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Abstract

The global work environment is changing quickly, often becoming unfavourable to employees. This scoping review aimed to synthesise the existing literature on self-undermining behaviours in the workplace, with a particular focus on their development as a concept and their application in occupational contexts. The method followed was the guidelines of the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR). A search was conducted using electronic databases (e.g.,

ScienceDirect, Scopus, EBSCOhost) and online platforms (e.g., ResearchGate). The list of references from the included studies was also assessed for any additional papers that could be relevant. The review's inclusion criteria were as follows: studies published in peer-reviewed journals only in English that explored self-undermining. Of the 60 papers identified, eight studies with 4046 participants were included; the majority followed a quantitative method and a cross-sectional design. Self-undermining was positively associated with burnout and job demands. Self-undermining mediated the relationship between several work-related factors and outcomes. The studies in this review had limitations, e.g., self-reported data. Strategies to monitor and reduce self-undermining may be a crucial intervention to prevent burnout. Organisations shall develop and implement different programs to reduce these behaviours among employees.

Keywords: Reactive work behaviours, JD-R theory, burnout, work engagement, job crafting, working population

INTRODUCTION

The global work environment is changing quickly, often becoming unfavourable to employees. Recent organisational transformations—such as restructuring, extended working hours, and increased work intensity—have contributed to higher psychosocial risks at the workplace [1, 2]. In parallel, mental health concerns such as stress, depression, and anxiety have become more common, generating both personal and financial costs [3, 4].

One significant outcome of prolonged psychosocial stress is burnout, characterised by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment [5]. According to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, high job demands (e.g., work overload) alongside insufficient resources (e.g., social support) can impair employees' well-being, reduce work engagement, and increase burnout risks [6]. Burnout, in turn, may push individuals toward detrimental behaviours— such as self-undermining—which create additional work obstacles and perpetuate a harmful cycle of high strain and decreased performance [7-10].

Figure 1 presents a simplified conceptual diagram adapted from Bakker and Demerouti (2017) to capture the interrelations between these concepts more clearly [11]. It centres on how job demands and job resources relate to work engagement and burnout. It highlights self-undermining as a product of strain and a contributor to future job demands. By visually mapping these interconnections, it becomes clearer how concepts like self-undermining, burnout, and job demands fit within a broader occupational health psychology model [12, 13].

Despite its growing relevance, the literature on self-undermining in occupational contexts remains fragmented. Existing research often intertwines self-undermining with related constructs like burnout, job crafting, and work engagement, primarily examined within the JD-R theory. There is a need to consolidate and clarify empirical findings to inform theory and practice.

This scoping review aimed to synthesise the existing literature on self-undermining behaviours in the workplace, with a particular focus on their development as a concept and their application in occupational contexts. Recognising that self-undermining does not occur in isolation, this review also examined its relationships with key constructs such as burnout, job demands, and job resources, as informed by the JD-R theory. By doing so, this review sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how self-undermining behaviours contribute to workplace stress and the broader loss cycles of employee well-being. The review also identifies gaps in the current research and highlighted areas for future exploration.

METHODS

The method employed in this scoping review was based on the guidelines developed by Tricco et al. (2018) and outlined in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): checklist and explanation (http://www.prisma-statement.org/Extensions/ScopingReviews) [14].

Search strategy

On March 17, 2024, an electronic search was conducted using the following databases: ScienceDirect (Elsevier), EBSCOhost, Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed. These databases were chosen to ensure that the included papers came from reputable journals and guarantee the greatest possible coverage of the literature on this field. On March 17, 2024, the screening of the primary studies was also completed.

The search string was adjusted for all databases and used in All fields (Table 1). The following search step involved using the snowballing technique to look through the reference lists

of the first publications and authors that were found until no more relevant information could be found [15]. A new search was also performed in Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/) and ResearchGate (https://www.researchgate.net/) using the titles of the papers, checking the results for studies that had cited those works, and searching for each author and their other published works. With this strategy, the objective was to be as exhaustive as possible in identifying possible primary studies to be integrated into the scoping review.

Screening and Eligibility stage

The researchers' inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 2) were used to filter the papers throughout the screening phase. Initially, works were restricted by date (2014–2024), document type (articles), source type (journals; academic journals), and language (English) using filters applied to databases. All the duplicate records were then deleted. All systematic reviews, conference papers, reviews, book chapters, meta-analyses, books, meta-synthesis, short surveys, conference reviews, letters, editorials, reports, business articles, and abstract reports were not included because the scoping review was limited to journal papers (research articles). All non-English articles were removed, leaving only English items included. Since every search in the databases yielded publications with publication dates after 2014, it was decided to include all works published after the year the self-undermining concept first appeared (2014). The study's timeframe was set from 2014 to 2024, with papers published before 2014 excluded. The working population served as the sample for the papers, and those who discussed the non-working population were removed. Primary studies should be empirical and explore self-undermining. Every study that was not empirical was eliminated.

The remaining papers' titles, abstracts, and keywords were checked to guarantee they met the criteria for inclusion. Lastly, the eligibility of the papers was accurately evaluated through full-text screening, and only those meeting the inclusion criteria were included in the review. Two independent judges conducted the review to ensure reliable and consistent primary study selection. In case of doubt about whether or not to include a primary study, a verbal discussion was held between the two reviewers. When conflicts were not solved, a third reviewer was included.

Data collection and management

The Mendeley Reference Manager software was used to store the selected studies from the electronic libraries, and data management was performed directly from these libraries. The details of every paper were extracted into a Microsoft Excel table after the primary studies were identified. Using all this data, it is feasible to characterise the body of research that has already been performed on the topic and come to conclusions that allow the research question to be addressed.

RESULTS

The searches were performed in all databases, and 60 papers were retrieved. The following filters were applied to the databases to screen the studies: 26 papers were duplicate records; eight were removed after the date filter, nine after the document type filter, and three after the type of source filter. This left 14 papers needing assessment for their title, abstracts, and keywords. Ten papers were left for the final full-text screening after the title, abstract, and keywords were screened. Four studies were eliminated because they did not match the inclusion criteria, which indicated that primary research should investigate self-undermining. Two publications were removed following full-text screening for failing to meet the inclusion criteria related to the primary studies

(investigating self-undermining), leaving eight papers to be included in the scoping review. The PRISMA flow diagram illustrates the process for choosing relevant papers for the scoping review (Figure 2).

More research was performed to ensure that every paper relevant to the topic was included. Using the keywords "self-undermining", "JD-R", "burnout", "engagement", "job demands", "performance", "job crafting", "exhaustion", and "self-regulation", references from the 40 papers (including the final eight papers included) were checked in the first stage of retrieval. No additional works that matched the inclusion criteria were found. Subsequently, on March 17, 2024, a new search was performed through Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.com/) and ResearchGate (https://www.researchgate.net/), searching for the eight included publications by their titles and authors. The studies that had cited the papers in the title search were evaluated to determine whether they satisfied the inclusion criteria. The author's name search was conducted similarly, but each published work was checked to determine if any studies or reports would fit the inclusion criteria. Neither of the additional search types' papers satisfied these criteria. A second search using the keywords from the eight studies in the databases was performed on May 16, 2024, but no additional publications were discovered. As a result, only the final nine papers were included in the scoping review.

In Table 3, a summary of the key discoveries from each study is presented, including details such as the author and year of publication, the study's objectives, the role of the main variable, other variables examined, the research method, sample size (N), industry sector, country, and main findings. Of the eight papers included in the review, one employed a quantitative method and diary study [16], a quantitative method and cross-sectional design were used in six [17–22], and one used a qualitative method through interviews [23]. Regarding data sources, the sample sizes ranged from

N=13 [23] to *N*=1256 [21]. Two of the primary studies used a sample with various geographical representations, one being conducted in North America (NA), South America (SA), Europe, the Middle East, Africa (EMEA), and Asia, Pacific (APAC) [23] and another in Chile, China, the Netherlands, Romania, and the United States of America [21]. Concerning the other six primary studies, two were conducted in Romania [19, 22], one in Germany [18], one in the Netherlands [17], one in Pakistan [16], and one in Poland [20]. Considering publication, 2022 was the year with the most primary studies published, with four studies [17–19, 23]. In terms of activity sectors, the studies' samples represented a broad range of occupational contexts, for example, nurses [16, 20], healthcare workers [19], and international salespeople [23].

After assessing the eight primary studies, it was found that self-undermining had a mediating role in five papers [16, 18, 20, 22, 23], was the dependent variable in four papers [16, 17, 19, 20], and was the independent variable in two papers [16, 21].

Figure 2 presents a mind map synthesising core themes from the included studies. The map centralises self-undermining as a behavioural mediator linking job demands to burnout while highlighting moderating roles of job resources and personal capacities such as job crafting and self-regulation. The map reveals research gaps, notably the predominance of cross-sectional designs limiting causal inference and the need for standardised measurement tools. This visual framework underscores intervention targets, including reducing job demands, enhancing resources, and addressing self-undermining behaviours to mitigate burnout risk.

DISCUSSION

This review highlighted the critical role of self-undermining in shaping occupational health outcomes. By systematically analysing the literature, we identified consistent evidence linking

self-undermining to increased job demands and burnout. These findings underscore the need for interventions targeting self-undermining behaviours to break the escalating job demands and poor well-being cycle.

This review examined primary studies published in journals between 2020 and 2023 that addressed self-undermining in different activity sectors. Seven studies used a quantitative method and self-report measures, and one used a qualitative method with interviews. This choice may have stemmed from the advantage of the quantitative method in facilitating the collection of larger samples, while self-report instruments enable the simultaneous evaluation of multiple variables [24].

It was found that self-undermining is positively associated with burnout [16, 17, 19, 21, 22]. Self-undermining behaviours, which include actions and attitudes that sabotage one's success and well-being, can exacerbate stress and decrease one's ability to cope with job demands. For instance, individuals who engage in self-undermining might procrastinate, set unrealistic goals, or engage in negative self-talk, contributing to increased stress levels and a sense of inadequacy. This heightened stress and self-criticism can lead to a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, depersonalisation, and emotional exhaustion, critical components of burnout. The research conducted by Sonnenschein et al. (2007) and Van Gelderen et al. (2017) consistently indicated that employees experiencing burnout tend to disrupt their daily functioning due to poor sleep quality. Additionally, individuals with elevated levels of strain are more prone to self-undermining behaviours [25, 26].

Job demands were positively related to self-undermining [5–8]. High job demands, such as excessive workload, time pressure, and emotional labour, can overwhelm employees, leading them to adopt maladaptive coping strategies. These strategies often manifest as self-undermining behaviours, where individuals inadvertently sabotage their performance and well-being. For

example, when faced with unrealistic deadlines, employees might procrastinate or engage in negative self-talk, doubting their ability to meet expectations. This situation can lead to a harmful cycle in which the stress from high job demands leads to self-undermining behaviours, exacerbating the stress levels and contributing to further burnout. The studies cited suggest that interventions to reduce job demands or improve employees' coping mechanisms could be crucial in breaking this cycle. Bakker et al. (2022) found that weekly job demands affect self-undermining, especially for those with chronic burnout, highlighting job demands' dynamic and ongoing impact on employees' mental health and behaviour. The study suggested that employees who face high job demands weekly are more inclined to exhibit self-undermining behaviours. These behaviours were particularly pronounced in individuals with chronic burnout, suggesting lower resilience and increased susceptibility to the adverse effects of job stressors.

Mathews and Rutherford (2022) found that fights, sales closure rates, and work-family conflict were self-undermining aspects experienced by sales executives. In a high-pressure sales environment, conflicts with colleagues and clients (fights) can lead to stress and reduced team cohesion, ultimately impacting performance negatively. Sales closure rates, a critical metric for sales executives, can become a source of significant pressure; when targets are not met, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, further diminishing performance and motivation. Additionally, the demanding nature of sales roles often leads to work-family conflict, where work pressures invade personal and family time, causing stress and dissatisfaction in both domains. This conflict can foster a negative feedback loop where stress from one area exacerbates difficulties in the other, contributing to a cycle of self-undermining behaviours [23].

Regarding the association between self-undermining and self-regulatory capacity, Roczniewska and Bakker (2021) found a negative correlation between these constructs.

Additionally, the study found that self-regulatory capacity is linked to improved functioning through self-undermining and increased job crafting for employees with low burnout [20]. Employees with higher self-regulatory abilities were less likely to engage in behaviours that sabotaged their success and well-being. Self-regulatory capacity refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours to pursue long-term goals. When employees possess solid self-regulatory skills, they can manage stress and resist the temptation of self-undermining behaviours like delaying tasks, criticising themselves, and avoiding challenging situations. Job crafting involves employees proactively modifying their job demands and job resources to fit their strengths and interests better, leading to increased job satisfaction and performance. For employees experiencing low levels of burnout, this combination of reduced self-undermining and increased job crafting due to high self-regulatory capacity can significantly improve their work engagement and productivity.

Bakker and Wang (2020) found in their study that there was a positive correlation between self-undermining and self-handicapping, suggesting that employees who engage in self-undermining behaviours are also likely to exhibit self-handicapping tendencies. Self-undermining involves actions that negatively impact one's performance and well-being, such as procrastination, negative self-talk, and setting unrealistic goals. On the other hand, self-handicapping is a strategy where individuals create obstacles and excuses to avoid taking responsibility for potential failures, thereby protecting their self-esteem. For example, an employee might intentionally delay starting a project (self-handicapping) and then criticise his/her lack of progress (self-undermining). This interplay can create a vicious cycle, where self-handicapping behaviours lead to increased stress and reduced performance, fostering more self-undermining behaviours. In the same study, the authors stated that self-undermining is associated with lower proactivity and engagement. This

indicates that employees who engage in self-undermining behaviours are less likely to take the initiative and be fully involved in their work. Proactivity refers to the self-initiated and future-oriented actions that employees take to bring about change and improve their work environment. On the other hand, work engagement involves being psychologically present, enthusiastic, and absorbed in one's work. When employees engage in self-undermining behaviours, their motivation and confidence to take proactive steps are diminished. This lack of proactivity can lead to missed opportunities for improvement and innovation [21].

This review has emphasised the critical role of self-undermining as a mediator in the connection between various work-related factors and their outcomes. Self-undermining behaviours serve as a crucial intermediary in several critical associations within the workplace. Firstly, self-undermining mediated the association between burnout and job demands [16]. When employees experience high job demands, the resulting stress and pressure can lead to burnout. Burnout exacerbates self-undermining behaviours, creating a cycle where employees' performance and well-being are further compromised. In addition, job crafting and self-undermining behaviours mediated the impact of job demands and resources on emotional exhaustion and work engagement. Conversely, self-undermining behaviours can diminish these positive effects, highlighting the dual pathways through which job demands and job resources influence employee outcomes. Daily self-regulation is linked to enhanced functioning in employees with low burnout levels by reducing self-undermining and boosting job crafting [20]. Effective self-regulation helps employees manage stress and avoid self-sabotaging behaviours, enhancing their ability to craft their jobs to promote work engagement and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the link between feeling exhausted and the perception of having a heavy workload was mediated by self-undermining [22]. Highly exhausted employees are more inclined to exhibit self-undermining behaviours, influencing how they

perceive their workload. This suggests that addressing self-undermining behaviours can help mitigate the negative impact of exhaustion on workload perception. Additionally, self-undermining indirectly links exhaustion to the perception of emotional load and job demands [22]. Exhausted employees are more prone to self-undermining, which can heighten their perception of job demands and emotional strain. This indirect pathway underscores the importance of interventions targeting self-undermining to alleviate the burden of job demands and emotional load. Lastly, exhaustion significantly predicted self-undermining, and self-undermining predicted the perception of job demands [22]. This sequential relationship indicates that efforts to reduce exhaustion can lower self-undermining behaviours, subsequently improving employees' perceptions of their job demands.

Hihglighted across all the studies included in this scoping review are certain common concepts that need to be emphasised: the theoretical framework, as all studies were rooted in the JD-R theory, which emphasises the interplay between job demands, job resources, burnout, and work engagement; the measurement, as each study used a self-undermining scale to measure specific behaviours that undermine performance, and the development and validation of this scale demonstrated the importance of assessing self-undermining behaviours in an occupational context; relationship with burnout, as the studies consistently show that there is a positive correlation between self-undermining and burnout, highlighting the detrimental impact of self-undermining behaviours on employees' well-being and organisational outcomes, and the mediating role, as some studies suggested that self-undermining may mediate the relationship between job demands and burnout, indicating its potential role in the health impairment process of the JD-R theory.

LIMITATIONS

First, in the reviewed studies, several occupations, including nurses, manufacturing plant employees, and international salespeople, limit the findings' generalisation to a broader range of professions and settings. Thus, future research should study self-undermining behaviours in other groups of workers.

Another limitation is related to the research design employed in the primary studies. Most of the studies used a cross-sectional approach, focusing on fixed time points, which poses limitations on determining the direction of causality. This design cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship as it does not account for time lags between variables, potentially leading to biased effect estimations. The identified relationships were correlational, and causal inferences could not be made. While cross-sectional studies reveal immediate effects, they may not capture the complex dynamics of causality. For future research, it is advisable to use a longitudinal design or repeated measures when researchers want to explore causality. Longitudinal evaluations would yield more accurate findings of causal relationships by studying changes over time, thus reducing the potential for common method variance.

Another limitation across most reviewed papers was the reliance on self-report data, introducing the possibility of inflated relationships due to common method variance. To mitigate this, employing objective data from the organisation would be preferable. Using multiple sources for perception or behaviour data, such as observing and recording self-undermining behaviours by researchers, could improve the reliability and validity of the results.

The limited number of papers included in the review was expected. Acknowledging the challenge of searching all databases, an extensive search was performed, and no additional relevant sources were identified. Despite only eight papers meeting the inclusion criteria, it is essential to

note that all documents were from journals. On the other hand, this shows that self-undermining is a recent concept and has been more studied in the past few years. This means that the importance of this concept is increasing in terms of employees' well-being.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

These findings offer valuable theoretical insights. They align with the JD-R theory, which suggests that excessive job strain can result in self-undermining behaviours. The review also reinforces the concept of loss cycles in the workplace, highlighting the interplay between job demands, strain, and exhaustion caused by self-undermining. Additionally, these results enhance the understanding of the reciprocal relationship between job demands and job strain, contributing to the field of occupational health psychology.

Regarding the practical implications, monitoring and reducing self-undermining behaviours is essential for preventing burnout. Organisations should focus on developing and implementing programs, training sessions, and initiatives to minimise these behaviours among employees. Additionally, the results underscore the importance of addressing psychosocial risks in the workplace to enhance employee well-being and achieve better organisational outcomes.

This scoping review on self-undermining in an occupational context could provide valuable insights for researchers and professionals in occupational health and safety. The findings contribute to theoretical advancements by encouraging researchers to include self-undermining as a critical variable in occupational stress and burnout models. Future studies can explore how self-undermining impacts workplace outcomes, paving the way for more comprehensive theories of employee well-being. Moreover, integrating self-undermining into existing job crafting and work engagement frameworks can offer a more holistic perspective on employee behaviour.

Strategies to monitor and reduce self-undermining may be a crucial intervention to prevent burnout. The following strategies can benefit both employees and organisations: develop and implement awareness and educational programmes about self-undermining behaviours, which can educate employees on recognising signs of self-undermining and provide strategies to mitigate such behaviours; encourage job crafting initiatives that would enhance job satisfaction and work engagement and reduce the propensity of self-undermining behaviours by promoting a sense of autonomy and purpose within the employees; introduce stress management techniques which would allow organisations to reduce the likelihood of self-undermining behaviours caused by stress and pressure; managers and supervisors should receive leadership training to enable them to identify signs of self-undermining in their teams because creating a culture of trust can significantly benefit from effective leadership and play a crucial role; foster a supportive work environment which promotes open communication, psychological safety, and constructive feedback. Occupational health professionals can integrate strategies to address self-undermining into existing stress management and burnout prevention programs. Additionally, workplace policies can be developed to foster a supportive environment that discourages self-undermining and promotes positive coping strategies.

CONCLUSION

This scoping review contributes significantly to understanding self-undermining in occupational settings. By synthesising recent literature, this review elucidates how self-undermining behaviours are closely associated with burnout and job demands. The findings consistently highlight that self-undermining exacerbates stress and impairs employees' ability to cope with job demands, thus fostering a cycle of increasing burnout and decreasing performance

(i.e., loss cycle). Additionally, the review highlights the mediating role of self-undermining between job demands and burnout, indicating that self-undermining behaviours reduce work engagement and intensify the perception of job demands. Interventions targeting self-regulatory capacities and reducing job demands are crucial in breaking this cycle, as enhanced self-regulation mitigates self-undermining behaviours and promotes job crafting. Overall, the review emphasises the importance of addressing self-undermining to improve employee well-being and organisational outcomes, providing a robust base for upcoming studies and practical studies in the field of occupational health.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Search string.

Database	Search string
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("self-undermining") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("job demands" OR "self-regulation" OR "performance" OR "burnout" OR "engagement" OR "JD-R" OR "job crafting" OR "exhaustion"))
Web of Science	"self-undermining" (Topic) AND ("job demands" OR "self-regulation" OR "performance" OR "burnout" OR "engagement" OR "JD-R" OR "job crafting" OR "exhaustion") (Topic)
EBSCOhost	AB "self-undermining" AND AB ("job demands" OR "self-regulation" OR "performance" OR "burnout" OR "engagement" OR "JD-R" OR "job crafting" OR "exhaustion") OR TI "self-undermining" AND TI ("job demands" OR "self-regulation" OR "performance" OR "burnout" OR "engagement" OR "JD-R" OR "job crafting" OR "exhaustion")
ScienceDirect - Elsevier	"self-undermining" (All Fields) AND ("job demands" OR "self-regulation" OR "performance" OR "burnout" OR "engagement" OR "JD-R" OR "job crafting" OR "exhaustion") (All Fields)
PubMed	("self-undermining"[Title/Abstract]) AND ("job demands"[Title/Abstract] OR "self-regulation"[Title/Abstract] OR "performance"[Title/Abstract] OR "burnout"[Title/Abstract] OR "engagement"[Title/Abstract] OR "JD-R"[Title/Abstract] OR "job crafting"[Title/Abstract] OR "exhaustion"[Title/Abstract])

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

| Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria		
Criterion	**Inclusion**	**Exclusion**
Date	Between 2014 and 2024	< 2014
Document type	Journal papers (research articles)	Conference paper; systematic review; review; meta-analysis; meta-synthesis; book chapter; note; book; conference review; short survey; editorial; letter; report; data paper; abstract report; business article
Source type	Journals	Conference proceeding; book series; trade journals; books; reports
Language	English	Non-English
Methodology	Primary studies should explore self-undermining	Studies which did not explore self-undermining
Population	Working population	Non-working population
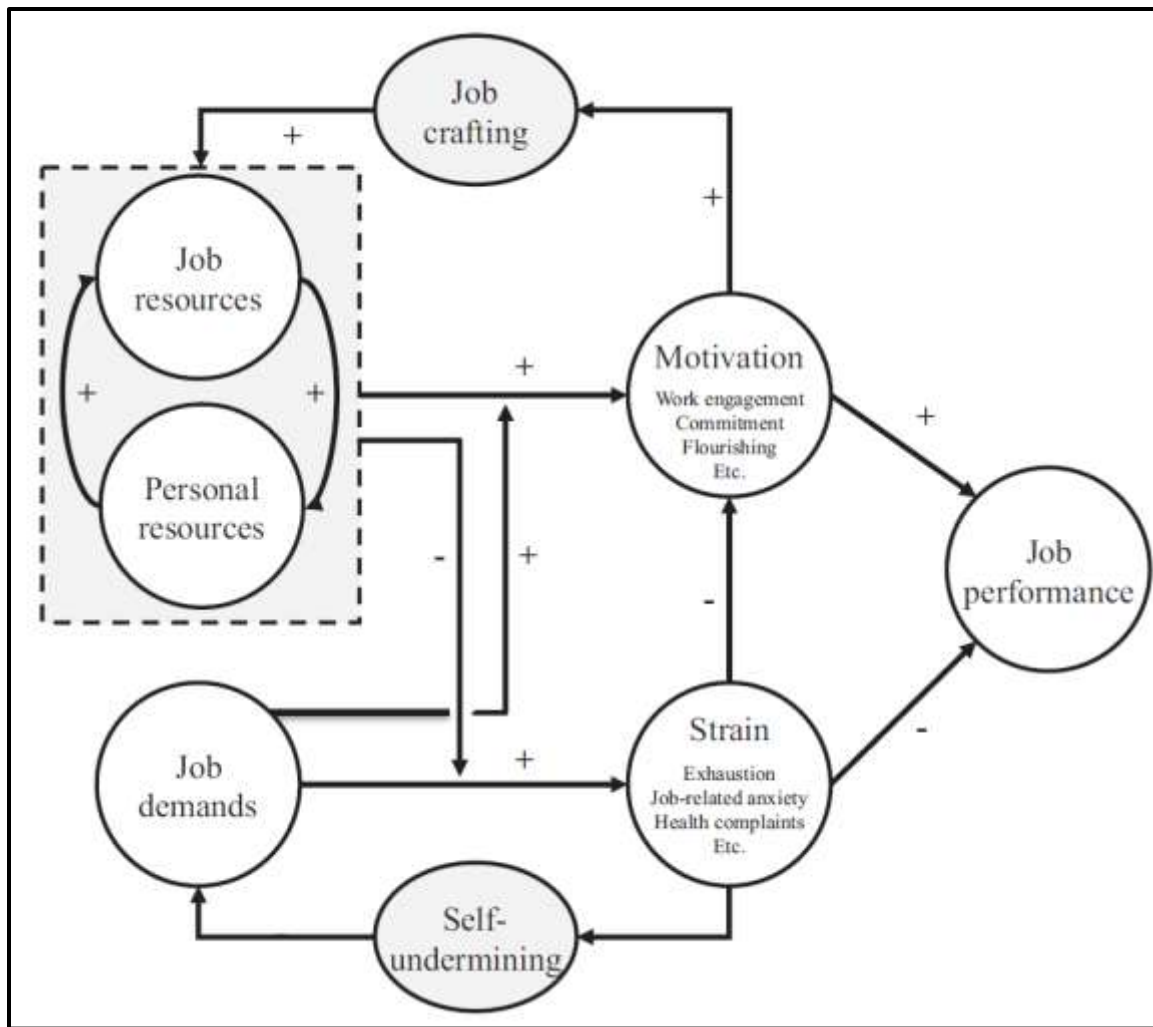
Figure 1. Conceptual model illustrating the relationships between job demands, self-undermining behaviours, and burnout based on the JD-R theory. Adapted from Bakker and Demerouti (2017, p. 275).
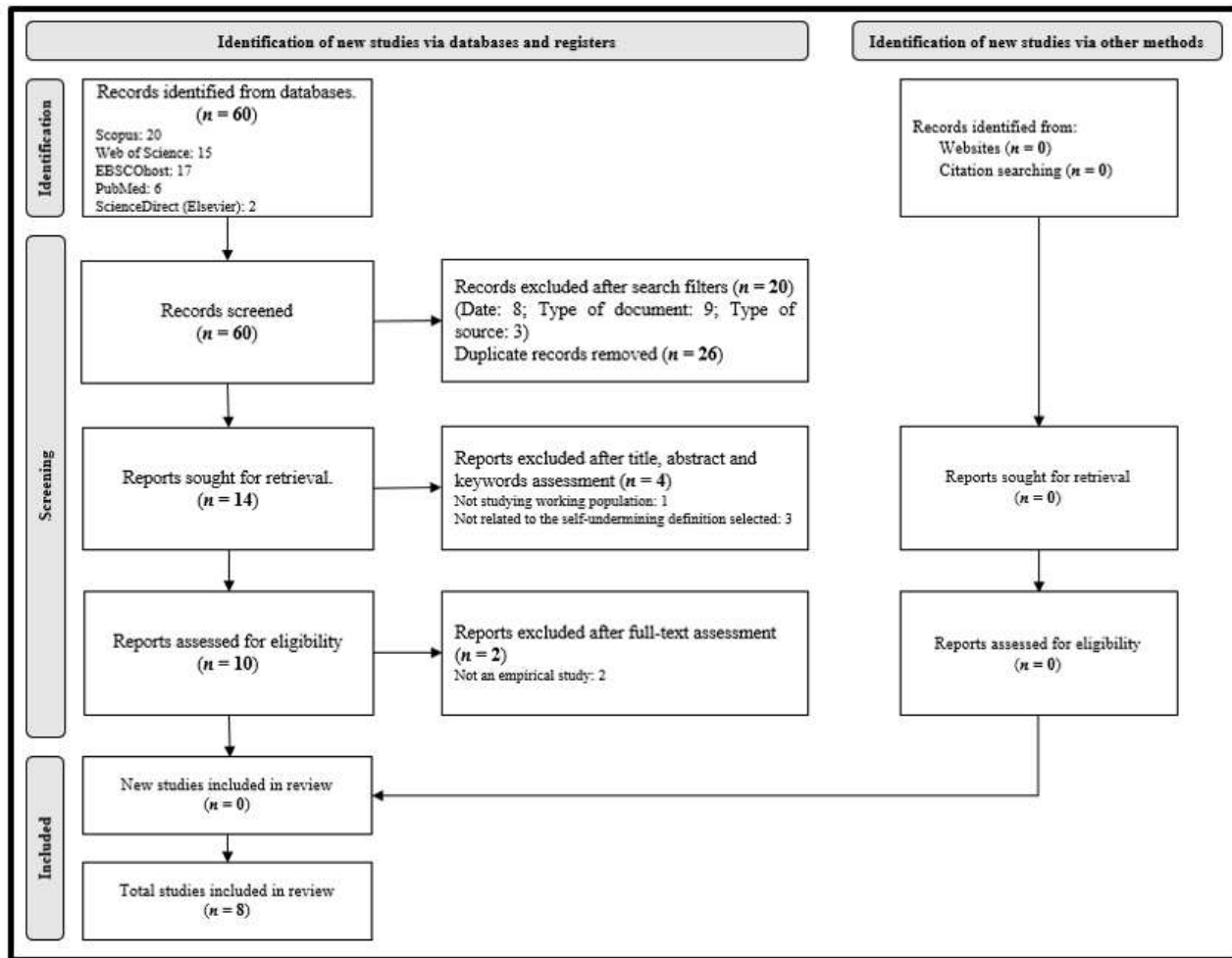
Figure 2. PRISMA flowchart of the study selection process.

Table 3. Summary of information about the studies included regarding self-undermining.

Author and publishing year	Study purpose	Main variable role	Other variables tested	Methodology / Design	Sample dimension (n) and activity sector	Country	Main results
Zeshan et al. (2023)[16]	To clarify how job demands impact employee burnout through self-regulation and demonstrate how organizational human resource practices can mitigate the impact of job demands on employees' adaptive self-regulation.	**Dependent variable, independent variable, and mediating role:** - Self-undermining	**Dependent variable:** - Burnout **Independent variable:** - Job demands **Dependent variable and mediating role:** - Job recovery **Moderating role:** - High-performance work system (HPWS)	Quantitative method and diary study	n=81 nurses	Poland	• The impact of job demands on self-undermining is positive. • Job demands positively affect self-undermining. • Self-undermining has a positive effect on burnout. • Self-undermining mediates the association between burnout and job demands.
Bakker et al. (2022)[17]	To examine if employees with higher levels of chronic burnout, compared to those with lower levels, struggle to effectively manage their weekly job demands and how this affects their dysfunctional behaviors and symptoms of burnout every week.	**Dependent variable:** - Weekly self-undermining	**Dependent variable:** - Weekly dysfunctional coping **Independent variable:** - Weekly job demands **Mediating role and dependent variable:** - Weekly burnout symptoms **Moderating role:** - Enduring burnout	Quantitative method and cross-sectional design	n=84 employees, including industry, education, healthcare, etc.	Netherlands	• Chronic burnout and week-level job demands were strongly correlated with week-level self-undermining. • Weekly job demands were positively associated with self-undermining, but only for employees experiencing higher levels of chronic burnout. • No significant association was found between weekly job demands and self-undermining for workers with lower levels of chronic burnout. • Self-undermining was strongly associated with weekly burnout. • The mediating association was confirmed by the significant indirect relationship between the weekly job demands vs. chronic burnout interaction term and weekly self-undermining through weekly burnout symptoms.

Table 3.   Summary of information about the studies included regarding self-undermining (cont.).

Author and publishing year	Study purpose	Main variable role	Other variables tested	Methodology / Design	Sample dimension (n) and activity sector	Country	Main results
Döbler et al. (2022)[18]	To explore the connection between job crafting, self-undermining, work engagement, emotional exhaustion, and workability as an indicator of employee well-being over the long term. Additionally, it assesses how personal resources moderate the stress-strain process by comparing various employee groups based on the five types of job satisfaction.	**Mediating role:** - Self-undermining	**Dependent variable:** - Work motivation - Job strain - Workability **Independent variable:** - Job demands - Job resources **Mediating role:** - Job crafting behaviors - Types of job satisfaction	Quantitative method and cross-sectional design	*n*=1145 blue- and white collar workers from a German DAX company's manufacturing plant	Germany	• Job crafting and self-undermining behaviors mediated the impact of job demands and resources on emotional exhaustion and work engagement.
Golu et al. (2022)[19]	To investigate the potential mediating effect of burnout in the connection between self-undermining behavior and job demands of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.	**Dependent variable:** - Self-undermining	**Dependent variable and independent variable:** - Job demands **Independent variable and mediating role:** - Burnout	Quantitative method and cross-sectional design	*n*=523 healthcare workers	Romania	• The positive association between two demands (lack of equipment and supplies, work-family conflict) and self-undermining was mediated by burnout. • Self-undermining was positively associated with exhaustion, emotional load, workload, and perceptions of job demands.
Mathews & Rutherford (2022)[23]	To investigate how job demands and job resources influence burnout in international salespeople, with job resources acting as a buffer.	**Mediating role:** - Self-undermining	**Dependent variable and independent variable:** - Burnout **Independent variable:** - Job demands **Moderating role:** - Job resources	Qualitative method, interviews	*n*=13 international salespeople	Worldwide	• Fights, sales closure rates, and work-family conflict are self-undermining aspects experienced by sales executives.

Table 3.   Summary of information about the studies included regarding self-undermining (cont.).

| Author and publishing year	Study purpose	Main variable role	Other variables tested	Methodology / Design	Sample dimension (n) and activity sector	Country	Main results
Roczniewska & Bakker (2021)[20]	To investigate how daily fluctuations in self-regulatory resources influence job crafting and self-undermining among nurses and to examine how nurse burnout affects daily behaviours that connect self-regulatory resource levels with job performance.	**Dependent variable and mediating role**: - Self-undermining	**Dependent variable:** - Functioning at work **Independent variable:** - Self-regulatory capacity **Mediating role and dependent variable:** - Job crafting **Moderating role:** - Burnout	Quantitative method and cross-sectional design	n=253 nurses	Poland	• Before starting work, the momentary self-regulatory capacity negatively correlates with self-undermining behaviour. • For employees with low levels of burnout, daily self-regulation was associated with improved functioning through decreased self-undermining and increased job crafting.
Bakker & Wang (2020)[21]	To create a new instrument to evaluate workplace self-undermining behaviours and explore these behaviours from the perspectives of JD-R theory and self-regulation theory.	**Independent variable**: - Self-undermining	**Dependent variable:** - Job performance - Self-handicapping - Personal initiative - Job crafting - Burnout - Work engagement	Quantitative method and cross-sectional design	**1st study**: n=1256 employees **2nd study**: n=595 (additional sample of employees)	China, the USA, Chile, Romania, and the Netherlands	• Self-reports of self-undermining correlate positively with self-handicapping and supervisor ratings of self-undermining. • There is a negative correlation between self-undermining and job performance ratings from supervisors. • Burnout and self-undermining are positively correlated. • Individuals who engage in self-undermining behaviours are somewhat less inclined to demonstrate proactivity, engage in job crafting activities, and experience high levels of work engagement.
Ratiu & Dobre (2020)[22]	To address the mediating role of self-undermining in the connection between exhaustion and the perception of job demands among employees in the software industry.	**Mediating role**: - Self-undermining	**Independent variable:** - Exhaustion **Dependent variable:** - Perception of job demands - Perception of workload - Emotion load - Cognitive load	Quantitative method and cross-sectional design	n=96 employees of two large IT companies	Romania	• Self-undermining acted as a mediator in the association between exhaustion and the perception of workload. • Self-undermining significantly mediated, indirectly linking exhaustion to the perception of job demands and emotional load. • Exhaustion significantly predicted self-undermining, and in turn, self-undermining predicted the perception of job demands.
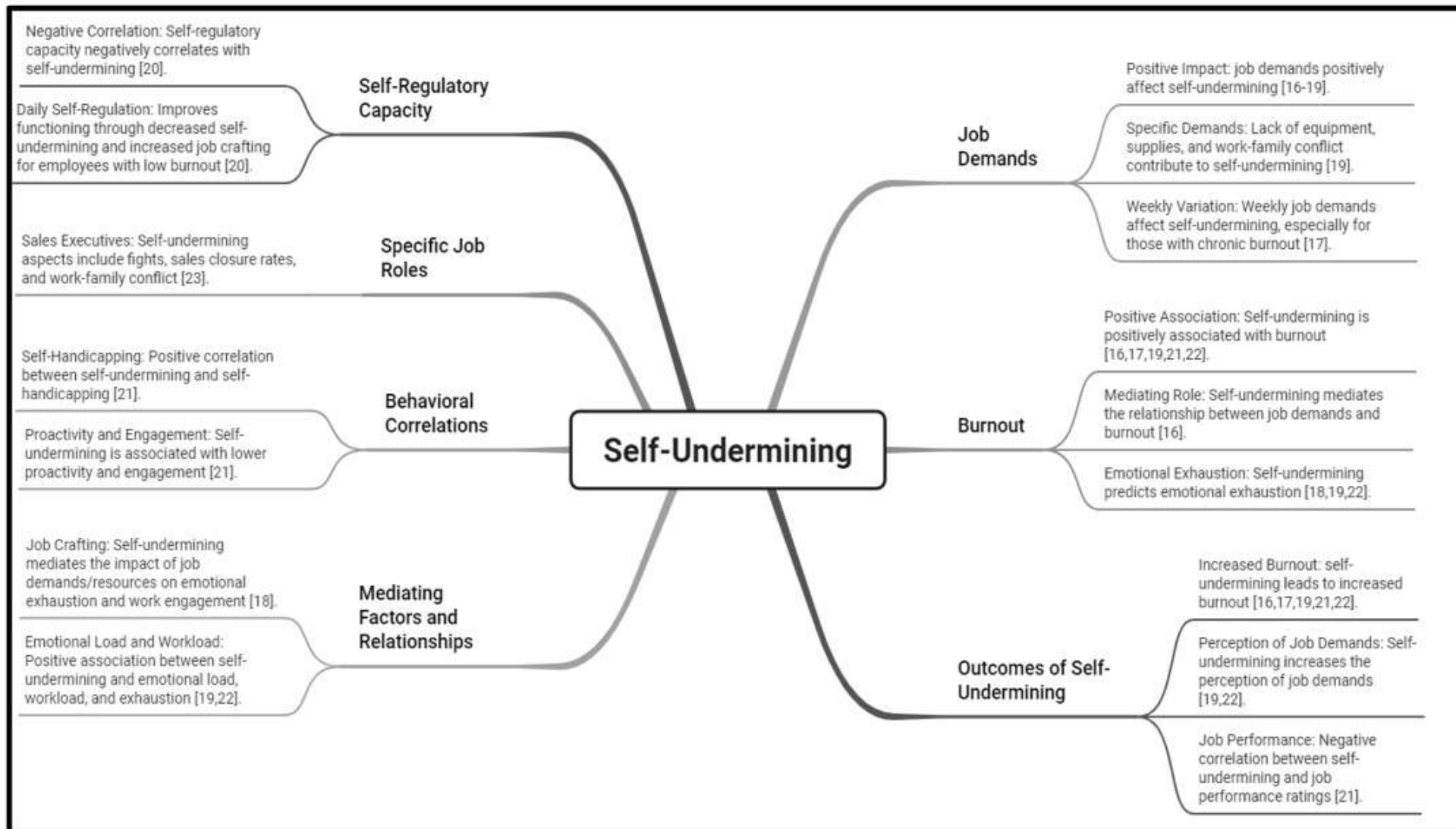
Figure 3. Mind map about self-undermining based on the eight studies in the scoping review.