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**Transformational leadership, adaptability, and job crafting:
The moderating role of organizational identification**

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Abstract

In this study, we aim to explore the link between transformational leadership and job crafting. We predict that transformational leadership will stimulate employee job crafting (seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands) by increasing their adaptability; but that transformational leadership will be less effective when employees have higher levels of organizational identification. We collected data from 185 dyads of subordinates and supervisors. Supervisors rated their own transformational leadership and subordinates' adaptability, and subordinates rated their own job crafting and organizational identification. Results from structural equation modelling analyses partially supported our hypotheses. In general our findings suggest that transformational leadership is associated with more expansion job crafting (seeking resources and seeking challenges) via adaptability, particularly for employees with lower organizational identification. We conclude that transformational leadership is an important antecedent of employee adaptability and proactivity at work.

Keywords: employee adaptability, job crafting, organizational identification, transformational leadership

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Introduction

In the field of leadership, researchers suggest that transformational leadership is especially effective during times of organizational change, because transformational leaders are able to reframe employees' perceptions of change to view it as an opportunity rather than threat (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978). But, in a highly competitive and uncertain business environment, top-down change initiated by organizations is not adequate in addressing emergent demands and opportunities at work; organizational leaders have to rely on employees to take initiative and create change from the bottom-up. Employees are not only required to carry out the core tasks specified in the job description, but are also expected to be more proactive in improving the status quo (Grant & Parker, 2009; Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Martin, Liao, & Campbell, 2013). For example, employees can craft their jobs by initiating change in the task and relational boundaries of their work (i.e., job crafting, Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). By constantly crafting what they do and how they do it in the job, employees can shape their work to better serve organizational goals in a changing environment. Thus, it is important to understand factors that facilitate employee job crafting.

In this study, we examine transformational leadership as an antecedent of job crafting (seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands). Specifically, we suggest that transformational leadership stimulate employees' job crafting by increasing their adaptability defined as "the willingness and ability to change behaviors, feelings, and thoughts in response to environmental demands" (McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007, p.248). Adaptability in our definition is a positive motivational orientation toward changing oneself. Moreover, research found that the effect of transformational leadership was moderated by employees work identity (Li, Chiaburu, Kirkman, & Xie, 2013). Organizational identification

is one form of work identity, referring to the extent to which an organization's identity and an employee's own identity overlap (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). We examine the interaction of transformational leadership and employee organizational identification on employee adaptability and subsequently job crafting. We suggest that because transformational leadership particularly emphasizes the collective identity of the organization, for employees who already have a high level of organizational identification the effect of transformational leadership may become weaker. That is, employees' motivation to change may be supplied by strong feelings of organizational identification instead of being supplied by a transformational leader.

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, we link transformational leadership to employee job crafting, adding to the promising literature on job crafting. Researchers have focused on either the individual difference factors (e.g., proactive personality, Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012; individual approach temperament, Bipp & Demerouti, 2015; self-efficacy, Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2014) or job characteristics as determinants of job crafting (e.g., job autonomy, Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012). A perspective on leadership and employee job crafting, however, has received much less research attention.

Job crafters do not live in a social vacuum; other people in the work group may have an impact on how they craft their work (e.g., Bakker, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Vergel, 2016). The supervisor or leader is arguably a very important person in the social environment of employees. Different types of leadership may provide employees with more/less freedom, resources, or legitimate reasons to engage in job crafting. Indeed, it has been found that leaders play a critical role in increasing or decreasing employees' motivation to behave proactively (Fuller, Marler, Hester, & Otondo, 2015; Parker & Wu, 2014). Employees have different ways of crafting their work for different reasons. They may expand the job for personal growth via seeking resources and seeking challenges, and/or contract the job via

reducing demands in order to reduce high job strain. As leaders play a significant role in the social context of work, a question arises whether transformational leaders would encourage both expansion and contraction job crafting by employees.

In the field of proactivity, job crafting is seen as employee proactive behavior to increase person-environment fit (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). There are a few empirical studies on the relationship between transformational leadership and proactive behavior, such as personal initiative (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016), taking charge (Li et al., 2013), and prosocial proactive behavior (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Strauss, Griffin, & Rafferty, 2009). Yet, job crafting is different from these types of proactive behavior in a way that it is specifically targeted at employees' job characteristics (i.e., job demands and job resources, Demerouti, 2014). Moreover, the limited research on transformational leadership and employee proactive behavior did not directly test underlying mechanisms. This is a critical limitation since motivational states likely serve as key mediators between leadership and employees' behavioral reactions (Parker & Wu, 2014). To address the limitation, we delineated and empirically tested a moderated mediation model that specifies why and when transformational leadership relates to job crafting via employees' adaptability, thus providing insights into motivational processes linking transformational leadership to employee self-initiated actions. The inclusion of organizational identification as a boundary condition of the effect of transformational leadership would also allow us to provide new evidence for the perspective of substitutes for (transformational) leadership (e.g., Kerr & Jermier, 1978).

Theory and Hypotheses

Job Crafting

The basic premise underlying job crafting is that employees actively use elements of the job to construct their work; it suggests that employees are agentic in creating their own work experiences by making changes to the job. Job crafting stands in contrast to the

traditional work design approaches in which it is assumed that employee work experiences (e.g., motivation) are determined by external job characteristics (e.g., Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) focused on work tasks and interactions as the raw materials employees use to craft their jobs and defined job crafting as changes employees make to the task or relational boundaries of their work.

Consistent with the premise that employees play an active role in building their work experiences, European scholars yet focused on job demands and job resources that employees use to craft their work (Petrou et al., 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Tims, Bakker, & Derks., 2012). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model was introduced in the literature 15 years ago (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) and has stimulated hundreds of studies. According to the JD-R model, job characteristics can vary widely across occupations but can always be classified into two categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands are job aspects that require energy and effort. Examples are conflict with colleagues or work overload. In contrast, job resources are those aspects that help employees cope with the job demands and achieve work goals. Examples are ICT support or feedback on job performance. Whereas job demands primarily relate to reduced health (e.g., exhaustion, psychosomatic health complaints), job resources primarily relate to work motivation (e.g., work enjoyment, engagement). Job crafting was viewed as “*changes that employees initiate in the level of job demands and job resources in order to make their own job more meaningful, engaging, and satisfying*” (Demerouti, 2014, p. 237), consisting of seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands, particularly hindering job demands that harm personal growth and development (Petrou et al., 2012). Seeking resources and seeking challenges refer to behaviors that expand the job (i.e., expansion job crafting), whereas reducing demands refers to behaviors that contract the job (i.e., contraction job crafting).

The JD-R perspective on job crafting has stimulated substantial empirical research because it concretely describes Wrzesniewski and Dutton’s (2001) “task crafting” and

“relational crafting” on the basis of job demands and job resources. Seeking challenges (e.g., asking for more tasks or responsibilities) and reducing demands (e.g., diminishing emotional, cognitive, or physical job demands) can be seen as altering task boundaries, while seeking resources (e.g., contacting other people at work to get work-related information) can be seen as altering relational boundaries. In this stream of literature, research has found evidence that job crafting can foster positive outcomes, such as work identity (Mattarelli & Tagliaventi, 2015), work engagement (Bakker et al., 2012; Harju, Hakanen, & Schaufeli, 2016), person-job fit (Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, & Bakker., 2014; Tims, Derks, & Bakker, 2016), job satisfaction (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013), and increased personal resources (Vogt, Hakanen, Brauchli, Jenny, & Bauer, 2016). As job crafting is an effective way to maintain employee well-being and work motivation, researchers have been interested to investigate factors that predict job crafting.

Transformational Leadership and Job Crafting

First proposed by Burns (1978) and later advanced by Bass (1985), transformational leadership theory has received a tremendous amount of attention in the past decades and has become one of the most well-known and widely studied leadership theories. Transformational leadership is seen as a leadership style where a leader transforms the norms and values of the subordinates and motivates them to perform beyond their own expectations. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) did a comprehensive review of research (at that time) examining behaviors related to transformational leaders, including Bass’s research. They developed a scale measuring six behaviors known to be associated with transformational leadership, which has been widely used in the literature. These behaviors include articulating a vision (i.e., inspiring followers with the vision of the future), providing an appropriate model (i.e., setting an example for followers that is consistent with the values the leader espouses), fostering the acceptance of group goals (i.e., promoting cooperation among employees and getting them to work together toward a common goal), communicating

high performance expectations (i.e., getting the best out of followers), and providing individualized support (i.e., respecting followers and being concerned about their personal feelings and needs) and intellectual stimulation (i.e., challenging followers about the ways they see their work and how they do it).

Working with a transformational leader, employees may tend to engage in seeking resources behaviors. Leaders have many valuable resources such as support for employee career development (e.g., training opportunities), work-related information, knowledge, and experiences. Transformational leaders are supposed to be open and willing to share those resources with employees (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005), which is likely to stimulate employee seeking resources behavior. Moreover, transformational leaders expect high performance of employees, which may drive employees to ask feedback and advice from leaders or colleagues (i.e., resources-seeking) in order to improve their performance.

Working with a transformational leader, employees may be inclined to engage in seeking challenges behavior. Transformational leaders challenge the status quo and motivate employees to perform beyond their own expectations; they care about employees' personal growth and development (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002). Under transformational leadership, employees are likely to be encouraged to seek job challenges (e.g., starting a new project) to achieve a better fit with their own strength and ability. Indirectly supporting this idea, Chi and Pan (2012) found that transformational leadership was associated with followers' higher perceptions of person-job fit (e.g., demand-ability fit).

Leaders' view on what and how much employees should do in the job may influence employees' reducing demands behavior. Employees may want to take some of the grunt work out of their jobs (i.e., demands-reducing) so that they could have more time do what they like. However, employees may feel that they don't have the power to do that (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010). It has been found that transformational leaders delegate more power to

employees (e.g., Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). Thus, followers of transformational leaders may also engage in reducing demands behavior. Taken together, we propose:

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership is positively related to subordinates' seeking resources (H1a), seeking challenges (H1b), and reducing demands (H1c).

The Mediating Role of Employee Adaptability

We suggest that one way that transformational leaders influence employee job crafting is through increasing employee adaptability referring to the willingness and ability to change personal factors. One fundamental role of leadership is to motivate followers. Employee motivational states may mediate the relationship between leadership and employee behavioral reactions (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Consistent with this notion, Parker and Wu (2014) developed a theoretical model of leadership (particularly transformational) and employee proactive behavior. Specifically, they suggest that leaders can influence employees' proactive behavior through enhancing their motivation (e.g., "can do", "reason to", and "energized to") and their capability (e.g., knowledge, skills, and abilities). We suggest that a positive motivational orientation (i.e., adaptability) shaped by transformational leadership drive employee proactive behavior (i.e., job crafting). Our model thus is consistent with Parker and Wu (2014) and is grounded in the basic premise that leaders influence follower behaviors through influencing follower motivation

As transformational leaders communicate a compelling vision and challenge the status quo, employees are expected to be more flexible and open to change (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008; Oreg & Berson, 2011). Transformational leadership has been found to be an important facilitator of employee adaptation (e.g., Nemanich & Keller, 2007). Transformational leaders identify the change that is needed in the organization, and create a vision to guide and execute the change through inspiring and motivating followers. It was found that followers of transformational leaders have less intention to resist change (Oreg & Berson, 2011), less cynicism about change (Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005), and more

commitment to change (Herold et al., 2008). Therefore, transformational leadership may enhance employees' willingness to adapt to changing situations. Moreover, transformational leaders mentor and coach employees and show their confidence in employees' ability to perform work tasks (Bass, 1985). This individualized consideration element of transformational leadership, which is similar to leader supportiveness, reinforces employees' competence and self-efficacy. Thus, transformational leadership may also increase employees' ability to adapt to the changing environment.

Adaptable employees expose themselves more easily to change because they welcome change and know better how to take advantage of change ("personal flexibility", Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). They also proactively prepare for future work change in order to achieve the best possible job and career outcomes ("anticipation and optimization", Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). For instance, Taber and Blankemeyer (2015) found that career adaptability was positively associated with proactive skill development and proactive network building. In terms of job crafting, we argue that adaptable employees may expand their task and relational environments to cope with change. Supporting this argument, Petrou, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2015) found that willingness to change was positively related to seeking resources and seeking challenges. Adaptable employees may also use reducing demands as a way to deal with work stress and to sustain well-being. They may engage in minimizing unnecessary or hindering demands so that they can obtain more advantages from change. It was reported that reducing demands (e.g., saying 'no' to some tasks) is important to achieve personal growth and meaningful performance during organizational change (Kira, Balkin, & San, 2012).

Taken together, transformational leadership may be associated with higher adaptability of employees, which, in turn, may be associated with more job crafting by employees. Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Subordinates' adaptability mediates the relationships between transformational leadership and subordinates' seeking resources (H2a), seeking challenges (H2b), and reducing demands (H2c).

The Moderating Role of Organizational Identification

The limited research on the association of transformational leadership with employee proactive behavior suggests that the strength of the association may vary depending upon specific characteristics of employees. For example, Griffin, Parker, and Mason (2010) found that employees' role breadth self-efficacy (i.e., perceived capability of performing a broader and more proactive set of work tasks beyond prescribed job requirements) moderated the effect of leader's articulating a vision on employee proactivity. Li et al. (2013) found that the association of transformational leadership with employee taking charge was attenuated when employees were highly identified with their workgroups. We examine how employees' organizational identification moderates the effect of transformational leadership, which is in line with the notion that individuals' motivation and behaviors are a function of both social influence and their self-concept.

Many approaches on leadership research have suggested that follower self-concept may act as a moderator of leadership effectiveness (e.g., Kerr & Jermier, 1978; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004). Organizational identification reflects the level of overlap between one's own identity and the organization's identity (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). The more individuals identify with an organization, the more the organization's values, goals, and norms are included in individuals' self-concept. We suggest that when employees already have high identification with the organization, the effectiveness of leader behaviors in enhancing employees' adaptability may be attenuated. Employees are willing to adjust themselves to fit into the organization system when they view themselves as members of the organization (Carmeli, Gilat, & Waldman, 2007). Besides, they are intrinsically motivated to behave in line with the

organizational goals and norms and thus have low need for leadership. It was found that the effect of transformational leadership was weakened when employees' need for leadership was low (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Derks, 2016). In contrast, if employees are not identified with the employing organization, it is difficult for them to find meaning at work (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). In this situation, transformational leadership is needed more and supposed to have stronger effects. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' adaptability is stronger for subordinates with low organizational identification than for those with high organizational identification.

Taken together, the three previous hypotheses suggest a model in which not only the relationship between transformational leadership and adaptability, but also the mediated relationship between transformational leadership and job crafting depends on the level of organizational identification. More specifically, we assume that transformational leaders promote job crafting via enhancing adaptability, which is more likely to occur in a situation where employees have low levels of organizational identification. Because in such a situation, employees' motivation to adjust themselves and craft the job tend to be more influenced by their transformational leaders. In contrast, when employees identify with the organization, the motivation to make change happen is more fueled by their collective identity. Applying this argumentation, organizational identification may be a prominent boundary condition for this mediating relationship as it substitutes for transformational efforts in increasing adaptability.

Hypothesis 4: Subordinates' organization identification moderates the mediated relationships between transformational leadership and subordinates' seeking resources (H4a), seeking challenges (H4b), and reducing demands (H4c). The mediated relationships are stronger at low levels of organizational identification than at high levels of organizational identification.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The participants in the study were 185 supervisor-subordinate dyads recruited by master or bachelor students in the Netherlands. We followed Demerouti and Rispens' (2014) suggestions (e.g., process of data collection is standardized for all students; a feasible amount of data for each student, etc.) to control the quality of student-recruited data. The students handed out dyadic questionnaires that were filled out separately by supervisors and subordinates. In all surveys, a cover letter accompanying the questionnaire indicated that the survey was being conducted solely for academic research purposes, and the confidentiality of responses was assured. The supervisors and subordinates were asked to fill out the questionnaires independently. We distributed 246 packages of questionnaires. In the end, 185 unique supervisor-subordinate dyads (i.e., each subordinate has a different supervisor) returned completed questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 75%.

Among the participants, 134 (72%) supervisors and 115 (62%) subordinates were male. The mean age of supervisors was 43.91 years ($SD = 10.13$) and of subordinates 37.23 years ($SD = 14.31$). About 74% of supervisors and 48% of subordinates had completed a university or college degree. Participants mainly worked in business service (36%), industry and construction (20%), public service (20%), medical service (11%), and education (8%). On average, supervisors had 11.48 years ($SD = 9.48$) of work experience in the current company, whereas subordinates on average had worked in the current company for 9.41 years ($SD = 9.72$).

Measures

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership was assessed with twenty-three items developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990), reflecting six dimensions: articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation. Supervisors were asked to report their own transformational leader behaviors. A sample item

is “I inspire others by my plan for the future”. All of the items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “*strongly disagree*” (1) to “*strongly agree*” (7).

Adaptability. Two different types of subordinates’ adaptability were assessed by supervisors with eight items from Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006): anticipation and optimization, and personal flexibility. Anticipation and optimization was measured with five items. A sample item is “S/he associated himself/herself with the latest developments in the job domain”. Personal flexibility was measured with three items. A sample item is “How easily can s/he adapt to changes in the workplace”. All of the items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “*strongly disagree*” (1) to “*strongly agree*” (5).

Organizational identification. Employees rated their organizational identification with two items developed by Bartel (2001). The first item is “To what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e., your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what your company represents”. In the second item, we used diagrams to illustrate the extent of overlap between the employee’s own identity and the organization’s identity (see Bartel, 2001). The items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “*not at all*” (1) to “*to a great extent*” (6).

Job crafting. Employees rated their job crafting behaviors with thirteen items from Petrou et al. (2012), covering seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands. All of the items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “*never*” (1) to “*often*” (5). Seeking resources included six items (“I ask colleagues for advice”), seeking challenges included three items (“I ask for more tasks if I finish my work”) and reducing demands included four items (“I try to simplify the complexity of my tasks at work”).

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Descriptive Statistics

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis to test the factorial validity of our measures through maximum likelihood estimation with Amos 18.0. The relatively small

sample size did not permit us to assess a complete item-level CFA because it would require the estimation of too many parameters. As an alternative, we used item parcels to make the analysis tractable (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). Transformational leadership was modelled as a latent factor with six indicators (i.e., six dimensions: articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering the acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation). Adaptability was modelled with two indicators (i.e., two dimensions: anticipation and optimization, and personal flexibility). For seeking resources, reducing demands, and proactive personality, which were measured with more than three items, we randomly created three indicators respectively. We compared the hypothesized measurement model with an alternative model in which we made seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands loaded on a second-order factor. The hypothesized model showed a better fit ($\chi^2(137) = 222.04$; TLI = .88, IFI = .91, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .06, AIC = 328.04)¹ than the alternative model ($\chi^2(143) = 252.20$; TLI = .86, IFI = .88, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .06, AIC = 346.20; $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 30.16, p < .001$).

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, correlations, and the alpha coefficients which range from .69 to .88. In addition, transformational leadership was positively related to seeking resources ($r = .18, p < .05$), but not to seeking challenges ($r = .08, p > .05$) or reducing demands ($r = -.03, p > .05$). Thus H1a received preliminary support.

Testing Hypotheses

The proposed model was tested as a whole using moderated Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). To create the indicator of the latent interaction variable, we followed previous studies (e.g. Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Each exogenous

¹ The factor loadings in the hypothesized model were all above .30 and significant except the “high performance expectations” dimension of transformational leadership ($\lambda = .15, p = .09$). After we deleted this dimension, the model fit became better ($\chi^2(120) = 176.51$; TLI = .92; IFI = .94; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .05; AIC = 278.51). Nevertheless, we kept this dimension since the scale has previously been validated and used in both Western and Eastern contexts (e.g., Spreitzer, Perttula, & Xin, 2005).

variable (i.e. transformational leadership and organizational identification) had only one indicator that was the standardized scale score of the respective variable. The indicator of the latent interaction variable was the multiplication of the indicator of transformational leadership and organizational identification.

In order to increase robustness of our findings, we put proactive personality as a control variable. Controlling for proactive personality is important because it was suggested to be related to both adaptability (e.g., Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Tolentino, Garcia, Lu, Restubog, Bordia, & Plewa, 2014) and job crafting (Bakker et al., 2012). We measured proactive personality with four items (e.g., “No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen”, see Parker & Sprigg, 1999). Proactive personality was included as a manifest variable that was allowed to correlate with the exogenous variables².

Following the suggestion by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007), we used a moderator centering approach to test the simple slopes and conditional indirect effects (i.e., moderated mediation effects) in SEM. Furthermore, we also tested an alternative model in which there was no path from transformational leadership to job crafting (i.e., “moderated mediation model WITHOUT direct effect”). The fit indices and path estimates of the proposed model and the alternative model are presented in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively. As shown in Table 2, the alternative model was better than the proposed model. Thus, we chose the alternative model as the final model, which is presented in Fig.1. The effect of transformational leadership on adaptability was significant ($\beta = .28, p < .01$), indicating that per standard deviation increase in transformational leadership is associated with .28 standard deviation increase in adaptability. In other words, with proactive personality as a control variable, transformational leadership explains approximately 8% variance in adaptability. The effect of adaptability on seeking resources ($\beta = .33, p < .01$) and seeking challenges ($\beta = .20,$

² We also tried to control for employees' gender and job tenure in SEM, yet they did not impact our results and conclusions. So they were not included in the final model for the sake of parsimony.

$p < .05$) were significant, indicating that per standard deviation increase in adaptability is associated with .33 standard deviation increase in seeking resources and .20 standard deviation increase in seeking challenges.

We used bootstrap estimates and constructed a bias-corrected confidence interval (95%) to test the indirect effect. If the confidence interval does not overlap zero, the effect is statistically significant. The results indicated that transformational leadership had a significant indirect effect on seeking resources (estimate = .048, standard error = .024, bias-corrected CI [.010, .112]) and seeking challenges (estimate = .042, standard error = .028, bias-corrected CI [.002, .118]), but not on reducing demands (estimate = -.018, standard error = .018, bias-corrected CI [-.066, .009]). H2a and H2b were supported. Regarding the moderation of organizational identification, the interaction was significant on adaptability ($\beta = -.21, p < .05$)³. As shown in Fig.2, for employees with low organizational identification transformational leadership had a stronger effect on adaptability ($b = .24, p < .001$). The simple slopes were not significant when organizational identification was high (adaptability, $b = .03, p > .05$). Hypothesis 3 was fully supported.

Moreover, the analysis of conditional indirect effect indicated that at low levels of identification, transformational leadership had a significant indirect effect on seeking resources (estimate = .058, standard error = .033, bias-corrected CI [.009, .152]) and seeking challenges (estimate = .050, standard error = .035, bias-corrected CI [.003, .150]); while at high levels of identification the indirect effect of transformational leadership was not significant for seeking resources (estimate = .009, standard error = .023, bias-corrected CI [-.033, .066]) and seeking challenges (estimate = .009, standard error = .025, bias-corrected CI [-.034, .074]). Regarding reducing demands, transformational leadership had no significant

³ As an additional analysis, we estimated the paths from the interactive term to job crafting, none of them were significant with adaptability included as the mediator (seeking resources, $\beta = -.16, p > .05$; seeking challenges, $\beta = -.17, p > .05$; reducing demands, $\beta = .04, p > .05$).

indirect effect at either high or low levels of identification. Taken together, H4a and H4b were supported.

Discussion

The present study examined how transformational leadership stimulates employee job crafting via increasing employee adaptability, and how employee identification with the organization influences the effect of transformational leadership. The results showed that transformational leadership had a direct effect on seeking resources; adaptability fully mediated this relationship. The results also supported the conditional indirect effects of transformational leadership on seeking resources and seeking challenges. These findings suggest that transformational leadership seems to be more effective in indirectly fostering expansion job crafting via increasing employee adaptability, especially when employees are less identified with the organization. It appears that transformational leaders encourage employees to enrich their job characteristics by increasing job resources and job challenges (e.g., asking colleagues for advice or learning new working skills). This finding corroborates the study by Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) in which it was found that under transformational leadership, employees tend to experience high levels of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (i.e., core job characteristics, Oldham & Hackman, 2010).

Theoretical Implications

In the rapidly changing business world, how to make employees more adaptive and proactive in response to environmental demands is now becoming a central goal for organization management. Our study reveals that leader transformational influence and employee collective self-concept interactively influence employee adaptability and proactive behavior. Our study has several implications for the literature. First, this study provides a leadership perspective to manage employee job crafting behaviors, therefore contributing to the development of the job crafting literature. Seeking resources and seeking challenges,

which are motivation-enhancing job crafting behaviors, may be more positively influenced by transformational leadership. Yet transformational leadership may not have direct or indirect effect on reducing demands. This may be because although reducing demands may protect employees from high stress and burnout, it could be seen as an indicator of incompetence (Tims et al., 2012) or low motivation (Petrou et al., 2012), which fails to meet leaders' expectations of high performance. As such, reducing demands may not be stimulated by transformational leadership.

Second, we also extend the literature by uncovering the role of employee adaptability in the link of transformational leadership and job crafting, responding to the call for studies to document the process linking leadership to job crafting (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013). Our findings suggest that the effect of transformational leadership on employee adaptability is above and beyond the effect of employee proactive personality. The results, however, did not support the proposed positive relation between adaptability and reducing demands. Adaptable employees have beliefs in their capability to overcome challenges and obstacles encountered in goal pursuit, and report lower levels of work stress (Maggiori, Johnston, Krings, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2013). It seems that it is less urgent for employees with high adaptability to reduce job demands in order to cope with stress. Previous studies have found that engaging in contraction job crafting such as reducing demands may not be positively related to job performance or may even bring negative outcomes to the organization (Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers, 2015). Our results showed that organizational identification was negatively related to reducing demands, suggesting that employees who are highly identified with the organization are less likely to engage in reducing demands. In addition, our findings also indicate that employee adaptability is a more proximal predictor of job crafting behaviors than proactive personality.

Third, the examination of the moderating role of organizational identification reveals that transformational leader behaviors influence followers differently. We showed that the

effect of transformational leadership on expansion job crafting becomes weaker when employees already have good reasons to legitimize their job crafting (i.e., high organizational identification). It has been pointed out that only few empirical studies have focused on employee self-concept as a moderator of leadership effectiveness (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Our findings suggest that identification with the organization can replace the effectiveness of a transformational leader, which is in line with the perspective of substitutes for leadership. However, researchers point out that the previous empirical support for this perspective had been rather weak. Few of the published hypothesized interactions were significant and most of these interactions were not in line with the predicted pattern (see De Vries, Roe, & Taillieu, 2002). It seems that we still need more research to investigate this issue. In addition, our data reveal a non-significant correlation between transformational leadership and organizational identification ($r = .13, p > .05$). A meta-analysis found that transformational leadership primarily affects leader identification (Horstmeier, Boer, Homan, & Voelpel, 2014), yet whether this leader identification could be transformed into organizational identification may be dependent on the extent to which employees see the leader as the agent of the organization.

Limitations and Future Directions

The limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, although we had a mixed measurement design by obtaining data on transformational leadership and employee adaptability from ratings of supervisors, the relationships between variables measured from the same source might have been inflated by common method variance. However, recent research has shown that common-method bias makes it even more difficult to detect interaction effects (Siemens, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). Thus, the potential impact of common-method bias should render the test of the hypothesized interactive effects more conservative. Second, our findings do not allow conclusions about causality. For example, although we found support for the mediating role of adaptability in the relationship between

transformational leadership and job crafting, it is also plausible that job crafting might enhance employee adaption to change. Future research adopting a three-wave longitudinal design might enable to address this issue. Third, we controlled for proactive personality as an individual difference variable. Future research may consider controlling for job characteristics (e.g., job autonomy) to see if (transformational) leadership may still have a unique effect on job crafting, or under what job characteristics leadership is more effective in encouraging employee job crafting.

Practical Implications

Our study suggests that leaders should consider transformational leadership to motivate employees to craft their jobs. For example, leaders can provide individualized support to build a trusting, open, and supportive climate in which job crafting is welcomed. Leaders can also display behaviors signaling openness and support, such as listening to employees' individual needs, considering their new ideas, and encouraging personal growth. As a result, employees may feel free and safe to craft their job demands and job resources. The findings of the mediation effect suggest that an effective way to increase job crafting is by improving employee adaptability. Therefore organizations may consider increasing employees' adaptability in order to promote their job crafting. Developing transformational leadership is one way to do this. Nevertheless, many other organizational practices (e.g., organizational support and communication) may also have an influence on employee motivation to adapt to change.

In addition, transformational leaders need to consider followers' social connection with the organization. Previous studies have found that engaging in contraction job crafting such as reducing demands may not be positively related to job performance or may even bring negative outcomes to the organization (Demerouti, Bakker, & Halbesleben, 2015). Our results showed that organizational identification was negatively related to reducing demands, suggesting that employees who are highly identified with the organization are less likely to

engage in reducing demands. Because when employees have a strong perception of oneness with the organization, they are likely to guide their own attitudes and behaviors, and are less influenced by their leaders. Leaders could rely on followers who are already identified with the organization and direct their transformational efforts to increase adaptability and job crafting toward less identified followers.

Conclusions

We conclude that transformational leadership, which is change-oriented, is an important antecedent of employee adaptability and proactivity. More specifically, transformational leadership is particularly effective in promoting employees' adaptability and consequently expansion job crafting when employees are not highly identified with the organization.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, and inter-correlations.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. TFL	5.42	.50	(.83)										
2. Adaptability	3.52	.56	.24**	(.80)									
3. Seeking resources	3.73	.59	.18*	.25**	(.71)								
4. Seeking challenges	3.32	.83	.080	.20**	.49**	(.69)							
5. Reducing demands	2.55	.72	-.03	-.06	.08	.19**	(.71)						
6. Organizational identification	4.09	1.01	.13	.05	.28**	.20**	-.25**	(.88)					
7. Gender_supervisor	.28	.45	.07	.09	.11	.24**	.12	.09	1				
8. Tenure_supervisor	11.48	9.48	.10	.04	-.02	.06	.02	-.01	-.03	1			
9. Gender_subordinate	.38	.49	-.04	.01	.01	.049	-.12	.15*	.42**	.04	1		
10. Tenure_subordinate	9.41	9.72	.18*	-.11	.00	-.05	-.23**	.02	.01	.21**	.18*	1	
11. Proactive personality_subordinate	3.77	.58	.18*	.25**	.07	.15*	.03	.16*	-.05	.01	.03	-.03	(.74)

Note. N=185. Alpha reliabilities are in parentheses on the diagonal. TFL= transformational leadership.* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

Table 2

Fit indices and comparison of the structural models.

Model	<i>Df</i>	χ^2	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	AIC	Comparison	Δdf	$\Delta\chi^2$
The proposed model (Moderated mediation model WITH direct effect)	71	107.09**	.93	.90	.05	235.09			
The final model (Moderated mediation model WITHOUT direct effect)	74	110.70**	.93	.91	.05	232.70	1 v.s. 2	3	3.61

Note. N=185. CFI, Comparative Fit Index; TLI, Tucker Lewis Index; RMSEA, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; AIC, Akaike information criterion. ** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Standardized path coefficients of the structural models.

Model		Adaptability	Seeking resources	Seeking challenges	Reducing demands
The proposed model (Moderated mediation model WITH direct effect)	TFL	.27**	.15	-.02	.02
	OI	-.01	.36***	.16	-.32***
	TFL*OI	-.21*	--	--	--
	Adaptability	--	.28*	.20*	-.11
	PP	.21**	.02	.15	.12
The final model (Moderated mediation model WITHOUT direct effect)	TFL	.28**	--	--	--
	OI	-.01	.37***	.16	-.32***
	TFL*OI	-.21*	--	--	--
	Adaptability	--	.33**	.20*	-.11
	PP	.21**	.03	.15	.12

Note. N=185. TFL, transformational leadership. OI, organizational identification. PP, proactive personality. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

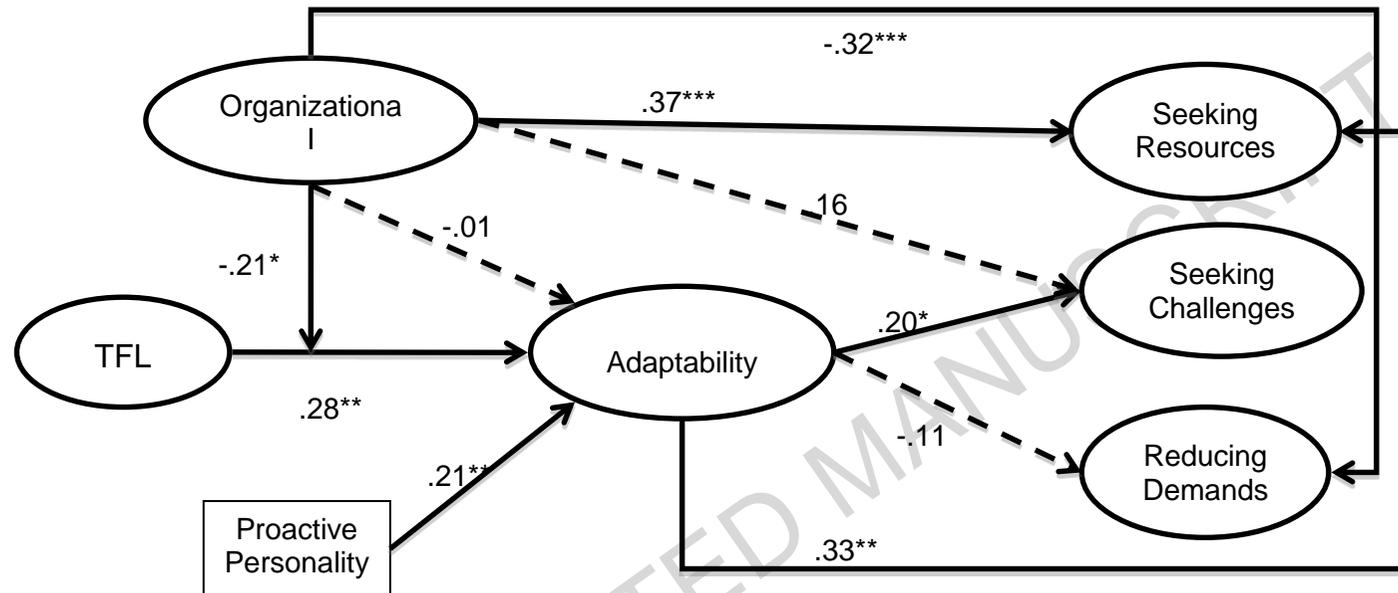


Fig.1. Standardized path estimates of the final model

TFL= transformational leadership. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

The relationships between proactive personality and job crafting were not significant, and thus were not shown for the sake of parsimony.

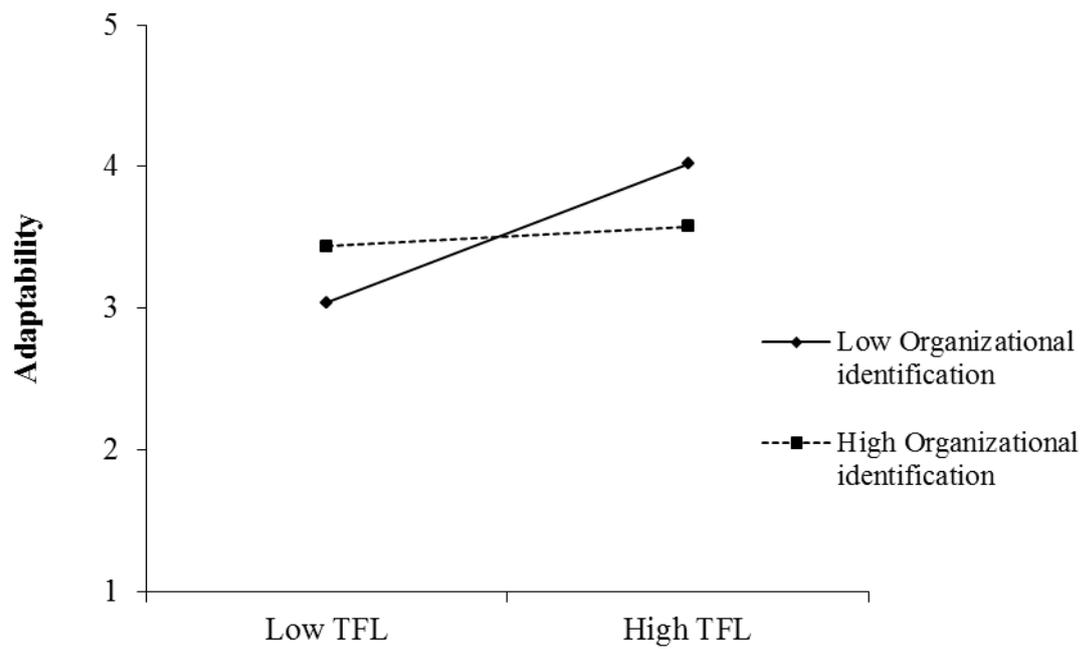


Fig.2. The moderation effect of organizational identification on the relationship between transformational leadership and adaptability. TFL= transformational leadership.

Highlights

- * **The relationship between transformational leadership and job crafting was examined**
- * **Employee adaptability was positioned as a mediator in the above relationship**
- * **The above mediation effect was moderated by employee organizational identification**
- * **Transformational leadership facilitates employee adaptability and proactivity**