Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Journal:	*Journal of Management & Organization*
Manuscript ID	JMO-2021-0287.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Article
Keywords:	Individual performance < KEYWORDS, Leadership Theories < THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES, Health and Wellness < KEYWORDS, Structural Equation Modelling < ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES, New Zealand < COUNTRY OR AREA STUDIES
Abstract:	There is scant research examining both the psychological (individual) and leadership (environmental) influences on older workers. We firstly examine the influence of older workers' mindfulness on their job engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Secondly, we address effective leadership approaches for older workers, comparing two positive relational leadership styles, Leader Member Exchange (LMX), and Leader Autonomy Support (LAS). We survey 1,237 participants from twenty-eight organisations in New Zealand and employ structural equation modelling (SEM) to test our hypotheses using AMOS 24.0. We find that mindful older workers enjoy greater wellbeing and are discerning of the leadership styles that most benefit their engagement, satisfaction, and intentions to stay within the organisation. We find that mindfulness has direct importance and LAS has indirect importance on advancing the wellbeing of older workers. Mindful older workers exhibit greater work wellbeing than non-mindful workers, but they also demonstrate greater expectations and discernment of the leadership styles they encounter.

Responses to Editor

Comment: The reviewer(s) suggest some minor revisions to your manuscript. In particular, Reviewer 2 still have concerns regarding some areas, e.g. arguments about hypothesis 1 was not addressed and the results about the variables and constructs were not addressed. The results presented in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 are not consistent with discussion of the results in the result sections of the paper. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise your manuscript.

RESPONSE

Thank you for the feedback. The attached document, highlights in RED, all the changes required. Hypothesis one has been augmented within the text (see page 2, 3, 4 and 6 and 7)

Further, Table Three has been reattached and RED highlight demonstrates the changes to the original manuscript. We also responded to Reviews point by point as below, to ensure we addressed all issues.

Response to Reviewer 1

Comment: One question I had was that the well-being of older workers being equated with outcome variables such as job engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intention has not been established quite clearly in the article. So, in saying that older workers' wellbeing=job engagement, job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions-this needs more research evidence as (older) worker well-being could well be construed in terms of different variables for that matter.

RESPONSE

Thank you. We have clarified what we mean as 'wellbeing' that was originally used as a way to minimise word count. Please see page three. Furthermore we also clarify wellbeing in terms of engagement, satisfaction and turnover on pages 2,4,6 and 7.

Response to Reviewer 2

Comment 1: One of the notable strengths of this paper is the sample size (N=1237). The author(s) collected data from 1,237 employees in 20 organisations in New Zealand. This large sample may provide power such that, the author(s) can examine the variables of the study and draw meaningful conclusions from their findings. Thus, I commend the author(s) for studying such a large sample.

Comment 2. Another strength of the paper was the wording of the hypotheses. The four hypotheses the author(s) studied were worded succinctly. This provided focus to the study and allowed the author(s) to test a parsimonious theoretical model of direct and indirect relationships of mindfulness and leader-follower relationships.

Comment 3. Despite the strengths of the paper (sample size, hypotheses), I have some concerns with the paper and will provide suggestions to help the author(s) improve their work. I note my concerns and suggestions in the following paragraphs:

RESPONSE

For Comments 1-3: Thank you.

Comment 4. My first concern relates to the research questions that the author(s) studied. The author(s) studied two questions: 1) Is mindfulness a valuable psychological resource for older workers' wellbeing? and 2) When older workers are mindful, are both leader-follower relationship practices (LMX and LAS) equally positive for older workers' engagement and workplace wellbeing? My concern with the first question is that, it is a question of importance (i.e. whether mindfulness is valuable) and such question does not need a theoretical model and the large sample the author(s) used in their study to answer this question. Given that, the author(s) were interested in understanding the relationships between mindfulness and outcome variables in their theoretical model, I will encourage the author(s) to reframe their question – from question of importance to question of relationships. For example, what are the relationships between mindfulness and older workers' wellbeing (job engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions)?

Comment 5: I am satisfied with changes in the research question. The author(s) changed the research question based on feedback I provided in previous review.

RESPONSE

For Comments 4-5: Thank you.

Comment 6: My concern with the second research question is the constructs: 2) When older workers are mindful, are both leader-follower relationship practices (LMX and LAS) equally positive for older workers' engagement and workplace wellbeing? The 'workplace wellbeing' should be rephrased to the specific wellbeing variables such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This is because 'workplace wellbeing' is too general and could mean anything in the workplace. Thus, I encourage the author(s) to remain consistent with the constructs and variables in the study.

RESPONSE

Thank you. We have clarified what we mean by 'wellbeing' that was originally used as a way to minimise word count. Please see page three. Furthermore we also clarify wellbeing in terms of engagement, satisfaction and turnover on pages 2,4,6,7 – this is in red highlight.

Comment 7: I am not sure whether the author(s) forgot to address this specific concern that I raised. I asked the author(s) to be specific about what they meant by 'workplace wellbeing' in

their second research question. Unfortunately, this concern was not addressed. Therefore, I am asking the author(s) to state specifically the variables or constructs that constitute the workplace wellbeing (i.e. job satisfaction and turnover intentions) in their research questions.

RESPONSE

Thank you. Please see page four: This has been re written as below:

- When older workers are mindful, are both leader-follower relationship practices (LMX and LAS) equally beneficial to the wellbeing of older workers (work engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions)?

Comment 8: A major concern of the paper is the hypotheses. Although, the hypotheses were stated simply and succinctly, all the hypotheses are underdeveloped. There are little or no rationale supporting the hypotheses of the study. For example, hypothesis 1 was about the relationship between mindfulness and wellbeing outcomes of engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. There is no discussion or explanation theoretically why mindfulness would relate to older workers' wellbeing outcomes such as job engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This is a serious omission. If we do not know why and how these variables would relate, how can the author(s) meaningfully study them?

Comment 9: I am unsatisfied that the author(s) did not attend to the concern that I raised about hypothesis 1. There was no efforts made to discuss why and how mindfulness would relate to wellbeing outcomes of:

a. Engagement
b. Job satisfaction
c. Turnover intentions

Comment 10. I am unsatisfied because the paragraphs supporting hypothesis 1 was left unchanged as in the previous review when I provided the feedback and suggestion.

RESPONSE to 8, 9, and 10

Our apologise. We previously added references, but did not elaborate, but appreciate your suggestion. We have rewritten the H1 section; please refer to pages 6 and 7 with red highlight demonstrating the rational for the 'wellbeing' outcomes tested. We believe this strengthens the paper considerably.

We have also updated the references for H1 to include the below:

Kleine, A.K., C.W., Rudolph, & Zacher, H. (2019). Thriving at work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 40,(9-10), 973-999

Rubenstein, A.L., Eberly, M.B, Lee,T.W., & Mitchell, T., R. (2018) Surveying the forest: A meta-analysis, moderator investigation, and future-oriented discussion of the antecedents of

voluntary employee turnover. *Personnel Psychology*,71(1), 23-65
Bentley, T., Blackwood, K., Catley, B., O'Driscoll, M. P., Roche, M., Teo, S. and Twiname, L. (2017), "The role of human resource practices and other factors influencing the continuing work participation of older workers in New Zealand", Antoniou, A., Burke, R. and Cooper, C. (Ed.), *The Aging Workforce Handbook: Individual, Organizational and Societal Challenges,* Emerald Group Publishing, WA, United Kingdom.

Comment 11: Similarly, the second hypothesis 2 suggesting relationships between mindfulness and positive followers' perceptions of LMX and LAS was poorly developed. We know much about LMX and LAS from the paragraphs supporting hypothesis 2. However, there is no arguments about why and how mindfulness will relate to LMX and LAS? So much time was spent on discussing LMX and LAS and no information was provided about how mindfulness will relate to these variables? As with hypothesis 1, the author(s) will need to provide strong theoretical reasons and justifications why they expect relationships between mindfulness and LMX and LAS!

Comment 12. I am satisfied with hypothesis 2. The author(s) provided three paragraphs to discuss why they expect positive relationships between mindfulness and LMX and LAS. I would like the author(s) to take similar approach to hypothesis 2 and address hypothesis 1 adequately.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS 11 AND 12

Thank you.

Comment 13. I saw some slight difference in the mediating hypotheses (i.e. LMX mediates relationships between mindfulness and outcomes) and (LAS mediates relationships between mindfulness and outcomes). For these mediating variables, the author(s) discussed LMX and LAS relationships with previous outcomes (e.g. engagement, job satisfaction, performance, turnover intentions, autonomy) and made some attempts to discuss the gaps in the literature of how mindfulness transmits its effect to outcome variables. However, these mediating variables still need more work. I would like to know how mindfulness influence engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions through LMX and LAS.

Comment 14. I am satisfied with hypotheses 3 and 4. The author(s) revised their work and provided five paragraphs to discuss why they expect positive relationships between mindfulness, LMX and LAS. In addition, they also discuss why they expect LMX and LAS to mediate the relationships between mindfulness and wellbeing outcomes.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS 13 AND 14

Thank you

Comment 15. My next concerns about the paper after the hypotheses are the results. The author(s) did not analyse the results well. In their results section of the paper (see pp. 13 – 14), the author(s) reported that, they conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to

confirm the factor structures of several instruments including mindfulness, LMX, LAS, turnover intentions and engagement. According to the author(s), their CFA results achieved an 'acceptable fit' as suggested by Williams et al (2009) (see p.14). However, the author(s) stated a comparative fit index (CFA ≥.95); the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA ≤.08); and the standardised root mean residual (SRMR ≤.10).

Comment 16. It was not clear to me whether the (CFA ≥.95); (RMSEA ≤.08); and (SRMR ≤.10) were the fit indices for the eight constructs (mindfulness, LAS, LMX, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, physical engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement) the author(s) examined. The author(s) provided the statement, 'please contact the corresponding author for the full results' (p.14). I will encourage the authors to provide the results of the CFA so that readers can assess and evaluate whether these constructs were confirmed in the current study. Readers do not have to contact the authors for results to understand the CFA results. The author(s) need to clearly communicate their findings for them to be understood by readers.

RESPONSE TO 15 and 16

We have removed the statement "please contact the corresponding author for the full results', and provided one table (i.e., Table 3) and presented all CFA results. Please refer to page 26.

Comment 17. The author(s) referred me to Table 3 which contains 5 variables (i.e. Mindfulness, LMX, Perceived autonomy support, Work engagement and Turnover intention). This is so confusing to me given that, the author(s) discussed in the results section acceptable fit indices for 'eight distinct constructs – including mindfulness, LAS, LMX, turnover intention, physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement' and job satisfaction. I am confused that, results reported in Table 3 do not correspond with discussion of CFA results presented in the results section of the paper. Moreover, Figure 1, Table 1 and Table 2 present five dependent variables (Job satisfaction, turnover intention, physical engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement) whereas Table 3 presents only two dependent variables (Work engagement and turnover intention). I would encourage the author(s) to be consistent with their variables and constructs to avoid confusion in interpreting the results!

RESPONSE TO 17

On page 16, we stated " Job satisfaction was not applicable for CFA, because job satisfaction is measured by only one item". Therefore, job satisfaction is not included in Table 3. We also stated that "work engagement was split into three factors: physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement". The work engagement in Table 3 is a three-factor construct. We have added one note at the bottom of Table 3 "Work engagement is a three-factor construct. The three-factor construct of work engagement achieved an ideal model fit compared with one-factor work engagement." Furthermore, to avoid any confusion over the number of study variables, we changed the title of Table 3 to "Fit indices of measurements of mindfulness, leader-member exchange, perceived autonomy support, work engagement and turnover intention."

Because work engagement is a three-factor construct, we have totally eight variables mindfulness, LAS, LMX, turnover intention, physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement and job satisfaction. Five of them are dependent variables, including turnover intention, physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement and job satisfaction.

Please refer to red bold on pages 15 through to 18 and Table 3 on page 26.

Comment 18. Another thing that concerns me about the author(s) CFA results is the factor structure that underlie the measure items provided in the method section of the paper. The author(s) claimed that CFA results showed a 3-factor structure for the 18-items scale of job engagement (see p.14). However, the 15-items mindfulness scale produce a single factor structure! I could not understand this given that, the quantity of items was almost the same. Therefore, I will encourage the author(s) to provide the theories that guided their CFA analysis of the measured items reported in the method section.

Comment 19. The author(s) addressed this concern by indicating that they used a 'single-factor mindfulness attention awareness scale with 15 items'.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS 18-19

Thank you. The quantity of the dimensions of one construct was not determined by the quantity of the items in the measure. It was determined by the theory underling it. Brown and Ryan (2003) developed one-factor mindfulness measure, refer manuscript (page 14). Further, Carlson and Brown (2005) validated the one-factor measure.

Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 822-848.

Carlson, L.E. & Brown, K.W. (2005). Validation of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in a cancer population. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 58*, 29-33.

Comment 20. Finally, the mediation hypotheses (hypotheses 3 – 4) and the AMOS bootstrapping procedure that estimated the direct and indirect coefficients in the partial theoretical model seem reasonable (see p.16). However, given that, the CFI = 1.00 reported was 1.00 instead of .095, .096, .097, .098 or .099, I will encourage the author(s) to assess other fit indices such as Tucker Lewis index (TLI) to complement the CFI results. Reporting the TLI is an established practice in management research (see Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Williams et al., 2009).

Comment 21. The author(s) addressed this concern by including the Tucker Lewis index (TLI).

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS 20 and 21

Thank you. As noted, we have added TLI on pages 17-18.

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

There is scant research examining both the psychological (individual) and leadership (environmental) influences on older workers. We firstly examine the influence of older workers' mindfulness on their job engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Secondly, we address effective leadership approaches for older workers, comparing two positive relational leadership styles, Leader Member Exchange (LMX), and Leader Autonomy Support (LAS). We survey 1,237 participants from twenty-eight organisations in New Zealand and employ structural equation modelling (SEM) to test our hypotheses using AMOS 24.0. We find that mindful older workers enjoy greater wellbeing and are discerning of the leadership styles that most benefit their engagement, satisfaction, and intentions to stay within the organisation. We find that mindfulness has direct importance and LAS has indirect importance on advancing the wellbeing of older workers. Mindful older workers exhibit greater work wellbeing than non-mindful workers, but they also demonstrate greater expectations and discernment of the leadership styles they encounter.

Keywords

Older workers, Mindfulness, Leadership, Turnover, Engagement, Satisfaction

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Introduction

Globally, the aging population is booming and is expected to triple in size by 2050; in New Zealand, this is a 26% increase in individuals aged 80 years or older (NZ Stats, 2018). This global phenomena has created fears about future labour market shortages (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008) and, accordingly, concerns around the need to retain and develop older workers (defined as those aged 55+ by the OECD, 2015), since this cohort is central to sustaining workplaces of the future (Kooij et al., 2008; World Health Organization, 2010). While older workers offer opportunities for future workforce sustainability, they also face unique and unusual barriers, such as dealing with erroneous aged stereotypes, undermining and dismissive treatment (James et al., 2013; Harris, Krygsman,Waschenko & Rudman, 2017; Ng & Feldman, 2012;, Sparks, 2001). Accordingly, the work and wellbeing outcomes that employees usually derive from their jobs take on a different inflection when it comes to older workers (Krygsman et al., 2017). Moreover, particular approaches to leadership can pose as a stressor for older workers, where reports of poor quality relationships and feelings of disrespect from leaders are in stark contrast to the necessities identified by these workers to remain active in the workforce (Collins et al., 2009; James et al., 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2012 Thorsen et al., 2016).

To overcome such barriers, and to improve the workplace wellbeing of older workers, it is paramount to investigate the antecedents to wellbeing, by examining the internal psychological resources of such workers (i.e. mindfulness) *and* by ascertaining how this may also influence the leader-follower relationship (Sparks et al., 2001). Ultimately, research has shown that retaining and developing (older) workers derives from two connected but differing functions: the individual's positive psychological resources (e.g., mindfulness) and the social context and environment in which they work (e.g., leader-follower relationships) (Brown &

Ryan, 2003; Olafsen, 2017). However, there has been minimal research on these connected processes, in terms of promoting older workers' wellbeing (Thorsen et al., 2016: Allen et al., 2017), and we seek to address this.

Research on mindfulness in the workplace suggests that it is a valuable personal psychological resource (Roche et al., 2020). A mindful person has heightened awareness and attention to the present. They are not cognitively 'distracted' by future thinking, or ruminating over previous situations. Mindful workers have a mental clarity that facilitates self-regulation (Holzel et al., 2011; Roche et al., 2020), enabling them to disengage themselves from automatic or dysfunctional thoughts, habits, and behaviours (Holzel et al., 2011), which, in turn, facilitates their workplace wellbeing (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2017; Hafenbrack et al., 2014). Specifically, mindfulness has been offered as a valuable wellbeing resource for employees, including aiding employee engagement and satisfaction, and reducing turnover (as expanded below), but there is limited research demonstrating that mindfulness can be directly beneficial for older workers (c.f. Allen et al., 2017).

The mechanisms that support the relationships between older workers' mindfulness, wellbeing, and organisational leadership remain understudied (Roche, et al., 2020; Reb et al., 2019). Drawing from (limitations) of studies in mindfulness, we go beyond a focus on the (individual) psychological processes related to internal cognition (such as quieting the mind, rumination and thought distraction), and instead foreground the role of mindfulness and its relationship with environmental (external) phenomena, within the work environment (Roche, et al., 2020; Hafenbrack et al., 2014; Hafenbrack, 2017). The workplace is full of external stimuli and phenomena that shape the wellbeing of individuals, such as leadership support (Olafsen, 2017), and the environment in which we work, including the leadership styles enacted in that environment, is increasingly the subject of research on mindfulness (see Hülsheger et

al., 2019). There is evidence to suggest that positive leadership support, and the leader-follower relationship, which includes leader-member exchange (LMX) and leader autonomy support (LAS) approaches, are external/environmental influences that contribute to worker wellness (Slemp et al., 2018: Hülsheger, et al., 2019).

As such, we seek to support the growing literature that highlights the importance of understanding the mechanisms of mindfulness at work at both the individual and environmental (leadership) level, and to explore the implications of this for older worker wellbeing. We pose two key questions:

- What is the relationship between mindfulness and older workers' wellbeing (work engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions)?
- When older workers are mindful, are both leader-follower relationship practices (LMX and LAS) equally beneficial to the wellbeing of older workers (work engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intentions)?

In addressing these questions, we make the following contributions:

Firstly, we outline the importance of mindfulness for older workers in terms of enhanced engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. While the relationships between mindfulness and the importance of these outcomes exist in wider literature (see Roche et al., 2020), very limited research has focused specifically on the connection between mindfulness and the wellbeing of older workers (c.f Allen, 2017).

Secondly, we contribute to the literature on leadership, mindfulness, and aged workers. While prior research has found the importance of mindfulness influencing employee perceptions of LMX (Reb et al., 2019), we augment this research to include both LMX and LAS. As such, we provide a granulated analysis of (two) relational leadership theories -- one

that emphasis exchanges (LMX), and the other, autonomy (LAS). This provides insight into the awareness of mindful older workers with respect to different relational leadership theories.

Thirdly, we advance the mindfulness and employee decision making literature with regards to the leadership of older workers by assessing the importance of LMX and LAS on wellbeing outcomes. Despite being in its infancy, research on mindful workers and decision making (Pless et al., 2017; Galles et al., 2019; Small & Lew, 2021) suggests that mindful workers have a greater ability to engage in decision making including leadership styles (Reb et al., 2019) that are of most benefit to the individual (Galles et al., 2019; Reb et al., 2019). We seek to determine whether exchanges (LMX) or autonomy (LAS) is more beneficial in harnessing the wellbeing of mindful older workers.

Finally, we provide and test an initial model of wellbeing for the older worker, one that integrates both personal internal processes (i.e., mindfulness) and external phenomena (i.e., leader-follower relationships), providing a framework that may stimulate further research into older workers' wellbeing.

In the next section, we seek to confirm the effect of mindfulness as a personal, psychological resource for older workers' wellbeing on their work engagement, job satisfaction, and retention of roles. We provide clarity of specific terms and offer insights into the types of relationships that are important for improving mindful older workers' wellbeing. We distinguish between LMX and LAS as relational leadership constructs, and investigate how mindfulness, leadership, and older workers' discernment of leadership styles affect their wellbeing.

Mindfulness and Wellbeing

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Mindfulness does not have a single definition. However, common across most definitions is that mindfulness is, firstly, a cognitive process (Brown et al., 2007). This includes enhanced awareness of, and attention to, internal and external stimuli, as well as possessing a non-reactive or non-judgemental evaluation/orientation toward inner or outer experiences or stimuli. Secondly, mindfulness has a temporal focus, focused on the present moment as opposed to the past or the future (Sutcliffe et al., 2016). The surge of research attesting to the beneficial properties of mindfulness and the importance of mindfulness as a personal psychological resource for employee workplace wellbeing (Atkins & Styles, 2015; Dane & Brummel, 2014; Roche et al., 2014, 2020) is convincing.

As outlined above, scant attention has been paid to the mechanisms for motivating, understanding and leading an aging workforce. Yet this need is particularly important as this group of workers also face additional challenges because of their age. While some research suggests mindfulness buffers the effects of discrimination (e.g. Shallcross & Sprull, 2018), there has been surprisingly little research on the role mindfulness may play in promoting the wellbeing of older workers at work. This paper examines the direct effects of mindfulness on the workplace wellbeing of this unique follower group, particularly in relation to their work engagement, job satisfaction, and intentions to remain in their workplace.

Mindfulness functions in a way that counters automatic cognitive processes and it facilitates more appropriate responses to situations. Therefore, while older workers may face negative effects, such as workplace stereotyping (Karpinska et al., 2015). Mindfulness functions in a way that counters automatic cognitive processes and it facilitates more appropriate responses to situations. Therefore, while older workers may face negative effects, such as workplace stereotyping (Karpinska et al., 2015), mindfulness may help such workers to 're-orientate' or to 're-direct' their focus on satisfying aspects of their work (Shapiro et al., 2006).

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

As outlined above, we define wellbeing as older workers engagement, job satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions. Engagement and job satisfaction are positvely related to employee workplace thriving (see Kleine, Rudolph, & Zacher, 2019) while research on turnover intentions has urged for greater understanding, given turnover intentions centrality in addressing issues in the future of work (see Rubenstein, et al, 2018) - of which older workers will also play a pivotal role (Bently et al., 2017). Further, prior research has found that mindfulness is related to the enhancing of job satisfaction and engagement, and reducing turnover intentions (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019; Andrews et al., 2014; Dane & Brummel, 2014). Given the mechanism of mindfulness for older workers, as outlined above, follow the same cognitive processes (see Allen, et al., 2017) and mindfulness has an established role in engagement, satisfaction and turnover, we expect that mindfulness will be related to these same wellbeing outcomes for older workers.

We firstly test the direct effects of mindfulness on the wellbeing of older workers/followers.

Hypothesis 1: Mindfulness will be positively related to a. engagement and b. job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1c: Mindfulness will be negatively related to turnover intentions.

Mindfulness and Leader-Follower Relationships

Research suggests that social stereotyping of older workers is especially prevalent amongst their younger managers (Sparks et al., 2001), who therefore require education/training to remedy this viewpoint. This lack of understanding on how to lead older workers – who rate positive leadership *relationships* as very important – has fuelled concerns around the future of leading older workers, particularly for organisations (Thorsen et al., 2016; Karpinska et al., 2013). Unsupportive leaders, negative follower–management relationships, lack of recognition

from management, and poor trust in management, are all themes that dominate older worker research (Thorsen et al., 2016). However, while older workers may struggle with issues of poor management, *mindful* older workers, via the cognitive mechanism outlined above, may be able to reduce automatic cognitive processes and actively focus on positive aspects of the existing leadership relationships in their workplace. We will now examine positive leadership, specifically through the lens of relational leadership, as this leadership style resonates with older worker leadership needs (Thorsen et al., 2016).

A relational leadership focus is built on the relationships between leaders and followers, as a micro level (c.f. organisational) stance. As such, we conceptualise positive leadership by using two relational leadership theories: Leader Member Exchange (LMX) and Leader Autonomy Support (LAS). Both these theories share similarities in that they focus on building positive relationships between leaders and followers. Both are concerned with the close proximity between leaders and followers, and how the interactions facilitate a positive relationship, environment, and outcomes. However, they differ in their explanation of *how* this happens: LMX focuses on building relationships via positive (social) exchanges, while LAS focuses on harnessing perceptions of followers' psychological autonomy at work. We outline these similar but contrasting theories below.

Leader Member Exchange (LMX)

LMX describes the quality of the relationship between leaders and followers (Yukl et al., 2009). The central tenet is that LMX quality, or the degree to which these exchanges are mutually beneficial, is defined by the exchanges of valued tangible, informational, and socio-emotional resources (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). High-quality LMX is characterised by mutual trust and respect, as well as a general expectation of some form of future return, even though this is not stipulated in advance. Thus, relationships develop via exchanges and include feelings

like gratitude, trust, altruism, and respect that is reciprocal. LMX has been found to be highly predictive of a range of individual level outcomes as described further below.

Leader Autonomy Support (LAS).

Deci et al. (2017) suggest the workplace can enhance or restrict one's autonomy. A controlling environment enforces deadlines, limits rewards and over-emphasises the evaluation of workplace tasks, which can lead to decreased meaning and interest in activities (Gagne, 2003; Olafsen et al., 2015). Conversely, environments that actively acknowledge employee feelings and priorities, and which offer choice, serve to enhance worker autonomy (Slemp et al., 2020). A recent meta-analysis found that leaders who develop an autonomy enhancing relationship with their workers aid employee wellbeing (Slemp, Kerin, Patrick & Ryan, 2018). LAS is a form of leadership support that enhances psychological autonomy, and it is viewed as in*ter*dependence between leaders and followers. Ryan et al. (2005) found that people are more inclined to depend upon those who support their autonomy. Indeed, Deci and Ryan (2000) found that positive reliance on others fosters a sense of autonomy in those others and that people feel most connected to those who enthusiastically support their autonomy. LAS is an approach that promotes and provides choice, freedom, rationale, and support for employees' decisions (Gange & Bhave, 2011: Slemp et al., 2018), in a climate of relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2008). LAS includes providing rationale for tasks, framing requests using non-controlling language, acknowledging employees' perspectives even if tasks are not intrinsically motivating, and it ultimately serves to bolster employee wellbeing through enhanced psychological authonomy (Slemp et al., 2018).

While older workers often view their workplace leaders as largely unsupportive, we suggest that *mindful* older workers may be able to actively orientate and acknowledge positive aspects of the leadership relationships surrounding them. As outlined above, mindfulness as a

cognitive mechanism creates mental space, which, in turn, facilitates the employee's ability to 're-perceive' both internal and external phenomena through a positive lens. As with our hypothesis on the mechanism of mindfulness towards wellbeing outcomes (i.e. internal phenomena), we expect mindfulness will also aid the process of awareness and re-orienting leadership perceptions (i.e. external phenomena).

In summary, previous research has confirmed that when employees are mindful, they also perceive leadership with clarity, including the benefits of interpersonal leadership relationships (Reb et al., 2019). By viewing leadership mindfully, older workers may be more attuned to the respect and consideration enabled by high quality relationships. Attentive and mindful employees, who are not automatic and habitual in their cognitions, have enhanced sensitivities towards the importance of ethical, authentic, and task-related leadership (see Roche et al., 2020; Nübold et al., 2020; Reb et al., 2012). While Reb et al. (2019) found that perceptions of ethical and relational (LMX) leadership were more pronounced in mindful employees, we take a nuanced approach by using only the relational leadership theories of LMX and LAS. We suggest that perceptions of leadership from the same nomological framework (or family – that is, positive relational leadership) will still be enhanced when employees are mindful. As such, our contribution to the mindfulness and relational leadership literature is granular in nature.

We suggest that, when employees are mindful, even similar perceptions of leadership stemming from the same framework of relational leadership can be further clarified. While relational leadership sees effective leadership as resulting from high-quality relationships between leaders and employees, we suggest mindful workers are able to view these with greater cognitive clarity and granularity. We propose that, for mindful older workers, mindfulness

highlights the high-quality exchanges that take place between leaders and followers (i.e. LMX) and foregrounds the autonomy and supportive role leaders play (i.e. LAS).

This leads to our next direct hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Mindfulness is related to positive follower perceptions of (a) leader member exchanges and (b) leader autonomy support.

Mediating role of the leader-member relationship on mindful follower outcomes

While mindfulness may facilitate the positive awareness of, and attention to, leader-member relationships (i.e., LMX and LAS), it is unclear if these perceptions translate into positive *outcomes* with respect to the wellbeing of older workers. Mindful older workers may have a positive view of the leadership they experience in their workplace, but this may not necessarily increase their work engagement or satisfaction. Coupled with this, within the mindfulness literature, there is emerging and convincing evidence that suggests mindfulness enables greater discernment at the point of decision making (Holzel, et al., 2011; Hafenbrack, 2017). We were curious to determine if the relationship between mindfulness, LAS and older worker outcomes are the same as the relationship between mindfulness, LMX, and older worker outcomes. In other words, do LMX and LAS (i.e. regardless of the relational leadership type) equally influence job satisfaction, engagement, and turnover rates?

To answer this, we attempt to advance the mindfulness and employee decision making literature by assessing the importance of each (LMX and LAS) on wellbeing outcomes. Mounting research finds that mindful employees, as they re-perceive events with greater clarity, engage in higher quality decision making, including those relating to leadership styles (Reb et al., 2019). Mindful employees are found to be more capable of orientating the decisions they make to optimise benefits for themselves (Jacob et al., 2019). This has been with respect to

research on ethical decision making (Pless et al., 2017; Small, & Lew, 2021), career decisions (Jacob, et al., 2019), and financial decisions (Hafenbrack, Kinias, & Barsade, 2014).

Building on the growing literature on mindfulness and decision making, we suggest that mindful older workers may re-perceive positive relational leadership (i.e., LMX and LAS) and 'decide' which is more appropriate for their workplace wellbeing. That is, while mindful older workers may have clarity around the benefits of relational leadership, whether or not LMX and LAS generate equally important effects with respect to work outcomes (job satisfaction, engagement, and turnover) is yet to be established, a question this paper seeks to address. Before outlining our next hypotheses, it is pertinent to discuss the literature that provides the basis for them.

Mediation Hypothesis

Mindfulness, LAS, and Outcomes

Nübold et al (2020) and Reb et al. (2019) have found that mindful employees have positive leadership perceptions and that these perceptions are related to positive employee outcomes. The enhanced sensitivities that attentive and mindful employees have towards leadership also extend towards the cognitive processing of outcomes (see Nübold, et al., 2020). Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 72 studies of work settings by Slemp et al. (2018) found that LAS is positively related to job engagement and job satisfaction and is negatively related to turnover intentions. Other studies also indicate that LAS is negatively related to turnover intentions across different organisational types (Williams et al., 2014) and industries (Guntert, 2015; Gillet et al., 2013) while a study by Slemp et al. (2021) concluded that LAS is positively related to work engagement. This leads us to extrapolate from these findings and to contend that LAS, by facilitating one's sense of autonomy (van Solinge & Henkens, 2014, will also be advantageous to the engagement, job satisfaction and retention of mindful older workers. As such we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: LAS mediates the relationship between mindfulness and outcomes (a. engagement, b. satisfaction and c. reduced turnover) for older workers (see model one below).

Mindfulness, LMX, and Outcomes

LMX has also been found to be highly predictive of a range of individual level outcomes including engagement, job satisfaction, and performance (Masterson et al., 2000). Indeed, the role of LMX in predicting employee wellbeing is well documented in the wider organisational behaviour and HR literature (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). For example, Reb et al. (2019) found that LMX mediated the relationship between mindfulness and employee performance, which we also expect to be the case for older workers. As with LAS, prior research indicates that LMX has a clear relationship with mindfulness (Reb et al., 2019) and that LMX is positively related to job satisfaction (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005, Volmer et al., 2011) and job engagement (Breevaart et al., 2015; de Oliveira & da Silva, 2015) while negatively related to turnover intentions (Harris et al., 2009; Gerstner & Day, 1997). This provides us with the basis for our next hypothesis:

H4: LMX mediates the relationship between mindfulness and work outcomes (a. engagement, b. satisfaction, and c. reduced turnover) for older workers (see model two below).

Method

Participants aged 55 or above were recruited via Diversity Works New Zealand (previously the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust). Contacts (HR managers, diversity managers and business owners) in Diversity Works member organisations distributed a link to our online survey to staff who were eligible. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and

confidential and the study was approved by the University ethics board before data collection commenced.

Sample

In total, 1237 participants from twenty-eight organisations across a wide range of industries in New Zealand participated in this study. Participants were 33.2% male and 66.8% female. The age range of our participants was between 55 and 79, with 47.9% in the 55-59 age group, 34.5% in the 60-64 age group, 14.5% in the 65-74 age group, and 3.1% over 70 years old. Approximately 6% of respondents were senior managers, 20% were mid-level managers, 10% were first-line supervisors and approximately two thirds of respondents (64%) were non-managerial employees.

Measure

All measures applied in this study have been widely adopted in previous research. The research questionnaire consisted of the following elements:

Control variables

For this study, the age, gender, and job roles of our participants were included as control variables. According to Spector and Brannick (2011), if variables are thought to be theoretically important, then they do need to be controlled or investigated. Previous research on older workers (e.g., Zacher et al., 2017) suggests that age is related to staying longer in a complex role (Mujahid & Ozminkowski, 2016) and that the wellbeing of older workers rests on deriving a sense of achievement from, and engagement with, work (Robson et al., 2006). Zhan et al. (2015) found that gender differences, shaped by role theory, mattered in continued work for older workers. Subsequent t-test evidence supported these various findings. That is, age is significantly correlated with job satisfaction ($r=.16$, $p<.01$), turnover intention ($r=-.18$, $p<.01$), and emotional engagement ($r=.10$, $p<.01$). Gender is significantly correlated with job

satisfaction (r=.07, p<.05), LMX (r=-.08, p<.01), physical engagement (r=.16, p<.01), cognitive engagement (r=.17, p<.01), and emotional engagement (r=.09, p<.01). Job role is significantly correlated with job satisfaction (r=-.11, p<.01), LMX (r=-.13, p<.01), LAS (r=-.14, p<.01), physical engagement (r=.07, p<.05), cognitive engagement (r=-.07, p<.05), and emotional engagement (r=-.14, p<.01). Based on this, we include statistical controls in our model testing.

Mindfulness: Brown and Ryan's (2003) single-factor Mindful Attention Awareness Scale with 15 items was used to measure mindfulness. Respondents were required to rate the frequency of the listed experiences happening in their daily life on a six-point scale (where 1 is "almost always" and 6 is "almost never"). A sample item is that "*I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later*." The Cronbach alpha for this instrument was .90.

Leadership Autonomy Support (LAS): LAS was measured using a scale by Baard et al. (2004), ranging from 1 denoting "strongly disagree" to 5 being "strongly agree". Sample items include "*My manager listens to how I would like to do things"* and "*My manager made sure I understood the goals for my job and what I need to do*". The Cronbach alpha was .95.

Leader Member Exchange (LMX): An eight-item instrument taken from Bernerth et al. (2007) was used to measure LMX. Respondents were asked to rate the social exchange between leaders and subordinates by using a five-point Likert scale (where 1 is "strongly disagree", and 5 is "strongly agree"). A sample item is "*If I do something for my manager, he or she will eventually repay me"*. The Cronbach alpha for this measurement was .96.

Job satisfaction*:* This was measured using the widely employed single-item scale by Warr et al. (1979). Participants were asked to indicate their general feeling about their job -- "*Now*

taking everything into consideration, how do you feel about your job as a whole?" -- by using a seven-point scale (where 1 is "extremely dissatisfied" and 7 is "extremely satisfied").

Turnover intention*:* A three-item scale by Meyer and Allen (1991) was used to measure turnover intention. Respondents were required to indicate how often they thought about leaving their current organisations using a five-point scale ranging from 1="never" to 5="always". A sample item is "*I plan to look for a new job within the next 12 months*". The Cronbach alpha was .83.

Job engagement*:* The 18-item scale by Rich et al. (2010) was used and it contains three dimensions: physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement, each of which was measured by six items. Respondents were required to indicate to what extent they agreed with the items on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 denoting "strongly disagree" to 5 denoting "strongly agree". Sample items include "*I work with intensity on my job*" for physical engagement, "*I am enthusiastic in my job* for emotional engagement", and "*at work, my mind is focused on my job*" for cognitive engagement. The Cronbach alphas for these three components were .91, .93 and .94 respectively.

Analysis and Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations and reliability coefficients of all continuous study variables.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and testing for common methods bias. Before proceeding with hypothesis testing, a series of CFA) was conducted using AMOS 24.0 to confirm the factor structures of the instruments for mindfulness, LAS, LMX, working

engagement, and turnover intention. Job satisfaction was not applicable for CFA, because job satisfaction is measured by only one item. Mindfulness, LAS, LMX, and turnover intention were one-factor measures while work engagement was split into three factors: physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. All instruments, as listed in Table 3, achieved an acceptable level of fit suggested by Williams et al. (2009): the comparative fit index (CFI ≥ .95); the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA ≤ .08); and the standardised root mean residual (SRMR ≤ .10). Hence, eight distinct constructs were used in this research: mindfulness, LAS, LMX, turnover intention, physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement.

All the data were derived from a single-source: a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey, which raises potential concerns regarding common method variance (CMV) or common method bias (CMB) (e.g., Fuller et al., 2016). To address this, following Podsakoff et al. (2003), we performed the most commonly used Harman's one-factor test to detect the levels of CMV. The results show that the first factor only accounted for 27.85% of the variance, which is lower than the 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, no dominant factor explains the majority of the variance. To provide further evidence, we employed the marker variable technique of Lindell and Whitney (2001). This method requires including a measure, which is not theoretically relevant to at least one measure in the survey, as a marker variable. The logic of this method is that if the correlations between the study variables and the marker variable are not significant in the test of zero-order correlation, they will not be statistically significant after the adjustment for CMV (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Otherwise, CMV will be problematic for further analysis. We chose flexible human resource practice (a five-item variable with an alpha coefficient of .84) as the marker variable, because it is identified a priori as being theoretically unlikely to correlate with individuals' mindfulness. From Table 1, the correlations between our studied variables and flexibility slightly changed after an adjustment

for CMV, but the significance of them was consistent. Therefore, we conclude that CMV is unlikely to inflate the relationships found in this study.

Hypothesis testing

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted to test Hypotheses 1 – 4 by using AMOS 24.0. Unstandardised regression coefficients were used in this research as recommended by Grace and Bollen (2005). First, the direct relationships between mindfulness and outcome variables (job satisfaction, turnover intention, and three dimensions of working engagement) were examined. This was supported, as can be seen in Figure 1, with acceptable goodness-of-fit indices: CFI = .998, TLI = 961, RMSEA = .074, and SRMR = .016. Results suggest that mindfulness was positively and significantly related to job satisfaction ($\beta = .46$, $p < .001$), physical engagement ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$), emotional engagement ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$), and cognitive engagement ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), and negatively associated with turnover intention ($\beta = -.31$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Subsequently, the mediation hypotheses were also tested by undertaking SEM. Following the recent appealing practice of mediation testing by Zhao et al. (2010) and Zhu, Newman, Miao and Hooke (2013), we conducted two sets of SEM: a full mediation model (in which direct effects from mindfulness to outcome variables were excluded), and a partial mediation model (in which direct effects from mindfulness to outcome variables were included). The goodness-of-fit indices for the full mediation model were CFI = .981, TLI = .901, RMSEA = .115, and SRMR = .048, while the indices for the partial mediation model were CFI = 1.00, TLI = .990, RMSEA = .031, and SRMR = .006. Accordingly, the partial mediation model was accepted as the better model, as it improved the overall model fit.

To determine the significance of indirect effects in the mediation hypotheses

(Hypotheses 3-4), we followed the recommendations from Zhao et al. (2010), and utilised the bootstrapping estimates provided by AMOS 24.0. The direct and indirect coefficients in the partial mediation model are presented in Table 2. The results show that LAS significantly mediated the relationships of mindfulness with job satisfaction ($\beta = .13$, $p < .001$), turnover intention ($\beta = -.07$, $p < .001$), physical engagement ($\beta = .02$, $p < .01$), emotional engagement ($\beta = .04$, $p < .001$), and cognitive engagement ($\beta = .03$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 3. Within those mediation paths, mindfulness was significantly associated with LAS ($\beta = .20$, $p < .001$), which supports our Hypothesis 2b, and LAS was significantly related to all the outcome variables (see Table 2). However, LMX did not significantly mediate the relationships between mindfulness and the following: job satisfaction ($\beta = .00$, $p > .05$), turnover intention ($\beta = -.01$, $p > .05$), physical engagement ($\beta = -.00$, $p > .05$), emotional engagement ($\beta = .00$, $p > .05$), and cognitive engagement ($\beta = -.01$, $p > .05$), leading us to reject Hypothesis 4. Within this set of mediation paths, mindfulness was significantly associated with LMX ($\beta = .12$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 2a, but LMX was not significantly related to any outcome variables (see Table 2), which could be responsible for those insignificant mediation relationships in Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

To ensure workforce sustainability, calls for the retention and development of older workers have been made (Collins et al., 2009; James et al., 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2012 Thorsen et al., 2016).

However, despite the need for older workers, research consistently shows that for older workers, stress, negative stereotypes, and leadership inability pose challenges to their retention

and enjoyment of work (Sparks, 2001; James et al., 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2012, Collins et al., 2009). We sought to redress this by developing and testing a model for older worker wellbeing, which includes personal resources (i.e. mindfulness) and external/environmental (i.e. leadership) variables.

Mindfulness and Engagement, Satisfaction and Turnover

We tested and found a positive relationship between mindfulness and older workers' wellbeing (engagement, satisfaction and intention to leave). While research to date has found these relationships in other demographics and populations (see Roche, et al., 2020) scant literature has investigated the importance of mindfulness on the wellbeing of older workers (c.f Allen, et al., 2017). As with workers in other demographics, we found that mindfulness is a personal psychological resource for older workers, one on which they draw as they navigate difficult organisational terrains.

Mindfulness and Relational Leadership (LMX and LAS)

Secondly, we found a positive relationship between mindful older workers and relational leadership. Older workers often cite leadership ineffectiveness and disrespect as major issues they face at work. However, as mindfulness facilitates a process of selectiveness and purposefulness, it enhances the alignment of one's environment and one's needs (Eisenbeiss & Van Knippenber, 2015; Glomb et al., 2011; Hafenbrack, 2017), including leadership perceptions (Reb et al., 2019) and we found this for both LAS and LMX. As such, mindfulness is not only a key personal (psychological) resource for workers, it is central to the enhancement of positive organisational and social processes in the work environment, including leadership (Sutcliffe et al., 2016: Hülsheger, et al., 2019)

Mindfulness, Relational Leadership (LMX versus LAS), and Outcomes

As previously noted, there has been scant research on how different positive leadership behaviours, as perceived by mindful followers in leader-follower relationships, affect the

workplace wellbeing of older workers. Overall, we find that more mindful older workers tend to enjoy greater wellbeing, orientate towards positive leadership, and are more discerning of the style of positive relational leadership that is most beneficial for their engagement, satisfaction and intention to stay in the organisation.

One of the key findings of this paper is that while LAS mediated the relationship between mindfulness and outcomes, LMX did not. There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, it could be that older workers place less value on the importance of exchanges compared to younger workers, perhaps owing to a reduced focus on compensation, ambition and promotion (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Differences in age between leaders and followers may also have implications for the quality of these exchanges. In particular, relational demography theory predicts that employees who are similar in age to their managers will have more positive work attitudes and experiences than will employees who are dissimilar in age to their managers; while we did not test for age similarity, older workers are still a minority in the workforce. Alternatively, there is also a power differential associated with most LMX relationships. As people grow older, they tend to be less concerned with negotiating with powerful individuals (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). It is possible that mindful older followers view leaders as exerting more power in the development of LMX relationships, which reduces the perception of LMX quality by older workers (Settoon et al., 1996; Liden et al., 1997). At this point, this is only speculation, and it requires further testing.

Another explanation for why LAS mediated the relationship between mindfulness and outcomes while LMX did not may lie in existing literature which indicates that older workers value autonomy. LAS, which facilitates the autonomy of older workers, has greater importance and relevance for the wellbeing of older workers. As workers mature in age, they gravitate towards leadership styles that will satisfy their deeper eudaimonic wellbeing needs (Kasser & Ryan, 2006; Ryan et al., 2008), such as autonomy. They may have less interest in LMX

exchanges and in the need to derive reciprocal benefit from these exchanges. This would align with research from Sheldon and Kasser (2001) who found that age and maturity are related to a greater pursuit of autonomy in terms of benefitting wellbeing. While further research is needed here with respect to both LMX and LAS, we find that mindful mature workers typically thrive in a (leadership) environment that supports their autonomy.

We also suggest this opens research into the area of mindfulness and leadership, by demonstrating that not all positive leadership is beneficial, when employees are mindful. As such, this creates greater expectations of leaders, to more accurately engage in a range of leadership behaviours that their *mindful employees* want and need, rather than practising positive leadership that may be nonspecific to their employees' needs. Leaders and organisations should be aware that while there are many benefits to having mindful employees, such followers may also generate unexpected outcomes. Our paper flips the focus of leader-follower relationships towards the follower, arguing that mindful followers exhibit greater expectations, or at least greater discernment and judgement, about leadership in the workplace. Finally, we suggest that this finding adds weight to, and contributes towards understandings of, the granulated nature and nuances of relational leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011), and the discernment and decision-making capabilities of mindful employees (Hafenbrack et al., 2014; Jacob et al., 2019; Pless et al., 2017; Small & Lew, 2021; Reb et al., 2019).

Finally, we suggest that the model we have developed and tested provides tentative promise as a model of wellbeing in integrating both personal and environmental resources. We suggest that our model may be used as an initial platform to extend further research into older workers' wellbeing.

Limitations

Further research is needed to confirm and extend our findings here. Firstly, our sample is of New Zealand older workers, and differences may be experienced in other areas of the Asia-Pacific region, or beyond. Secondly, experimental studies are needed to further unravel the exact cognitive processes of leadership as an internal (psychological) and external (i.e. leadership) phenomena at work, both in terms of better understanding the cognitive processes involved, and with different leadership styles in play. While this study confirms the leadership preferences of mindful older workers, more research is needed in relation to different age cohorts, gender needs, and other leadership styles at work. Further, we suggest the need for longitudinal research to establish greater validity of our findings. Finally, leadership is only one aspect of the workplace environment that we tested. Other aspects, such as team support, should also be tested.

Implications

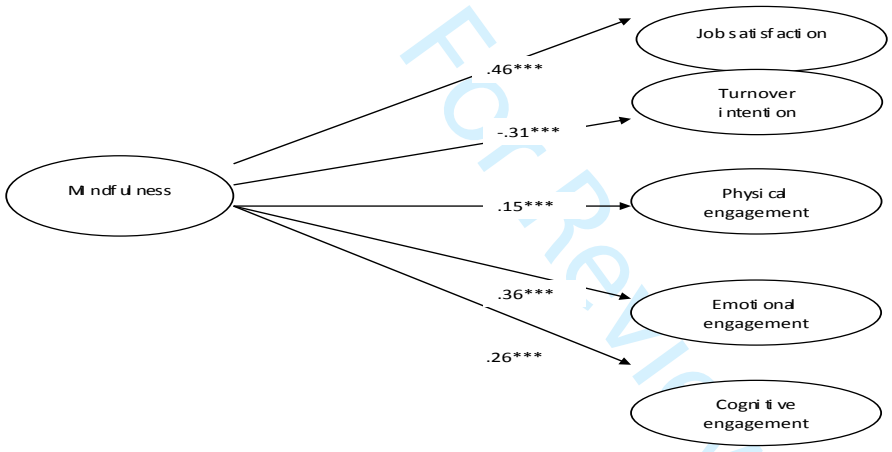
Our study garners some initial insights for enhancing the wellbeing of older workers with respect to leadership and organisational interventions. Firstly, organisations may introduce mindfulness training for older workers as this can enhance their wellbeing and direct their attention to positive leadership behaviours. That said, our study also demonstrates that older mindful followers are highly discerning of the leadership influences that have a positive impact on their workplace outcomes. Although positive leadership styles may be in play within an organisation, the wellbeing of older workers rests on leadership approaches which specifically promote and support their autonomy. For leadership to effectively facilitate the wellbeing of older workers, it is imperative that these workers engage in mindful follower cognitions. Ultimately, our paper shifts the debate on leadership and mindfulness towards the importance of follower mindfulness, as opposed to giving full weight to leadership behaviours.

In conclusion, our study provides for a model of older worker wellbeing, finding that mindfulness is an important personal psychological resource for the wellbeing of older workers.

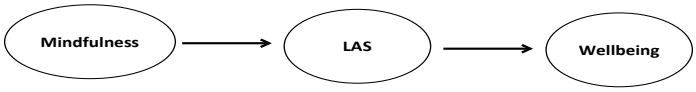
Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

In finding that mindful older workers are discerning about positive leadership styles and relationships, our paper forges new territory in the underexplored area of the wellbeing and leadership of older workers (Zacher et al., 2017).

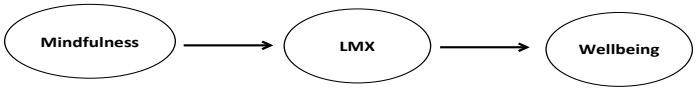
Figure 1. Direct relationships between mindfulness and outcome variables



Model One



Model Two



Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations for major variables (N= 1237) and marker variable technique to test Common Method

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Mindfulness	3.92	.55	**.90**								
2. LAS	3.71	.92	.12**	**.95**							
3. LMX	3.46	.92	.07**	.85**	**.96**						
4. Job satisfaction	5.53	1.40	.19**	.49**	.41**	N/A[1]					
5. Turnover intention	2.24	1.01	-.18**	-.37**	-.33**	-.53**	**.83**				
6. Physical engagement	4.34	.58	.15**	.13**	.09**	.24**	-.11**	**.91**			
7. Emotional engagement	4.17	.72	.28**	.35**	.30**	.66**	-.41**	.55**	**.93**		
8. Cognitive engagement	4.30	.61	.24**	.17**	.17**	.38**	-.21**	.71**	.67**	**.94**	
9. Flexibility (Y: Marker)			-.02	.34**	.36**	.24**	-.18**	.04	.16**	.08**	**.84**
$R_{yi\text{-}M}$ Variance			-.02	.33**	.35**	.23**	-.20**	.02	.15**	.07**	

Note: ** $p < .01$ (1-tailed). 1=one-item measurement. Internal reliabilities are reported along the bold diagonal line; LAS = Leader autonomy support; LMX = Leader-member exchange; Flexibility = Workplace flexibility, which is the marker variable for testing common method variance. $R_{yi\text{-}M}$ is the correlation between studied variables and maker variable after adjustment of common method variance.

Table 2. Direct and indirect coefficients in the partial mediation model

Mediated Paths	**Indirect effect (*a*×*b*)**	
Mindfulness → LAS → Job satisfaction	.13***	(.20*** × .67***)
Mindfulness → LAS → Turnover intention	-.07***	(.20*** × -.33***)
Mindfulness → LAS → Physical engagement	.02**	(.20*** × .09**)
Mindfulness → LAS → Emotional engagement	.04***	(.20*** × .22***)
Mindfulness → LAS → Cognitive engagement	.03***	(.20*** × .13***)
Mindfulness → LMX → Job satisfaction	.00	(.12*** × .03)
Mindfulness → LMX → Turnover intention	-.01	(.12*** × -.06)
Mindfulness → LMX → Physical engagement	-.00	(.12*** × -.02)
Mindfulness → LMX → Emotional engagement	.00	(.12*** × .03)
Mindfulness → LMX → Cognitive engagement	-.01	(.12*** × -.02)

Note. a = the unstandardized path coefficients of path from predictor to mediator; *b* = the unstandardized path coefficients of path from mediator to outcome; LAS = Leader autonomy support; LMX = Leader-member exchange. *p*<.01**, *p*<.001***; Control variables were age, gender, and job position.

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Table 3. Fit indices of measurements of mindfulness, Leader-member exchange, Perceived autonomy support, work engagement and turnover intention.

Variables	SRMR	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Mindfulness	.03	.96	.95	.056
Leader-member exchange	.010	.985	.995	.059
Perceived autonomy support	.007	.995	.998	.044
Work engagement*	.029	.95	.98	.055
Turnover intention	.010	.997	.998	.056

Note: Work engagement is a three-factor construct. The three-factor construct of work engagement achieved an ideal model fit compared with one-factor work engagement

References

Allen, T., Henderson Tyler, G., Mancini, V.S., & French, K.M. (2017). Mindfulness and meditation practice as moderators of the relationship between age and subjective wellbeing among working adults, *Mindfulness,* 8 (4), 1055-1063.

Andrews, M. C., Kacmar, K. M., & Kacmar, C. (2014). The mediational effect of regulatory focus on the relationships between mindfulness and job satisfaction and turnover intentions. *Career Development International*, *19*(5), 494–507. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/MRR-09-2015-0216

Armstrong-Stassen, M. (2008). Human resource practices for mature workers—And why aren't employers using them?, *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 46 (3), 334-352.

Atkins, P. W., & Styles, R. (2015). Mindfulness, identity and work: Mindfulness training creates a more flexible sense of self. In Reb, J. & Atkins, P. W. B. (Eds.), *Mindfulness in organizations* (1st ed., pp.. 67-99), Cambridge University Press.

Baard, P. P., Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2004). Intrinsic need satisfaction: A motivational basis of performance and well-being in two work settings, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 34*, 2045-2068.

Bentley, T., Blackwood, K., Catley, B., O'Driscoll, M. P., Roche, M., Teo, S. and Twiname, L. (2017), "The role of human resource practices and other factors influencing the continuing work participation of older workers in New Zealand", Antoniou, A., Burke, R. and Cooper, C. (Ed.), *The Aging Workforce Handbook: Individual, Organizational and Societal Challenges,* Emerald Group Publishing, WA, United Kingdom

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Bernerth, J. B., & Hirschfeld, R. R. (2016). The subjective well-being of group leaders as explained by the quality of leader-member exchange, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27 (4), 697-710.

Bernerth, J. B., Armenakis, A. A., Feild, H. S., Giles, W. F., & Walker, H. J. (2007). Leader–member social exchange (LMSX): Development and validation of a scale. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *28*(8), 979-1003.

Breevaart, K., Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Van Den Heuvel, M. (2015). Leader-member exchange, work engagement, and job performance. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *30*(7), 754–770. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-03-2013-0088Brown, K. W. & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*,84 (4), 822-848.

Brown, K., Ryan, R., & Creswell, J. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry,* 18 (4), 211-237.

Collins, M. H., Hair, J. F., & Rocco, T. S. (2009). The older-worker–younger supervisor dyad: A test of the reverse pygmalion effect. *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* . 20 (1) 21–41.

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An Interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31 (6), 874-900.

Dane, E., & Brummel, B. J. (2014). Examining workplace mindfulness and its relations to job performance and turnover intention. *Human Relations*, 67, 105–128.

Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017).Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of a science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior,* 4 (1), 19-43.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior". *Psychological Inquiry,* 11 (4), 227-268.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Facilitating optimal motivation and psychological well-being across life's domains. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 14–23.

de Oliveira, L. B., & da Silva, F. F. R. A. (2015). The effects of high performance work systems and leader-member exchange quality on employee engagement: Evidence from a Brazilian non-profit organization. *Procedia Computer Science*, *55*, 1023-1030. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2015.07.092

Eisenbeiss, S., & Van Knippenberg, D. (2015). On ethical leadership impact: The role of follower mindfulness and moral emotions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36 (2), 182-195. *https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1968*

Epitropaki, O., & Martin, R. (2005). From ideal to real: A longitudinal study of the role of implicit leadership theories on leader-member exchanges and employee outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*(4), 659 –676. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.4.659

Fuller, C. M., Simmering, M. J., Atinc, G., Atinc, Y., & Babin, B. J. (2016). Common methods variance detection in business research. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(8), 3192-3198.

Gagne, M. (2003). The role of autonomy support and autonomy orientation in the engagement of prosocial behavior. *Motivation and Emotion*, 27, 199–223.

Gagne, M., & Bhave, D. (2011). Autonomy in the workplace: An essential ingredient to employee engagement and well-being in every culture. In Chirkov, Ryan, and Sheldon (Eds.). *Human Autonomy in Cross-Cultural Context: Perspective on the Psychology of Freedom and People's Well-Being,* Springer, 163-187.

Galles, J., Lenz, J., Peterson, G. W., & Sampson Jr., J. P. (2019). Mindfulness and decision-making style: Predicting career thoughts and vocational identity. *Career Development Quarterly*, 67 (1), 771-790.

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Gerstner, C. R., & Day, D. V. (1997). Meta-analytic review of leader–member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*(6), 827 –844. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.6.827

Gillet, N., Gagné, M., Sauvagère, S., & Fouquereau, E. (2013). The role of supervisor autonomy support, organizational support, and autonomous and controlled motivation in predicting employees' satisfaction and turnover intentions. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 22*(4), 450–460. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2012.665228

Glomb, T. M., Duffy, M. K., Bono, J. E., & Yang, T. (2011). Mindfulness at work. *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management*, 30, 115–157.

Grace, J. B., & Bollen, K. A. (2005). Interpreting the results from multiple regression and structural equation models. *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America*, 86 (4), 283–295.

Graen, G. B., Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *Leadership Quarterly*, 6, 219-247.

Gunasekara, A., & Zheng, C. S. (2019). Examining the effect of different facets of mindfulness on work engagement. *Employee Relations*, 41 (1), 193-208. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-09-2017-0220

Guntert, S. T. (2015). The impact of work design, autonomy support, and strategy on employee outcomes: A differentiated perspective on self-determination at work. *Motivation and Emotion, 39*(1), 74–87. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-014-9412-7

Hafenbrack, A. C. (2017). Mindfulness meditation as an onthe-spot workplace intervention. *Journal of Business Research*, 75, 118-129.

Hafenbrack, A. C., Kinias, Z., & Barsade, S. G. (2014). Debiasing the mind through meditation mindfulness and the sunk-cost bias.*Psychological Science*, 25 (2), 369-376.Harris, K. J., Wheeler, A. R., & Kacmar, K. M. (2009). Leader–member exchange and empowerment: Direct and interactive effects on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance. *The Leadership Quarterly, 20*(3), 371–382. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.03.006

Harris, K., Krygsman, S., Waschenko, J., & Laliberte Rudman, D. (2017), "Ageism and the Older Worker: A Scoping Review", *The Gerontologist*, Vol. *58 No.* 2, pp. e1-e14.

Holzel, B. K., Lazar, S. W., Gard, T., Schuman-Olivier, Z., Vago, D. R., & Ott, U. (2011). How does mindfulness meditation work? Proposing mechanisms of action from a conceptual and neural perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6, 537–559.

Hülsheger, U. R., Walkowiak, A., & Thommes, M. S. (2019). How can mindfulness be promoted? Workload and recovery experiences as antecedents of daily fluctuations in mindfulness. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 91 (2), 261-284.

James, J., McKechnie, S., Swanberg, J., & Besen, E. (2013). Exploring the workplace impact of intentional/unintentional age discrimination, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 28,(7/8), 907-927.

Karpinska, K, Henkens, K., & Schippers, J. (2013). Retention of older workers: Impact of managers' age norms and stereotypes. *European Sociological Review*, 29 (6), December 2013, 1323–1335. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jct017K.,

Karpinska, K., Henkens, K., Schippers, J., &, Wang, M. (2015). Training opportunities for older workers in the Netherlands: A vignette study.*Research in Social Stratification and Mobility,* 41, 105-114.

Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1996). Further examining the American dream: Differential correlates of intrinsic and extrinsic goal.*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 280-287.

Kleine, A.K., C.W., Rudolph, & Zacher, H. (2019). Thriving at work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 40,(9-10), 973-999

Kooij, D. T., Jansen, P. G., Dikkers, J. S., & De Lange, A. H. (2008). The influence of age on the

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

associations between HR practices and both affective commitment and job satisfaction: A meta-analysis.*Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31 (8), 1111-1136.

Liden, R. C., Sparrowe, R. T., & Wayne, S. J. (1997). Leader-member exchange theory: The past and potential for the future. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 15, 47-120.

Lindell, M. K., & Whitney, D. J. (2001). Accounting for common method variance in cross-sectional research designs.*Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86 (1), 114-121.

Masterson, S. S., Lewis, K., Goldman, B. M., & Taylor, M. S. (2000). Integrating justice and social exchange: The differing effects of fair procedures and treatment on work relationships. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 738- 748.

Mesmer-Magnus, J., Tedone, A. M., & Viswesvaran, C. (2017). Trait mindfulness at work: A meta-analysis of the personal and professional correlates of trait mindfulness. *Human Performance,*.30 (2-3), 79–98. doi: 10.1080/08959285.2017.1307842

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1 (1), 61-89.

Mujahid, A., & Ozminkowski, R. J. (2017. Demographic trends and implications of the aging workforce, with some policy options for consideration. In Antoniou, A., Burke, R., & Cooper, C. L. (Eds.). *The Aging Workforce Handbook: Individual, Organizational, and Societal Challenges,* Emerald Group Publishing Limited 441-467.

Ng, T. W. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2012). Evaluating six common stereotypes about older workers with meta-analytical data. *Personnel Psychology*, 65, 821–858.

NZ Statistics 2018, (10 May), http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/estimates_and_projections/NationalPopulationProjections_HOTP2016.aspx

Olafsen, A. H. (2017). The implications of need-satisfying work climates on state mindfulness in a longitudinal analysis of work outcomes. *Motivation & Emotion,* 41 (1), 22-37.

Olafsen, A. H., Halvari, H., Forest, J., & Deci, E. L. (2015). "Show them the money? The role of pay, managerial need support, and justice in a self - determination theory model of intrinsic work motivation. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology,* 56 (4), 447-457.

Pless, N., Sabatella, F. & Maak, T. (2017).,Mindfulness, reperceiving, and ethical decision making: A neurological perspective. In *Responsible Leadership and Ethical Decision-Making* (*Research in Ethical Issues in Organizations, 17*), Emerald Publishing Limited, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1529-209620170000017001

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*, 879–903.

Roche, M., Good, D., Lyddy, C., Tuckey, M., Grazier, M., Leroy, H., & Hülsheger, U. (2020). A Swiss army knife? How science challenges our understanding of mindfulness in the workplace, *Organizational Dynamics*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2020.100766

Roche, M., Haar, J. M., & Luthans, F. (2014). The role of mindfulness and psychological capital on the well-being of leaders. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, . 19, 476-489.

Reb, J., Chaturvedi, S., Narayanan, J., & Kudesia, R. S. (2019). Leader mindfulness and employee performance: A sequential mediation model of LMX quality, interpersonal justice, and employee stress. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 160 (3), 745-763. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3927-x

Reb, J., Narayanan, J., & Chaturvedi, S. (2012). Leading mindfully: Two studies on the influence of supervisor trait mindfulness on employee well-being and performance, *Mindfulness*, 5 (1), 36-45.

Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R., (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53 (3), 617–635.

Robson, S. M., Hansson, R. O., Abalos, A., & Booth, M. (2006). Successful aging: Criteria for aging well in the workplace. *Journal of Career Development*, *33*(2), 156-177.

Ryan, R. M., Huta, V., & Deci, E. L. (2008). Living well: A self-determination theory perspective on eudaimonia. *Journal of Happiness Studies,* 9, 139-170.

Ryan, R. M., La Guardia, J. G., Solky-Butzel, J., Chirkov, V., & Kim, Y. (2005). On the interpersonal regulation of emotions: Emotional reliance across gender, relationships, and cultures. *Personal Relationships*, 12, 145–163.

Rubenstein, A.L., Eberly, M.B, Lee,T.W., & Mitchell, T., R. (2018) Surveying the forest: A meta-analysis, moderator investigation, and future-oriented discussion of the antecedents of voluntary employee turnover. *Personnel Psychology*,71(1), 23-65

Settoon, R. P., Bennett, N., & Liden, R. C. (1996). Social exchange in organizations: Perceived organizational support, leader–member exchange, and employee reciprocity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81 (3), 219-227.

Shallcross, A. J., & Spruill, T. M. (2017). The protective role of mindfulness in the relationship between perceived discrimination and depression. *Mindfulness*, 9 (4), 1100-1109.

Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 62, 373–386.

Sheldon, K. M., & Kasser, T. (2001). Getting older, getting better? Personal strivings and psychological maturity across the life span. *Developmental Psychology*, 37 (4), 491-501.

Slemp, G.R., Zhao, Y., Hou, H., Vallerand, R. (2020). Job crafting, leader autonomy support, and passion for work: Testing a model in Australia and China. *Motivation & Emotion*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-020-09850-6

Small, C., & Lew, C. (2021). Mindfulness, moral reasoning and responsibility: towards virtue in ethical decision-making. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 169, 103–117. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-

Sparks, K., Faragher, B., & Cooper, C. (2001). Well-being and occupational health in the 21st century workplace. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,* 74, 489-509. 10.1348/096317901167497.

Spector, P. E., & Brannick, M. T. (2011). Methodological urban legends: The misuse of statistical control variables. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14, 287-305.

Sutcliffe, K. M., Vogus, T. J., & Dane, E. (2016). Mindfulness in organizations: A cross-level review, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior,* 3, 55-81.

Thorsen, S. V., Jensen, P. H., & Bjørner, J. B. (2016). Psychosocial work environment and retirement age: A prospective study of 1876 senior employees. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 89 (6), 891-900.

Van Solinge, H., & Henkens, K. (2013). Work-related factors as predictors in the retirement decision-making process of older workers in the Netherlands. *Ageing & Society*, 34 (9), 1551-1574.

Warr, P., Cook, J. D., & Wall, T. D. (1979). Scales for the measurement of work attitudes and psychological well-being. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 58, 229-242.

Williams, G. C., Halvari, H., Niemiec, C. P., Sørebø, Ø., Olafsen, A. H., & Westbye, C. (2014). Managerial support for basic psychological needs, somatic symptom burden and work-related correlates: A self-determination theory perspective. *Work and Stress, 28*(4), 404–419. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2014.97192

Mindfulness
Older Workers and Relational Leadership

Williams, L. J., Vandenberg, R. J., & Edwards, J. R. (2009). 12 structural equation modeling in management research: A guide for improved analysis. *Academy of Management Annals*, 3 (1), 543-604.

Yukl, G., O'Donnell, M., & Taber, T. (2009). Influence of leader behaviors on the leader-member exchange relationship. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24, 289-299.

Zacher, H., Burke, R., Cooper, C., & Antoniou, A. (2017). *The multi-generational and aging workforce: Challenges and opportunities.* Edward Elgar.

Zhan, Y., Wang, M., & Shi, J. (2015). Retirees' motivational orientations and bridge employment: Testing the moderating role of gender. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100 (5), 1319-1331.

Zhao, X., Lynch Jr, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (2), 197-206.

Zhu, W., Newman, A., Miao, Q., & Hooke, A. (2013). Revisiting the mediating role of trust in transformational leadership effects: Do different types of trust make a difference? *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24 (1), 94-105.