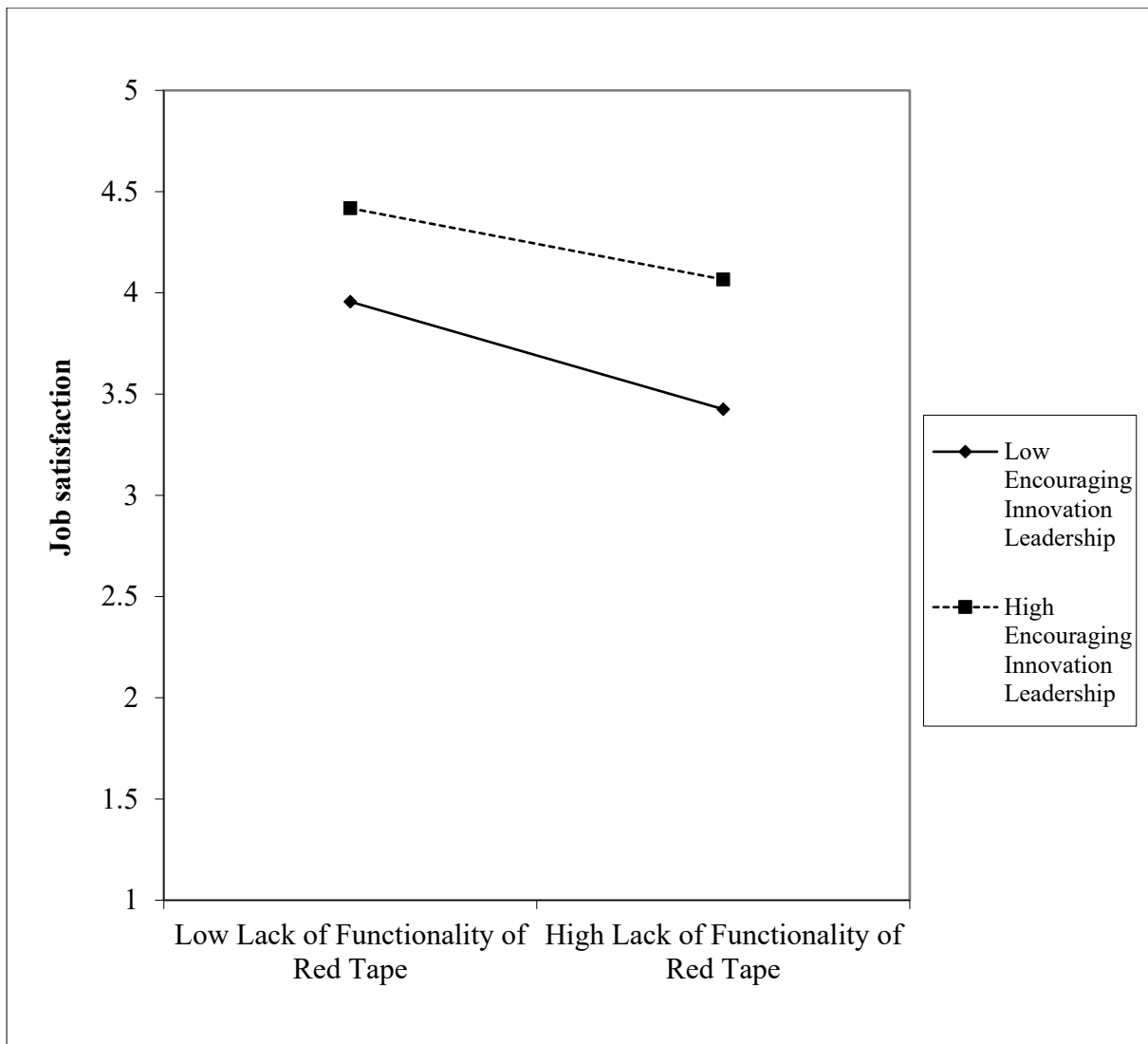


Hypothesis 2b will be tested by adding an interaction variable to the model presented in table 10 once more. This time the interaction variable consists of ‘lack of functionality x encouraging innovation leadership’. Table 12 shows the results of this interaction analysis. R^2 is .147, which means that this interaction model accounted for 14,7% of the variance in job satisfaction. The coefficients of the mean-centred independent variable (lack of functionality of red tape) and the moderating variable (encouraging innovation leadership) remain significant and are close to their respective coefficients in the model presented in table 10. The thesis will test hypothesis 2b by looking at the coefficient of this interaction variable as well. The b -value is .033. Figure 7 illustrates this coefficient by the fact that the two downward graphs have slopes that are almost identical. Furthermore, the coefficient of the interaction variable has a t -value of 1.039 and a p -value of .299. This result is, therefore, insignificant. Hence, the data do not support hypothesis 2b.

Table 12: interaction analysis of the burden of red tape and supporting leadership behaviour with job satisfaction as dependent variable, including control variables (N = 833).

	b	Standard Error	β	t	p	Confidence intervals: lower bound	Confidence intervals: upper bound	R ²
(constant)	4.098	.170		24.078	<.001	3.764	4.432	
The Lack of Functionality of Red Tape (mean-centred)	-.283	.033	-.289	-8.453	<.001	-.349	-.217	.147
Encouraging Innovation Leadership (mean-centred)	.143	.032	.155	4.448	<.001	.080	.206	
Lack of Functionality x Encouraging Innovation Leadership (mean centred)	.033	.032	.034	1.039	.299	-.030	.096	
Gender	-.022	.089	-.008	-.246	.806	-.196	.152	
Age	.007	.004	.091	1.816	.070	-.001	.015	
Education	-.073	.067	-.035	-1.086	.278	-.206	.059	
Tenure	.007	.004	-.081	-1.635	.102	-.015	.001	

Figure 7: Interaction plot for the lack of functionality-encouraging innovation leadership interaction.



Chapter 5: Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to contribute to the public administration literature by analysing two relationships. Firstly, it examined the relationship between perceptions of red tape and employee job satisfaction by looking at two specific dimensions of red tape – its burden and its lack of functionality. Secondly, the thesis analysed the extent to which supporting leadership behaviour and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour could moderate this relationship. This relationship had, to the best of the author’s knowledge, not been examined before by other research. This novel contribution combined two important strands of the literature, namely the public administration literature on red tape as well as the interdisciplinary literature on leadership behaviours.

The quantitative analysis showed that employee perceptions of red tape negatively related to their job satisfaction. When employees perceive rules as burdensome, their job satisfaction decreases. Similarly, rules that are perceived as lacking functionality negatively relate to employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, the analysis showed that supporting leadership as well as encouraging innovation leadership positively relate to employee job satisfaction. The leadership behaviours, however, did not moderate the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Supporting leadership behaviour did not mitigate the negative relationship between red tape’s burden and job satisfaction. Likewise, encouraging innovation leadership behaviour did not alleviate the negative relationship between red tape’s lack of functionality and job satisfaction. Therefore, the leadership behaviours were not found to mitigate the negative relationship between dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction.

5.2 Discussion

This thesis generated a multitude of results that deserve special attention. Firstly, this study has contributed to the red tape literature by showing how two dimensions of red tape were related to employee job satisfaction. Although many definitions and measurements of red tape exist (Blom et al., 2021), this thesis found empirical evidence that supports the job-centred definition of red tape theorised by Van Loon et al. (2016). Both the burden-dimension and the lack of functionality-dimension negatively related to employees’ overall job satisfaction. The lack of functionality-dimension, however, related to job satisfaction to a larger extent. Rules that are perceived as having no purpose or function, therefore, seem to weigh more heavily for employees’ job satisfaction than rules that are burdensome. This result is interesting with

regard to the definition of red tape. Both the burden and lack of functionality have been underscored by the seminal works of Bozeman (1993) and Van Loon et al. (2016), but the current analysis has shown that measuring employee perceptions of red tape generates a difference in the relative importance of the two dimensions when they are related to employee job satisfaction. Although employees' job satisfaction decreases when they perceive rules both as burdensome and as lacking functionality, it is the perceived lack of functionality of red tape that, in a relative sense, relates more negatively to employee job satisfaction than the perceived burden of red tape. Hence, the results of this thesis underscore the value of the job-centred definition of red tape by Van Loon et al. (2016) as this definition allows researchers of red tape to look at the extent to which red tape's dimensions matter in the daily activities of public employees.

Secondly, both supporting leadership behaviour and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour positively related to employee job satisfaction. This study, therefore, found evidence that two leadership behaviours, as theorised by Yukl (2012), are positively related to employee job satisfaction in a public sector context. In a relative sense, supporting leadership related more positively to encouraging innovation leadership. This aligns with the arguments made by Yukl et al. (2019) who theorised that supporting leadership is very strongly related to employee job satisfaction. Apparently, employees feel more satisfied with their job when their manager listens to them and supports them in stressful situations than when their manager stimulates them to think outside the box. However, it is noteworthy that encouraging innovation leadership behaviour positively related to job satisfaction as well. This means that the relationship-oriented behaviours are not the only leadership behaviours that positively relate to job satisfaction. This finding calls for a more comprehensive analysis in which several leadership behaviours, as theorised by Yukl (2012), are related to job satisfaction. This could shed more light on what behaviours actually matter for employees' job satisfaction and to what extent. Again, it is important that future studies measure employee perceptions in order to generate nuanced results.

Thirdly, given that the empirical findings of this thesis did not confirm a moderating role for the leadership behaviours, it is important to look at how this can be explained from a theoretical as well as a methodological perspective. Although the theoretical underpinnings pointed at a moderating relationship of the two selected leadership behaviours, it is possible that, in fact, other leadership behaviours are more plausible moderators for the two negative relationships. For example, clarifying leadership aims at "explaining any relevant rules" (Yukl,

2012, p.70). This behaviour could moderate the cognitive mechanism between red tape's lack of functionality and job satisfaction adequately. Public employees who perceive rules to be lacking functionality might change their perspective when leaders use clarifying behaviour instead of encouraging innovation behaviour. This could mitigate the negative relationship between red tape's lack of functionality and job satisfaction. Likewise, the burden of red tape might be alleviated when leaders use other relations-oriented leadership behaviours such as recognising or developing behaviour, as this whole meta-category is positively related to job satisfaction (Yukl et al., 2019). From a methodological point of view, it is possible that the selected encouraging innovation-items were too broad. More specifically, this thesis used encouraging innovation-items whereas the cognitive causal mechanism focused on the intellectual stimulation-aspect of this leadership behaviour (section 2.3.2). Therefore, an analysis using items that are focused on intellectual stimulation more specifically could, possibly, generate different results. All items were valid and reliable (chapter 3), but items focusing on specific aspects of the leadership behaviours could maybe have brought about different results. Therefore, the insignificant results of the moderation analysis could be explained both theoretically as well as methodologically.

Fourthly, the fact that hypotheses 2a and 2b were not supported also indicates that the supposed causal mechanisms between the dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction, as theorised in section 2.2.2, might take other forms in reality. Although a negative relationship between the two selected dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction exists, this thesis aimed at confirming the theorised motivational and cognitive causal mechanisms by looking at the extent to which the leadership behaviours moderated the negative relationships. As both behaviours do not moderate the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables, the causal mechanisms might, in reality, be different from this thesis' theoretical expectations. For example, it could be that red tape's lack of functionality does not relate to higher levels of meaninglessness, but rather to higher levels of cognitive uncertainty (Bernards et al., 2021). More qualitative research is needed to clarify the causal mechanisms between the two selected dimensions of perceived red tape and employee job satisfaction.

Fifthly, the fact that the empirical evidence did not support a moderation could mean that the relationship between leadership behaviours, red tape and job satisfaction is, in fact, a mediation. Moynihan et al. (2012) found that transformational leadership could change perceptions of red tape. In line with these findings, it could be that the two selected leadership behaviours can change employee perceptions of red tape, which, in turn, changes employee job

satisfaction. Although Blom et al. (2021) pointed at leadership behaviours as possible moderators in the context of perceptions of red tape, the findings of this thesis and of Moynihan et al. (2012) send the current academic debate into a different direction – leadership behaviours are, possibly, most suitably taken into the analysis as independent variables. Research should then consider leadership behaviours as independent variables, dimensions of red tape as mediating variables and job satisfaction as dependent variable. Thus, a mediation analysis comprising the five main variables of this thesis could provide for different results. In line with what has been said earlier in this section, future mediation analyses should then also include a comprehensive set of leadership behaviours that adequately correspond to the two dimensions of the job-centred definition of red tape (Van Loon et al., 2016).

Sixthly, it is possible that other samples do generate significant results for a moderation. This study focused on a sample of social welfare teams, but other samples from another public or private domain could, possibly, confirm this thesis' theoretical expectations.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study knows several limitations. Although the thesis' theoretical framework has been based on research that examined relevant relationships, the thesis did not conduct any independent qualitative research in order to clarify the specific relationships that this thesis wanted to analyse quantitatively. Interviews, for example, could have clarified how and the extent to which the leadership behaviours related to dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the thesis made use of an existing dataset that focused on a specific set of leadership behaviours. Although this dataset served as a useful database for the thesis' statistical analysis, the thesis could not analyse other kinds of leadership behaviours that possibly relate to dimensions of red tape and job satisfaction. Moreover, this thesis looked at social welfare teams. Although the results of this thesis are therefore generalisable to this part of the public service, this thesis was not able to provide results that are generalisable for other parts of the public sector. Lastly, respondents worked in teams who had their own manager. This multi-level structure means that respondents working in the same team reflected on the leadership behaviour of the same manager. However, employees all had individual ratings of their job satisfaction. The fact that the data were, therefore, nested would have required a multi-level analysis, but this thesis conducted a multiple regression analysis. Hence, the conducted analysis did not take into account any variance between teams or between team members within the same team. A multi-level analysis could have made the empirical findings of this thesis more thorough.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should relate other leadership behaviours to red tape dimensions and job satisfaction in order to see to what extent public managers can mitigate the negative consequences of red tape dimensions. This could provide for a more comprehensive analysis of the possible roles that leadership behaviours can in the negative relationship between red tape and job satisfaction. Also, this thesis would recommend to first conduct qualitative research in order to analyse the specific mechanisms that exist between red tape and job satisfaction as this has consequences for the selection of the leadership behaviours. For example, interviewing public employees could deepen the current knowledge by asking interviewees what it is exactly that they do not like about red tape. This could also provide for a better understanding of how employees perceive rules in general. Furthermore, future research could look at other types of leadership behaviours for the current causal mechanisms. The motivational mechanism could be moderated by other relations-oriented leadership behaviours, such as developing or empowering, as they are positively related to job satisfaction (Yukl et al., 2019). The cognitive mechanism could be mitigated by leadership behaviour that aims at explaining the rules' purposes. An adequate leadership behaviour in this case could be clarifying leadership behaviour as this behaviour intends to clarify tasks and rules (Yukl, 2012). Furthermore, it is worth to note that leadership behaviours are, possibly, not a fitting mitigating factor after all. Moynihan et al. (2012) showed that leadership behaviour as independent variable influences perceptions of red tape as dependent variable, but no research has shown that leadership behaviour could serve as a moderator in the relationship between red tape and job satisfaction. Other roles for leadership behaviour, such as being an independent variable, could be more suitable. Moreover, the current research should be carried out in other parts of the public sector as well.

5.5 Recommendations for Practitioners

Although this thesis was not able to provide practitioners with exact leadership behaviours that could mitigate the negative relationship between perceptions of red tape and employee job satisfaction, other findings are useful for public managers. Firstly, public managers should be aware of the fact that red tape affects job satisfaction through two dimensions, namely its burden and its lack of functionality. Employees are reluctant to spend their time on burdensome rules and they feel that their job is less meaningful when they have to work with rules that lack a clear purpose or functionality. The empirical findings of this

study show that in relative terms rules that lack functionality relate more negatively to employee job satisfaction than rules that are perceived as burdensome. This implies that managers should pay special attention to employees who do not understand the rules' purposes. Although the moderation hypotheses of this thesis were not supported, Moynihan et al. (2012) found that leaders can change employee perceptions of red tape through mechanisms such as clear communication. Communicating the rules' purposes to employees could, therefore, be a way for managers to mitigate the negative relationship between red tape's lack of functionality and employee job satisfaction. Future research should look into this mediation. Nevertheless, this thesis does alert managers to take into account that red tape negatively relates to employee job satisfaction to a larger extent through its lack of functionality than through its burden.

Secondly, the analysis found evidence showing that supporting leadership behaviour and encouraging innovation leadership behaviour positively relate to employee job satisfaction. When it comes supporting leadership, managers should focus on helping out employees when they face stressful situations (Yukl, 2012). By listening to employees' needs and interests, managers can increase employee job satisfaction (Yukl, 2012). Furthermore, employee job satisfaction is boosted when managers express confidence in their employees that they are capable of performing difficult tasks (Yukl, 2012). With regards to encouraging innovation leadership, managers should encourage their employees to "think outside the box" (Yukl, 2012, p.73). Encouraging innovation also consists of emphasising employees' creativity and their new ideas (Yukl, 2012). Managers who facilitate the generation of employees' new ideas will, therefore, have more satisfied employees. Providing the necessary resources to implement these new ideas is also an important of encouraging innovation leadership (Yukl, 2012). Therefore, it is by stimulating employees to come up with new ideas and by helping employees develop and implement their ideas that managers can boost employee job satisfaction.

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Appendix 1: Survey Items in Dutch

The following Dutch items have been selected from the dataset generated by the research project *Teamwerk in de Wijk* (Van Zijl et al., 2021).

Job Satisfaction

1. “Alles bijeengenomen ben ik tevreden met mijn werk.”

The Burden of Red Tape

“De regels en procedures waar ik in mijn werk mee te maken heb...

1. Veroorzaken veel werkdruk.
2. Kosten veel tijd om na te leven.
3. Veroorzaken veel vertraging.
4. Leveren veel frustratie op.”

Green Tape Items, in bold the items used for the Lack of Functionality of Red Tape

“De regels en procedures waar ik in mijn werk mee te maken heb...

5. Zijn consistent.
- 6. Bieden in de praktijk voldoende houvast.**
- 7. Zijn duidelijk.**
8. Zijn formeel vastgelegd.
- 9. Zijn nuttig.”**

Supporting Leadership behaviour

“Mijn [terminologie voor leidinggevende]...

1. Heeft aandacht voor de behoeftes van individuele teamleden.
2. Is betrokken met de teamleden.
3. Ondersteunt teamleden indien nodig bij een moeilijke taak.”

Encouraging Innovation Leadership Behaviour

“Mijn [terminologie voor leidinggevende]...

1. Spreekt over het belang van innovatie voor het succes van het team.
2. Moedigt teamleden aan om de doelen van het team beter te bereiken.

3. Moedigt teamleden aan om op innovatieve wijze de prestaties te verbeteren.”