Transformational Leadership and Meaningful Work: Building a Conceptual Model of Indirect and Direct Paths*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual model to examine whether direct and indirect relationships between transformational leadership, meaningful work, work engagement, job satisfaction and intention quit exist. To achieve this aim, a review of literature on transformational leadership and meaningful work is presented and their relationship with employee work engagement is theorized. The underlying argument of this paper is that transformational leadership impacts job satisfaction and intention to quit indirectly through the relationship between meaning in work and work engagement. This paper responds to the gaps in literature (Zhu et al., 2009; Yukl, 1999; Avolio et al., 2004; Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006) by developing a conceptual model proposing that transformational leadership relates to job satisfaction and intention to quit through a proposed indirect process, one that is based on employees' perceptions toward themselves (engagement) and their jobs (meaning in work). This paper proposes a novel model, as no research to date has proposed conceptual arguments integrating the indirect paths between transformational leadership and work-related outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and intention to quit) through meaning in work and work engagement. This manuscript recommends future research to empirically test the hypothesized model on different samples and check its robustness.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Meaning in work, Employee engagement, Work-related outcomes, Conceptual model.

INTRODUCTION

In the past twenty years, leadership scholars have turned their attention more to areas related to how leaders impact values of work, how can leaders stimulate their followers' higher needs and intrinsic motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The widespread acceptance of the key direct role that transformational leaders in predicting desirable work related outcomes have encouraged numerous studies to explain the process of influence. Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) argued on three possible processes through which transformational leaders exert their influence: (a) followers' perceptions toward leaders, (b) about themselves (c) and their jobs (P. 327). Despite the growing interests in these areas (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker and Brenner, 2008; Wefald, Reichard and Serrano, 2011; Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang and Shi, 2005) yet the process by which transformational leadership affect work engagement has received limited attention and needs further explanation (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011). These needs are imperative because the more we understand of how transformational leadership relates to work engagement, the more the opportunity to understand why followers become engaged.

Although several studies have examined the indirect

relationship between transformational leadership and work related outcomes (Ghafoor et al., 2011; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Tims et al, 2011; Zhu et al., 2009), no published study, to authors' knowledge, had conceptually explained the process underpinning the direct link between transformational leadership and related outcomes through employees' perceptions of meaning in work and followers' engagement in work. A key objective of this study is to fill this knowledge gap by proposing a conceptual model. Specifically, the proposed conceptual model indicates that transformational leaders as a proximal motivational factor (Bass, 1985) relates to work-related outcomes (specifically, job satisfaction and intention to quit) by leaders ability to create meaning in work (perceptions of the job) and enhancing work engagement (characteristics of self in work). Mainly, the relationship between transformational leadership, meaning in work and work engagement is considered in this review.

There are at least three key reasons why we need to consider this model. Firstly, previous studies (e.g. Zhu et al. 2009) empirically supported the positive direct relationship between transformational leadership and engagement; however they argued that other neglected variables that might indirectly affect employees' feelings of engagement must be tested and explored. Sefcondly, Bakker et al., (2011) argued that one significant way to explain the relationship between transformational leadership and engagement is by providing employees with ways to understand and experience meaning in work . It is believed that when employee perceptions' of the work is meaningful, attributes of engagement are enhanced. Finally, according to Yukl (1999) the underlying processes for transformational leadership and transactional leadership are still vague, and they have not been studied well. Yukl added that "these underlying processes provide a useful way to explain the effects of a leader on subordinate attitudes, motivation, and

behavior." (p. 287). By doing so, the theory of transformational leadership would be stronger if the essential influence processes were identified more clearly and used to explain how each type of behavior affects each type of mediating variable and outcome.

It is important to note that this paper is a continuation to the work of (Ghadi et al. 2013). This paper aims to build a conceptual framework that assesses the direct and indirect relationship of transformational leadership on positive work related outcomes. To achieve this aim, the main question that needs to be addressed is: "what is the nature of the direct and indirect relationships between transformational leadership, meaningful work, work engagement, job satisfaction and intention to quit?"

In the effort to achieve the aim of the study, the method used in this manuscript is systematic review in which it encompasses collecting high quality studies in the relevant field to examine research evidence that relate to arguments building.

This article begins with conceptualizing and defining the proposed terms with an explanation of why to choose particular definitions. Next, I justify several relationships that appeared in the literature between constructs for model development. Finally, this article concludes with answering the overall question of the study and point out some significant conclusions and implications.

Conceptualizations of terms of interests

Transformational leadership theory is evolved as one of the most dominant paradigms in the contemporary leadership literature (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The theory of transformational leadership was built on Maslow's Theory of Needs, in which employees perform effectively based on the levels to which these needs are achieved. Accumulated empirical and theoretical studies argued on its substantial validity for achieving behaviours among followers in different fields such as

task performance (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), job satisfaction (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker & Brenner, 2008a), organisational commitment (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004) and creativity (Shin & Zhou, 2003). Despite this popularity in the transformational leadership theory, concerns have been raised regarding the different sub-dimensions of transformational leadership (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Therefore, this study followed Bass' perspective of transformational leadership.

Work engagement is a relatively new construct that has been developed in the seminal work of (Kahn, 1990). The underlining theories for his idea were built on several previous studies related to self expression, self employment and the state of absorption in work (Goffman, 1961; Alderfer, 1972; in Wildermuth & Pauken, 2008, p. 126). Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as the "…harnessing of organisation member's selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances" (p. 694). Employees in work are either engaged or disengaged according to the appearance of three conditions: resources are available, work is meaningful, and psychological safe to present their own self in work. Although some authors followed this perspective of engagement (May, Gilson & Harter, 2004; Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010; Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011), other scholars in the engagement literature agreed that assessment of engagement is based on two dimensions: energy and identification (Schaufeli, Taris & Rhenen, 2008).

The commonly cited definition of Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker (2002) states that work engagement is a persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state of being characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour refers to high energy levels and states of mental resilience while working.

Dedication refers to involvement and experiencing a sense of pride and challenges. Absorption refers to being highly concentrated on and happily engrossed in work.

This article opted the Schaufeli et al. (2002) definition because it represents employees' experience of self vigour, dedication and absorption in the work which has well defined associated outcomes and antecedents (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Furthermore, McBain (2006) claims that other definitions of engagement appear to provide more stress on identification with or commitment to either the organisation or a job terms such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction (Wefald & Downey, 2009) and workaholism (Schaufeli et al., 2008). In overall, Schaufeli's definition of work engagement seems to cover the missing components in other conceptualizations.

The major transformations that have occurred in recent years such as demographic changes, globalisation and technological development have affected employees' behaviours and their perceptions regarding work. This drives scholars to propose different approaches in defining meaning in work. Furthermore, the appearance of "meaning in work" in different models such as spirituality (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003), empowerment (Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason, 1997) and job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) might affect the multidimensionality of the construct. For instance, Chalofsky (2010) argues that linking "meaning" with "work" produces three different conceptualizations which might indicate different perspectives: meaning at work, meaning of work, and meaning in work (or meaningful work). Meaning at work implies a relationship between the person and the organisation or the workplace, in terms of commitment, loyalty and dedication. Meaning of work refers to a sociological and anthropological concern for the role of

work in society — in terms of the norms, values and traditions of work in the day-to-day life of people. Chalofsky (2003) further differentiates meaning in work as an inclusive state of being where individuals express the meaning and purpose of their lives through activities or work (p. 73).

So far, I have reviewed some of the significant studies published in the last ten years (Isaksen, 2000; Morin, 2008; Chalofsky, 2010) and found different perspectives used by different authors. In this regard, Rosso, Dekas and Wrzesniewski (2010) note that researchers must be more definite about the types of meaning in work because dated perspectives for defining meaning in work may be no longer be appropriate in the current business setting described above. Thus, and based on this revision, I assume that employees' perceive meaning in work (1) when work has a goal, purpose, value that is connected to employees and their ability to create meaning and (2) when there is consistency between employees' values and goals in one hand and organisational and work values and goals on the other hand.

To build the proposed model, two work related outcomes were selected; job satisfaction and intention to quit, which have been investigated separately in the meaning in work (Arnold et al. 2007; Fairlie 2011), work engagement (Saks 2006; Christian et al. 2011) and transformational leadership (Castro et al. 2008; Walumbwa et al., 2003) literature.. Job satisfaction has been defined broadly in the literature; however the most-used research definition of job satisfaction is by Locke (1976, p 1304), who defined it as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences". In addition, job satisfaction is considered important for organisations as it measures how happy employees could be in their jobs. It is important to note that this article focuses on job satisfaction for followers rather than other elements such as salary, environment and leader.

According to Vandenberg & Nelson (1999), intention to quit is described as a subjective measure consisting of the strength of employees' conviction that they will stay or leave the organisation at some time in the future. Job satisfaction and intention to quit have long been considered as an important area of research in the transformational leadership literature due to its significant role in predicting organisational outcomes (Bycio, Hackett & Allen, 1995; Martin & Epitropaki, 2001).

Reviewing relevant literature regarding direct relationships

The justifications and plausible conceptual evidences for direct and indirect paths for the relationships of the study are provided.

Transformational leadership and work engagement attributes

The conceptual links between transformational leadership and the characteristics of work engagement are suggested below:

A central behaviour in a transformational leadership style is acting as a role model. Role model leaders build loyalty and devotion while paying scarce attention to their own self-interests (Bass & Bass, 2008). Followers strive to emulate their transformational leaders because they act in ways that allow them to serve as role models for their followers (Bono & Judge, 2003). That is, followers who are certain of the virtues or visions of their manager will be less likely to resist proposals for change. In this context, subordinates perform effectively and are energised to sacrifice and move beyond their own self-interests to make a better contribution towards organisations(Shamir et al., 1993). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) conceptually distinguish between engaged workers and their not-engaged counterparts in that engaged

workers should experience higher energies while working.

Another transformational leadership behaviour that could be linked to vigour is individualized consideration. The individualized consideration behaviour aims to encourage a two-way communication and acknowledge followers' needs for self growth in work (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bass & Bass, 2008). When leaders pay special attention for each individual, they are more likely to motivate positive leader-follower relationships to improve their sense of belonging to the organisation (Zhu et al., 2009). Because of their enhanced sense of belonging, a possible way to employees to reciprocate for this special attention is by devoting more time to their work. This was explained in the self concepts theory developed by (Shamir et al., 1993). Thus far, it might be argued that role models and individualized consideration behaviours owned by supervisors enhance employees' attributes of vigour, a main component of engagement.

Avolio and Bass (2002) state that through intellectual stimulation, leaders produce a supportive organisational climate, wherein subordinates are encouraged to be creative. Through this behaviour, managers stimulate their subordinate's effort to be more creative in solving problems by questioning old assumptions and looking at problems from different angels (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Bass (1995) found that transformational leaders stimulate subordinates to go beyond the basic needs to the needs for organisational mission and purpose. In turn, followers will be innovative and make considerable contributions towards work (Shin & Zhou, 2003). When employees' contributions in work are not criticized, transformational leaders are likely to increase the intrinsic motivation of followers, and thus increase their levels of dedication or involvement (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Bass, 2008). Taking into account that engaged workers are highly involved

and dedicated in work (Schaufeli et al., 2002), intellectual stimulation behaviours influencing employees' involvement in work may be linked to attributes of dedication, the second facet of engagement.

Finally, engaged employees are characterised as having higher attributes of absorption compared with other employees (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Through inspirational motivation, supervisors create a vision of the future that appeals to subordinates and makes them a significant part of the organisation (Bass& Avolio, 1994; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Motivational leaders are able to establish and convey high expectations that challenge and inspire subordinates to achieve more than they thought was possible (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Such motivational leaders are often expected to depend on idealistic visions and persuasive communication to influence subordinates to immerse themselves in their work. Shamir et al. (1993) argued that "supervisors who use verbal persuasion and emotional appeals act as a powerful source for motivating subordinates effort, therefore developing a sense of identification in subordinates with their work unit" (in Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006, p. 329). Thereby, inspirational motivational leaders are considered to be linked to absorption, the third facet of engagement. Yet, it is argued that supervisors who own the characteristics of transformational leadership style are able to enhance attributes of work engagement for followers.

Transformational leadership and meaning in work

Chalofsky (2003) described employees who fail to find meaning in work as those who have high feelings of rejection, prejudice, or misunderstanding. it is postulated that in an environment where supervisors possess transformational behaviours, such feelings might be diminished by creating perceptions of meaning in work. For example, through the use of intellectual stimulation, leaders can stimulate subordinates to create solutions for

the problems and to be openly creative (Shin & Zhou, 2003). In an environment, were leaders are intellectually stimulated, followers' self-esteem will be enhanced (Shamir et al., 1993). Thus, they feel safe to express their opinions without fear of criticism if they contribute to something incorrectly. This specific behaviour might help followers to control their environment where feelings of rejection, prejudice, or misunderstanding prevents meaning in work to appear. This justification is in line with Scroggins (2008) who claims that "consistency between work experiences and the individual's perception of self may enhance self-esteem, which will also make the work seem more meaningful". (p. 70)

Furthermore, it has been argued that perceiving meaning in work is not only related to rewards that individual gets for performance, but it also forms the link between purposes, values and activates that one gets in work (Chalofsky, 2003; Arnold et al. 2007). Podolny Khurana, and Hill-Popper (2005)found that supervisors who draw specific missions, goals and identities for organisation to subordinates are able to influence individuals' perceptions to perceive work as meaningful. Through inspirational motivation, transformational leaders are judged to articulate a compelling vision of the future and communicate optimism about future goals, which in turn increases subordinates' personal core values (Spreitzer et al., 1997; Bono & Judge, 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Nemanich & Keller, 2007; Nielsen et al., 2008a; Nielsen et al., 2008b). Consistency between mangers' vision of the organisation's mission and the core values of their subordinates are more likely to appear (Shamir et al., 1993). Hence, they will perceive the work to be more purposive, motivate, and important— all which are integral components of perceiving meaning in work (Chalofsky, 2003). Thus, the more the supervisors' exhibit transformational leadership behaviours, the more

likely followers perceive meaning in the work they perform.

Meaning in work and work engagement

Finally, it can be assumed that the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement is somewhat more complex than the simple direct effect that appeared in the previous literature (Salanova, Lorente, Chambel & Martı́Nez, 2011; Tims et al., 2011; Wefald et al., 2011). I justified the conceptual relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement and transformational leadership and meaning in work, though it is important to examine the nature of the relationship between meaning in work and work engagement before building the conceptual model.

Literature review indicated relationship between both terms can appear however with some confliction. On one hand, one party supported the idea that perceiving meaning in work is an intrinsically motivating factor that predicts characteristics of work engagement (Kahn, 1990; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; May et al., 2004). Mendes and Stander (2011) found that "when employees experience their work as meaningful they will concurrently experience higher levels of energy in doing their work, be more enthusiastic in completing work-related tasks and demonstrate high levels of focus in their work" (p. 10).

On the other hand, other scholars have suggested that during times spent at work where the employee is engaged, employees may come to value the work they do and be more aware about the significance and values of the work roles. Employees may actively change the design of their jobs by choosing tasks, negotiating different job content, and assigning meaning to their tasks or jobs (in Parker & Ohly, 2008; Bakker & Leiter, 2010, p. 190). These suggestions were based on Nakamura & Csikzentmihalyi's (2003) claims that sense

of meaning in work is facilitated when individual interact with the community of practice and social field. According to the definition for meaning in work, this study follows the first group of scholars and argues that creating meaning in work by transformational leaders influence the relationship with engagement. Yet, it can be proposed from the arguments and justifications provided above that supervisors' who own the characteristics of transformational leadership style are able to create perceptions' of meaning in the workplace, which in turn relates to the attributes of engagement for followers.

Transformational leadership and work-related outcomes

Since the introduction of transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), authors conducted studies on transformational leadership effectiveness in creating or fostering positive work related outcomes such as job satisfaction (Medley & Larochelle, 1995; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2005; Walumbwa, Lawler & Avolio, 2007). Conceptually, when acting as a mentor coach, leaders can bring deeper understanding and appreciation from every follower. Walumbwa et al. (2005) found that when followers feel that their supervisor provide them with special attention, they will be more likely to be motivated to work beyond expectations for the sake of the organisational goal which in turn leads them to be more happier and satisfied in the job.

Recent studies have strongly argued that behaviours of transformational leaders reduce followers' intention to quit. According to Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler & Shi (2004) and Wells & Peachey (2011), these arguments can be summarized in four ways. First, when followers believe that there is a fit between personal goals and vision and leader and organisation goals and visions, followers will be more likely to stay in the job because the leader is perceived as a person who can achieve goals that is in line with the overall mission. Second, when followers believe that their goals can be achieved by leaders, they will most likely trust and stay with them and thus reduce the intent to quit the job. Thirdly, with inspirational motivational leaders' help in building emotional commitment toward goals and missions, followers foster a sense of pride and belonging to the organisation, arousing followers' behaviour to stay in work. Finally, through the enhancement of respect and confidence, or through inspirational motivational leaders, followers will be emotionally identified with leaders and organisations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). When followers are emotionally identified with leaders, they will stay in the job even in hard situations because being with such leaders help them in maintaining a part of their identity. Given these foundations in the literature, one can propose that there is a relationship between transformational leadership and workers levels of satisfaction and followers' intention to quit the job.

Work engagement and work-related outcomes

The importance of achieving higher levels of employee engagement is that those engaged employees often display a deep, positive and emotional state of mind that is connected to work related outcomes (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Although preliminary evidence suggested work engagement may have links to job satisfaction and intention to quit, no publish research had examined this relationship in the appearance of transformational leadership and meaning in work.

It is important to note that some of the practitioners' poll studies (such as Tower Perrin) and academic findings mix employee engagement with employee satisfaction. For example, Harter et al. (2002) described engaged employees in terms "Individuals' involvement and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm for work" (p. 269). This created conflict of the nature of the relationship between engagement and satisfaction.

However, in a recent theoretical article, Bakker et al. (2011) claimed that the issue surrounding whether engagement is a new construct with its own characteristics or whether it consists of repacking of well-known constructs such as satisfaction, and that his trend must be "put to bed" (p. 9). Results of conceptual (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Bakker & Leiter, 2010), empirical (Salanova et al., 2011) and meta-analysis (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Christian et al., 2011) studies have supported this idea and claimed that work engagement is different from other well-defined constructs. As a way to prove its validity among other constructs, Christian et al. (2011) conducted a study to test the discriminate validity of work engagement and found that engagement construct is reliable, valid, and unique construct that predict outcomes better than other traditional terms such as job involvement and commitment. These arguments are supported and further claim that engagement is a useful construct meriting further attention.

There are number of reasons to expect that engagement is related to job satisfaction and intention to quit. A certain way to explain this relationship comes from the development of the "self-expression" notion (Shamir et al., 1993). Specifically, when employees are engaged, they are more likely to show more personal initiative (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Wefald et al., 2011), and proactive behaviours (Macey & Schneider, 2008) to arouse expressive motivations either cognitively or emotionally (Kahn, 1990). Thus, one can claim that employee engagement in work positively relates to work related outcomes.

With respect to the theoretical relationship between work engagement and both job satisfaction and intention

to quit, some studies also supported this relationship empirically (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Saks, 2006; Wefald et al., 2011).

Meaning in work and work related outcomes

Job satisfaction and intention to quit are two common outcomes that have been linked to meaning in work. A study by Gavin & Mason (2004)noted that perceptions of meaning in work are likely to contribute for the greater good for the organisation by creating employees who are happier, healthier and more productive. When work does not fulfil employees' desired values, employee will find work to be personally meaningless, which in turn affects their satisfaction at work (Spreitzer et al., 1997). This in turn fosters employees' intentions to leave the job (see Scroggins 2008; self-verification theory developed by Swann, Pelham & Krull, 1989). These claims on the relationships between meaning in work and both work related outcomes were supported and justified in the literature.

Overall, it is agreed with previous arguments that there are significant direct paths between transformational leadership and intention to quit (Walumbwa and Lawler 2003) and job satisfaction (Castro et al. 2008); meaningful work and intention to quit (Scroggins 2008; Fairlie 2011) and job satisfaction (Scroggins 2008); work engagement and intention to quit (Saks 2006) and job satisfaction (Schalkwyk, Toit, Bothma & Rothmann, 2010).These proposed relationships that had been found in the literature are illustrated in Figure (1).
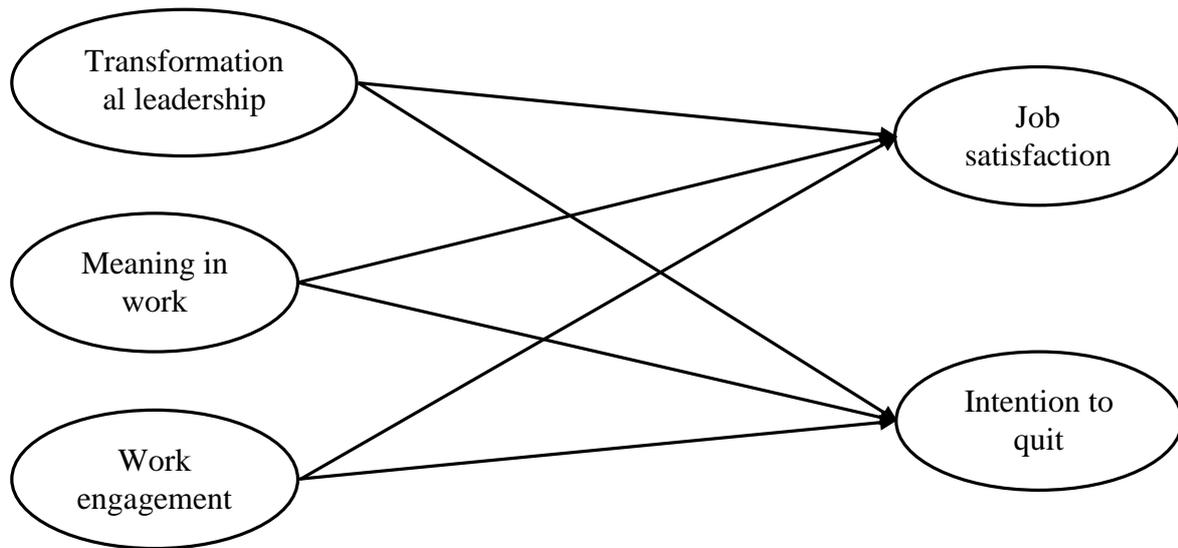
Figure (1): Illustration of the proposed direct relationship between constructs as appeared in the literature

Hypothesised Model

This article goes one-step further by developing the model presented in Figure (1)to another possible and alternative one that has other indirect paths. As noted above, the development of this hypothesised model was based on some significant gaps found in the work engagement (Zhu et al., 2009; Bakker et al., 2011; Wefald et al., 2011), transformational leadership (Yukl, 1999; Avolio et al., 2004; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006) and meaning in work literature (Arnold et al., 2007; Scroggins, 2008).

The following section explores the nature of the relationship between transformational leadership and work related outcomes through an underlying process based on employee perceptions toward their work (experience of meaning in work) and employee attitudes toward the self (employee engagement with work). In line with the aim of this study, the focus is the presentation of theoretical justifications concerning: meaningful work as having indirect influence of

transformational leadership; employee engagement as having indirect influence of transformational leadership; and how both represent indirect underlying process for transformational leadership influence.

The role of meaning in work and employee engagement in affecting transformational leadership, job satisfaction and intention to quit

Meaningful work as a mediator of transformational leadership influence

It has been argued previously that to achieve a high level of job satisfaction and a low intention to quit the job, an employee must experience meaningful work. However, transformational leadership behaviours alone do not guarantee that followers will experience increased job satisfaction or reduced intention to quit the job. Followers must feel that their job is purposeful and related to their overall goals in order to change their own behaviours and beliefs. If followers believe that their leaders are not visionary, they will be unlikely to experience meaning in work and consequently they will

be dissatisfied in their job and often think about leaving.

Transformational leadership facilitates the development of the experience of meaningful work because such leadership involves showing, developing, stimulating and inspiring employees to go beyond their self interest for the sake of the organisational goals and mission (Rosso et al., 2010; Serrano and Reichard, 2011). Sivanathan et al. (2004 p. 247) argued that the nature of transformational leadership increases experiences of personal meaning by enhancing employees' levels of morale and activating their higher order needs, transforming stressful work situations into challenges for employees, and increasing employees' sense of identification with their ability to reduce stress levels. Experiencing meaning in work is therefore vital, and has been shown to be a better indicator than others for predicting work related outcomes (see Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012). Furthermore, employees need to perceive work as a meaningful place if they are to contribute to desirable outcomes. Meaningful work has been shown to be an important mediating factor with respect to the relationship between transformational leadership and various important outcomes including well-being (Arnold et al., 2007) and organisational citizenship behaviour (Purvanova et al., 2006).

Based on the above discussion and the direct relationships that have been established, it can be stated that employees' experience of meaningful work intervenes in the relationship between transformational leadership and both job related outcomes (job satisfaction and intention to quit the job).

Employee engagement as a mediator of transformational leadership influence

Similarly, there is substantial empirical support for the mediating role of employee engagement on a set of antecedents (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006; Wefald et al., 2011).However, limited studies, to date, have examined the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between transformational leadership and job related outcomes (namely, job satisfaction and intention to quit the job). There are several theories that explain how employee engagement mediates the relationship with important work related outcomes. Halbesleben (2011) summarised three unifying evidence-based theories that help in guiding the research and practice on the relationship between employee engagement at work and job related outcomes. These are the Job Demand-Resource Model (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The Job Demand-Resource Model (JD-R Model) has been heavily cited in explaining the mediating role of employee engagement between a set of conditions in the work and work related outcomes in the latter two theories (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008). Simpson (2009) found that the JD-R Model has dominated the research on employee engagement.

The JD-R Model proposes that feelings of engagement at work can be developed through the motivational psychological process (Hakanen et al., 2006). This motivational psychological process acts as the underlying theory for using employee engagement to explain the relationship between a set of job resources and related outcomes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Leadership style has always been considered to be an important element of job resources. Job resources are defined as "those physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 297). A transformational leadership style can be aligned with

these three conditions, and is therefore considered as a vital job resource. Specifically, several studies supported the position that: behaviours of transformational leadership influence employee growth (Kark and Shamir, 2002), learning (Bass and Riggio, 2006) and development (Dvir, Eden, Avolio & Slaughter, 2002); the transformational leadership style is a motivational leadership style that influences employees to achieve desirable outcomes (Bass, 1985); and finally transformational leadership behaviours help in reducing overall job demands (Tims et al., 2011). Based on the motivational psychological process proposed in the JD-R Model, employees will be more likely to experience enhanced feelings of engagement and thus achieve desirable work objectives when they have vital job resources such as transformational leadership.

This motivational process of influence can hold either an intrinsic or extrinsic motivational role (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Specifically, in the intrinsic motivational process, job resources promote employees' traits of growth, learning and development by fulfilling their fundamental human needs, such as the needs of autonomy and competence (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, p. 298). For instance, the intellectual stimulation leader creates a supportive environment where followers are encouraged to learn to think creatively (Avolio and Bass, 2002), which in turn should increase job competence. As opposed to intrinsic motivation, the extrinsic motivational process argues that the availability of job resources nurtures the readiness of employees to dedicate greater effort and ability to more difficult work goals (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). This in turn enhances employees' desire to accomplish tasks effectively and to achieve the desired goals. This is evident in transformational leadership literature. Bass (1985) argued that the main aim of transformational leaders is to express their

motivational potential to stimulate followers to go beyond self-interest for the sake of the group or organisational goal.

Together, these two motivational processes indicate that the presence of an effective transformational leader enhances followers' feelings of engagement at work, by ensuring that tasks are completed and opportunities for personal growth are offered. However, when the work environment lacks such a leader, efforts to achieve the task will be hindered. This is more likely to develop a negative attitude in followers towards their own work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Based on the arguments presented in the literature, when an employee is engaged in work, a positive emotional state is developed in relation to the work. These positive emotions in turn should facilitate favourable job related outcomes such as job satisfaction. The presence of this positive emotional state also makes it harder for employees to detach from their work, leading engaged employees to reduce their thoughts about and desire to leave their job.

Integrating the theoretical discussion above with the evidence that reviewed these direct relationships, it can be stated that employees' levels of employee engagement and meaning in work mediate the relationship between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and intention to quit.

Conclusion: the hypothesised model

Transformational leaders stimulate feelings of purpose and personal meaning, which leads employees to experience work as a meaningful place that relates to employees' goals. Researchers have long been interested in the role of transformational leadership in influencing employees to achieve favourable outcomes. Most empirical studies have found that transformational leadership is positively related to indicators of leadership effectiveness, such as follower satisfaction in the job (Walumbwa et al., 2007), intention to quit the job (Wells

and Peachey, 2011) and performance (see meta-analysis for quantitative and qualitative review Lowe,Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Judge and Piccolo, 2004). However, Walumbwa et al. (2011) argued that few researchers to date have examined whether multiple constructs can sequentially mediate these relationships (p. 154). Accordingly, viewing the relationships between these constructs in this way is considered significant because a greater understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee outcomes will increase the opportunity to further

understand and develop transformational leadership theory (Yukl, 1998; 1999; Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). This can be also seen in Figure (2)

Consequently, based on these arguments and the relationships presented, it is proposed that experience meaningful work and employee engagement will sequentially mediate the relationship between transformational leadership, general job satisfaction and intention to quit. A diagrammatic representation of this hypothesised sequential mediating relationship is depicted in Figure 2.
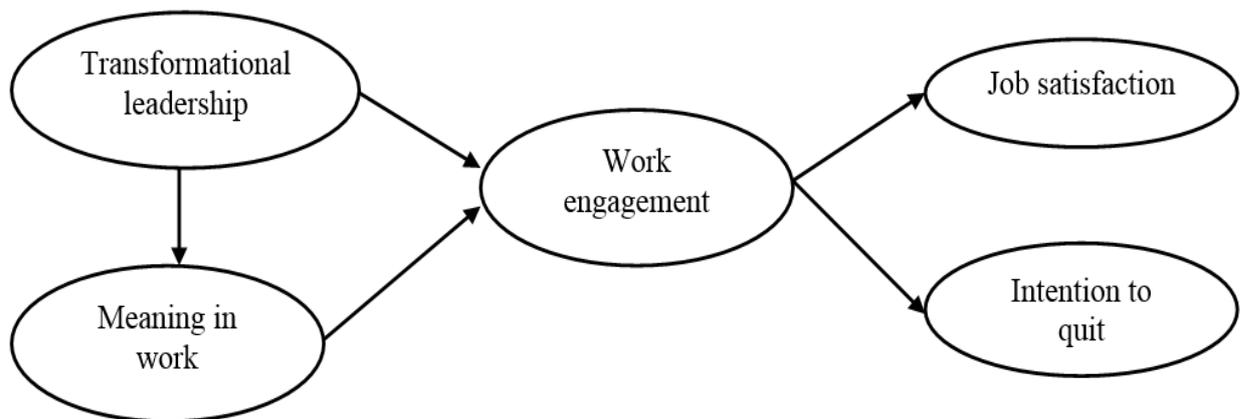

Figure (2): A diagrammatic representation of the hypothesised model

Implications

The findings reported in this study have led to the suggestion of two potential implications. First, conducting training programs to develop and promote a transformational leadership style. Specifically, the proposed model presented in this paper raises the important issue of how organisations can accelerate positive changes within the organisation by promoting transformational leadership style. One possible way to achieve this is by conducting suitable training programs (courses) to develop transformational leadership skills for organisations' supervisors or managers. Hall, Johnson, Wysocki, & Kepner(2000) argued that

effective transformational leadership is a process that can be learned through the exertion of conscious effort.

Considering employee engagement as an important organisational strategy during re-designing the work and recruitment, there are several possible approaches for achieving this. For example, it is necessary for programs concerned with redesigning working conditions to include strong employee participation, allowing top management to understand the opinions of and communicate with employees at all levels of organisation. Organisations can achieve this by offering employees greater flexibility in their work environment, by opening confidential discussions and by providing

improved communication and more detailed explanations through structured meetings between top management and employees. Any such discussion should begin with a clear explanation that employee engagement is considered to be a motivational strategy that is recognised as essential at all levels of the organisation in order for the organisation to survive and compete effectively in the market. Further discussion may also be held about critical employee engagement issues such as individual and organisational factors that can enhance current levels of employee engagement, and the positive impact of high levels of employee engagement on profitability in both the short term and long term. The provision of greater opportunities for career growth and an increased focus on a culture of support and openness in the design of their leadership programs would also be helpful for organisations that aim to change workplace relationships to increase productivity and compete effectively in the working environment.

Recommendations

Future research could focus more on the relationships in the model by clarifying whether other possible variables influence the relationship between transformational leadership, meaningful work and employee engagements such as trust in managers

(PillaiSchriesheim, & Williams, 1999; Sivanathan et al., 2004), employee self-efficacy (Pillai & Williams, 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2005a), cultural values and individual differences (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Zhu et al., 2009). Studying the role of these variables may account for some variance in transformational leadership influence. Extending on the model, future research can incorporate these variables as mediators or moderators and use them for further exploration of the underlying mechanism in the transformational leadership-work outcomes link. It would be also beneficial for future studies to include other variables such as personal environment fit, cultural and personal difference as moderators between the transformational leadership-intentions to quit link.

Further development of the model using any of these variables should contribute to our understanding. This understanding can be improved by providing more explanation of the nature of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement, and clarifying how job satisfaction can be achieved from employee engagement and meaning in work. This will provide managers with significant information to develop new strategies and then actively implement objective measures, with the goal of influencing and then sustaining engagement levels to keep talented employees.

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القيادة التحويلية والمعنى في العمل: بناء نموذج مفاهيمي

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ملخص

إن الهدف الأساسي من القيام بهذه الورقة البحثية هو بناء وتطوير نموذج مفاهيمي لبيان العلاقة بين القيادة التحويلية، المعنى في العمل، التشاركيه في العمل وتأثيرها على الرضا الوظيفي والنية في ترك العمل وفهم طبيعة هذه العلاقة المباشرة ومقارنتها مع العلاقات غير المباشرة. ولغايات تحقيق هذا الهدف، قام الباحث بمراجعة الأدبيات السابقة حول القيادة التحويلية بطريقة علمية ومقننه، والأدبيات المتعلقة بالمعنى داخل العمل لإصدار أحكام نظرية لفهم الدور الذي تلعبه تشاركيه العمال في العمل. بمعنى أكثر دقة، إن الجدل الأساسي الذي استدعى الباحث للقيام بهذه الورقة المفاهيمية جاء لفهم علاقة القيادة التحويلية وأثرها على الرضا الوظيفي والنية في ترك العمل بشكل غير مباشر من خلال العلاقة التكاملية والإرتباطية بين مفهومي إيجاد المعنى في العمل و أبعاد التشاركية في العمل (الحيوية، الإتقان، والاستيعاب). دعماً لهذا الجدل فإن هذا البحث جاء لتعبئة النقص الوارد في الأدبيات السابقة والمقترحة من قبل (Zhu et al., 2009; Yukl, 1999; Avolio et al., 2004; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). وقد جدت هذه الورقة البحثية من خلال تطوير النموذج المفاهيمي بأن القيادة التحويلية ترتبط بالرضا الوظيفي والنية في ترك العمل بشكل مباشر وغير مباشر من خلال العلاقة التكاملية والإرتباطية التي تحصل بين تصورات العمال لأنفسهم (التشاركيه في العمل)،تصوراتهم للأعمال التي يقومون بها (المعنى في العمل). وعليه فإن هذه الدراسة توصي الدراسات المستقبلية بالقيام باختبار هذا النموذج بشكل تجريبي وتطبيقي على عينات مختلفة للتأكد من مدى متانته وصلاحيته.

الكلمات الدالة: القيادة التحويلية، المعنى في العمل، تشاركية العمال، مخرجات متعلقه بالعمل، نموذج مفاهيمي.

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