

Employee engagement and adaptive performance achieved by agile transformational leaders in a changing healthcare system

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Background to the study

- The changing nature of healthcare organizations *in the digital age, pressures for increased quality and expectations of lower costs, as well as an increased demand for innovation, thrusts forward the need to examine and explore leadership models, adapting them to ensure that they do support not only organisational performance but also staff achievement and well-being* (Malloch, 2014)
- Leaders should be able to understand, sense and predict changes in the work environment, whilst responding quickly and effectively (Veiseh, Shiri, & Eghbali, 2014)
- While transformational leadership has been a well-known concept, excelling as a leadership model, as work environments continue encountering continuous change, leadership agility is steadily gaining momentum (Veiseh et al., 2014)
- Aim: To examine the relationship between an interaction of two leadership styles, agile and transformational leadership, and their effect on adaptive performance mediated by work engagement

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Transformational and Agile Leadership

- **Transformational Leadership:**
“moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration” (Bass, 1990, p. 11)
- **Leadership Agility:** when a leader is able to understand environmental change, embrace inconsistencies and navigate diverse followers, whilst sustaining some sense of stability and coherence in an ever-changing world (Mc Kenzie & Aitken, 2012)

Adaptive performance, work engagement and the JD-R model

- **Adaptive performance:**

This is when an individual is able to set priorities and handle emergency situations, face new problems, learn and adapt to ongoing changes (Hesketh & Neal, 1999), whilst contributing effectively in their role as an individual and team member (Griffin et al., 2007).

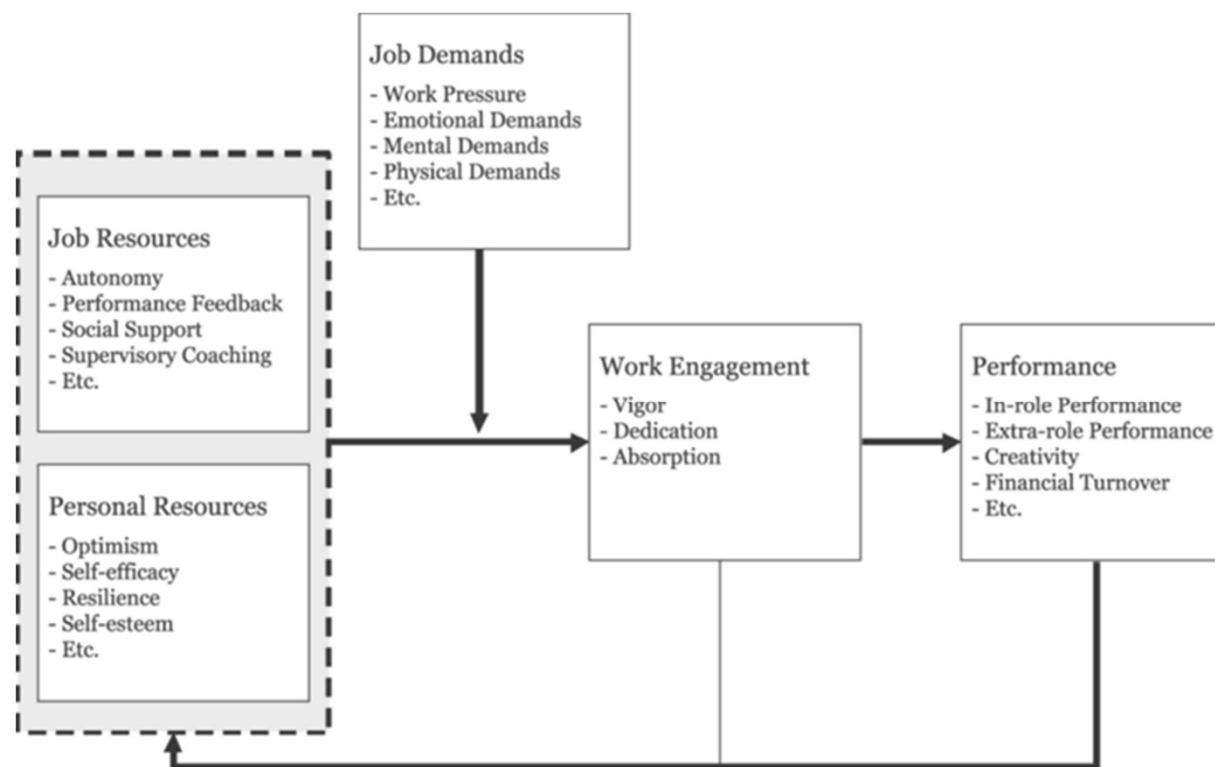
- **Work Engagement:**

This denotes a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind which is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (Breevaart et al., 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

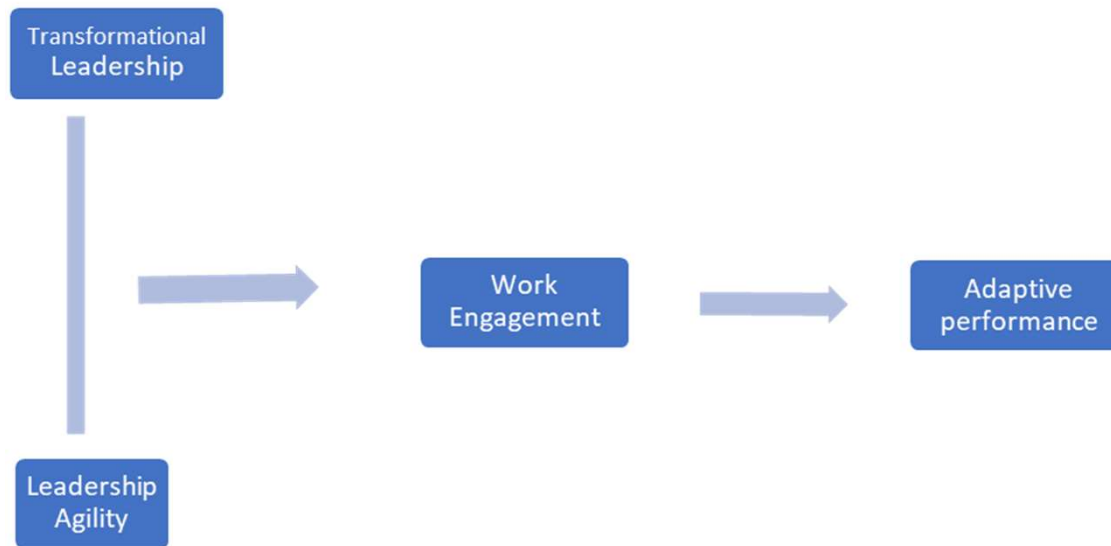
- **Job Demand-Resources model:**

This model assumes that job and personal resources start a motivational process leading to work engagement, eventually bringing about adaptive performance. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

JD-R model (adapted from Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)



Model of the study



Methodology

Research Setting	Three Maltese hospitals (MDH, RHKG, GGH)
Target Population	All medical, nursing and allied health professionals
Sampling technique	50% from MDH, 50% from RHKG and GGH Stratified random sampling
Research method	Structured self-administered Questionnaire Cross-sectional study
Research tool	Tools used were psychometrically validated and satisfactory reliability also achieved
Pilot study	Minor changes were made
Data Collection	January 2019, with a response rate of 49%
Data Analysis	SPSS version 24- multiple regression, two-point unstandardized, mediation-model analysis

Results

- ***Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between Transformational Leadership and Leadership Agility***
Transformational leadership is significantly ($p < 0.01$) and positively correlated with leadership agility (DC1 $r = .632$, DC2 $r = .597$)
- ***Hypothesis 2: Unit level Transformational Leadership is positively related to unit level adaptive performance***
 - Transformational leadership is significantly ($p < 0.01$) and positively correlated with adaptive performance (DC1 $r = .255$, DC2 $r = .188$).
- ***Hypothesis 3: Unit level Leadership Agility is positively related to unit level Adaptive Performance***
 - Leadership Agility (LA) is significantly ($p < 0.01$) and positively correlated with Adaptive Performance (AP) (DC1 $r = .266$, DC2 $r = .321$)

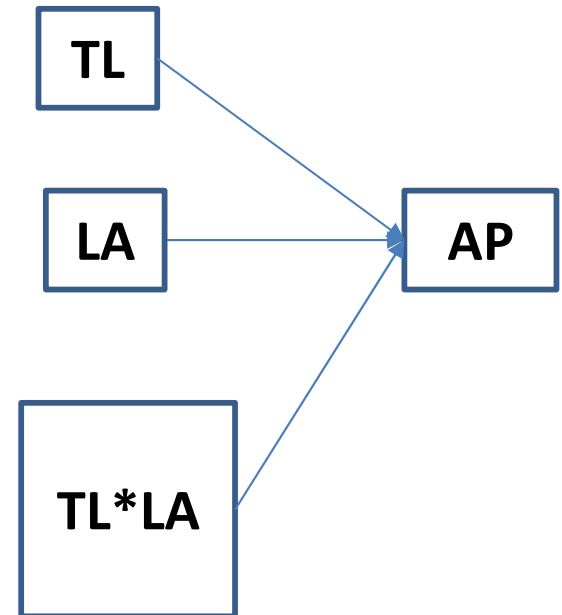
Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SE of estimate	R square	F change	df1	df2	Sig F change
1	.338a	.114	.110	.16283	.114	27.729	2	429	.000**
2	.382b	.146	.140	.16008	.032	15.852	1	428	.000**

a. Predictors (Constant) Leadership Agility, Transformational Leadership
b. Predictors (Constant) Leadership Agility, Transformational Leadership, Interaction of Transformational Leadership and Leadership Agility
c. Dependent Variable: Adaptive Performance
**significance at the p=0.01 level
*significance to the p=0.05 level

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.470	2	.735	27.729	.000 ^{b**}
	Residual	11.374	429	.027		
	Total	12.845	431			
2	Regression	1.877	3	.626	24.410	.000 ^{c**}
	Residual	10.968	428	.026		
	Total	12.845	431			

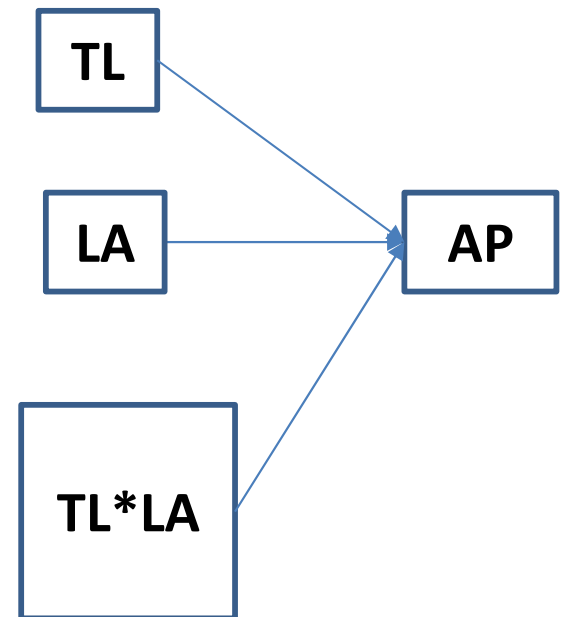
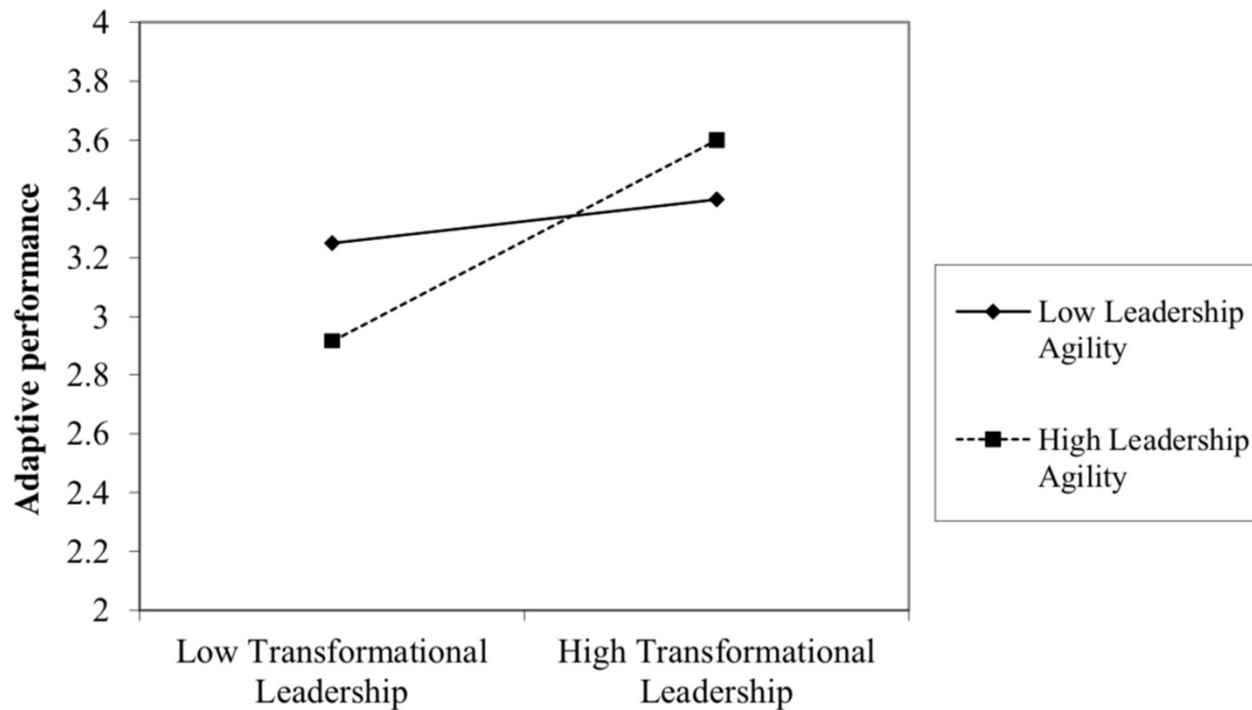
a. Dependent variable: Adaptive Performance
b. Predictors: (constant), Leadership Agility, Transformational Leadership
c. Predictors: (constant), Leadership Agility, Transformational Leadership, Interaction of Transformational Leadership and Leadership Agility
**significance at the p=0.01 level
*significance to the p=0.05 level



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Results

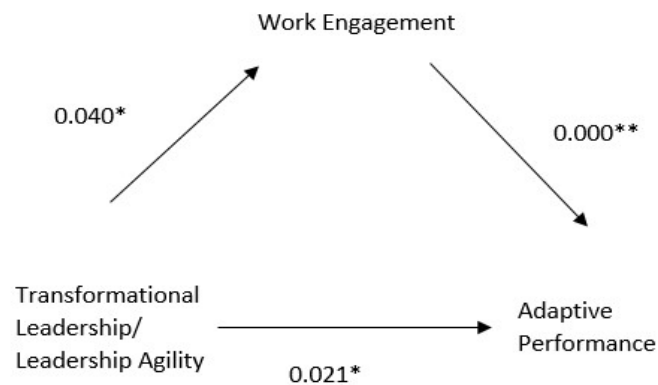
- Hypothesis 4: Leadership Agility will moderate the relationship between Transformational Leadership & Adaptive performance so that higher levels of Leadership Agility will enhance this relationship.*



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Results

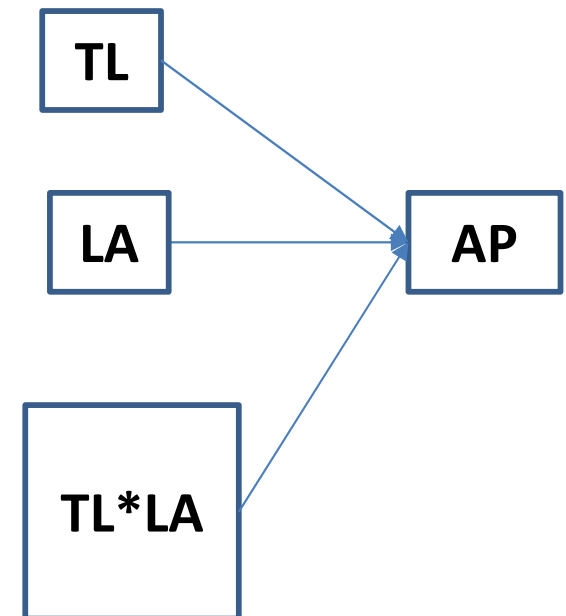
- Hypothesis 5: Work engagement mediates the stronger interactive effect of transformational leadership and leadership agility on adaptive performance. In the absence of work engagement, the effect of transformational leadership and leadership agility is less.*



**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

ns. Correlation is not significant (2-tailed)



Discussion

- The interaction of transformational leadership and leadership agility was noted to heighten their effect on adaptive performance. This was reflected in studies by O'Brien and Robertson (2015) and Akenroye and Kuenne (2015), which viewed leadership agility as an essential factor needed along with transformational leadership for followers to flourish in an ever changing organisation.
- While transformational leaders, through a longer term relationship (Ford et al., 2003), prepare their followers to embrace change (Bass & Riggio, 2006), an agile leader aids individuals to adapt to changing conditions and equip them with skills needed to proactively act to anticipate new challenges (Griffin et al., 2007)
- Bakker & Demerouti (2008) state that organizational features as leadership are influential in bringing about a state of engagement. This can be seen in the several similarities between transformational and agile leadership characteristics, and job and personal resources exhibited in the 'JD-R model'.

Concluding key messages

- Transformational leadership cannot function alone during times of change, and requires agile leadership skills to keep up and succeed in a turbulent setting.
- This study shows a significant relationship between the interaction term TL*LA and adaptive performance, mediated by work engagement.
- On a practical level:
 - Leadership skills training transformational, agility, adaptive
 - Promotion of work engagement

Thank you

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