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DOI: 10.2478/orga-2022-0008

Influence of Parental Experience on Transformational Leadership Behaviour: A Test of Work–Family Enrichment of Male Managers from an Employee Perspective

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Background: When a male leader becomes a father, changes in his transformational leadership behaviour occur due to shifted priorities, role expectations and resource transfer between domains. Work–life enrichment research acknowledges the positive overall effects of fatherhood on overall transformational leadership behaviours. Our quantitative study contributes to existing knowledge by analysing the perception of behavioural changes of leaders from the employees' view. The results are matched with previous studies to assess differences of perception between leaders and employees.
Methods: Our research uses a granular, detailed definition of transformational leadership. Based on a sample of 139 respondents, we test the positive effects of fatherhood on leadership performance with Wilcoxon signed rank sum tests.
Results: 13 out of 15 transformational leadership behaviours improve significantly with fatherhood. We find that leaders and employees view change differently. Employees perceive improvement similarly in terms of direction, but it is less pronounced in terms of magnitude. Moreover, we find that well rated leaders tend to benefit the most from fatherhood, at least from the perspective of their employees. Males perceive higher levels of improvement than females, which we attribute to a gender empathy bias.
Conclusion: Our study confirms work–family enrichment theory and the positive effects of fatherhood on transformational leadership behaviour. Nevertheless, we show that not all involved parties perceive behavioural changes conformably.

Keywords: *Multiple roles, Work–family enrichment, Parenthood, Fatherhood, Transformational leadership behaviour*

1 Introduction

Most people become parents sooner or later. The life-changing effects of parenthood are well described in the literature, being typically associated with behavioural changes and increased responsibilities (Graves et al., 2007; van Scheppingen et al., 2016). Parents who undertake multiple roles can enrich their competency and resources in their different roles through inter-role transfer. Even though parents are confronted with additional sources of conflict, enrichment typically overweighs these (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-family research frequently has a strong, one-sided focus on the issues of females (Heikkinen & Lämsä, 2017). Therefore, male leaders attaining fatherhood are a specific research subject in this context. Taking over responsibility for others, providing them with necessary resources to let them advance, motivating and supporting them, but also taking necessary

Received: 30th December 2021; revised: 29th April 2022; accepted: 7th May 2022

corrective actions are evident parallels between raising a child and leading employees. These capabilities, described in the work-family enrichment model, have the potential to be transferred between roles and can lead to enrichment and improved performance (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These positive behavioural influences of fatherhood on leadership have been examined at different levels of granularity so far. However, measuring leadership behaviour has lacked rigorous objectivity and may involve a variety of different methods and perspectives

The present research wants to verify the applicability of the work-family enrichment model for fathers who hold managerial positions. As we assume that their employees/followers have a stake in evaluating potential behavioural changes, our research aims to analyse employees' perception. By staying consistent with the methodology of our previous research (Stellner, 2021), we enable direct comparison with the self-evaluation of leaders and elaborate on the differences in perception regarding behavioural changes in terms of direction and magnitude.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Fatherhood Role

Roles are a set of expectations that relate to a particular social position and which are normally persistent regardless of the person occupying that position (Sieber, 1974). If an individual is active in more than one role, as is usually the case, we speak of multiple roles. Fatherhood is such a role, but by its very nature is not a role that men are born into. The meaning of the paternal role is shifting in the current social context. Altering social settings, family arrangements and policies are the key drivers for this re-elaboration process. While historically men lived this role rather as breadwinners, providers of shelter and resources, Western societies nowadays require men to be increasingly involved in raising children. Men with the latter role identification show high active availability in terms of time and attention (Dermott & Miller, 2015; Humberd et al., 2015). Accordingly, couple duties typically transcend a rigorous separation of income and household duties (Humberd et al., 2015). Combining fatherhood and work is steadily and more often being considered a part of the "package deal", resulting in similar work–family conflicts as for women (Townsend, 2002; Ladge et al., 2015).

The transition to fatherhood is "a critical juncture in men's development" (Palkovitz & Palm, 2009). Unlike in other roles such as occupation or relationship, becoming a father is an irreversible event (Bleidorn et al., 2016). Fatherhood is said to act as a catalyst for personal development, and changes one's societal role, self-construal and priorities. It is regarded as one of the most momentous events in a man's life, with the potential to realign personal values (Dahl et al., 2012). Nevertheless, this transition process of parenthood in general and specifically its effects on personality and behaviour have received little attention in research so far (Bleidorn et al., 2016; van Scheppingen et al., 2016). Different research designs have led to inconclusive results as to whether parenthood influences character traits mainly positively (Jokela et al., 2009), negatively (Specht et al., 2011; Bleidorn et al., 2016) or not significantly at all (van Scheppingen et al., 2016). Traits themselves are defined as dimensions of difference expressed in action, thought and feeling (Nichols, 2016). Bleidorn et al. (2016) have observed a reduction of self-esteem among persons upon becoming a parent, a fact which could be especially critical for people in management positions. Besides, there is ongoing speculation amongst scholars about whether males are less affected by the parenthood transition because they lack the pregnancy and other gender-specific role expectations (van Scheppingen et al., 2016; Asselmann & Specht, 2020). It is fairly obvious that conventional parenting goals like sustenance, stimulation, support, structure and surveillance for/of children have similarities with those of leaders at work. With males' increasing participation in childcare, such experience could be of value in other domains as well.

2.2 Work–Family Enrichment

Earlier research on multiplicity of domains has focused on the conflictual aspects, assuming that being active in one role leads to a drain and scarcity of resources in other roles. "If he conforms fully or adequately in one direction, fulfilment will be difficult in another" (Goode, 1960). The main assumption is that multiple relationships with different role partners cause mental stress and social instability, subsumed as the scarcity approach (Sieber, 1974). Both energy, time and attention are available to a predetermined extent only. Any deduction therefrom reduces the balance available (Goode, 1960). In managerial practice, this would mean that a leader who does volunteer work or has become a father has less time and resources available than before. Ultimately, this results in decreased performance at the workplace. Sieber assumes that individuals pursue a bargain as to the domain to which they can assign resources. The goal is to maximise personal value. In this process, potential rewards, negative consequences and others' perspectives are considered (Sieber, 1974). Despite this rather negative viewpoint, Goode also notes that some roles (like family) drain much less energy than others (Goode, 1960).

Marks picks up Goode's notion that some roles only drain a little energy while assuming that these roles may also create energy for use in the same or another role. Basically, his argumentation is built on the sociological approaches of David E. Durkheim suggesting that being involved in social groups has a positive, enriching, and vi-

talising effect. Group life and activity by being involved in roles are therefore energy-expanding measures. Marks compares the psychological effects of social activity in diverse roles with the biological process of creation and consumption of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), arguing that production of human energy is inseparably connected with its consumption. Therefore, under normal conditions, consumption of energy and being active in one role constitute the basis for producing more energy that can be utilised in another role. Moreover, Marks also draws the parallel to malnutrition, excessive stress and activity, arguing that these abnormal conditions lead to excessive drain of energy (Marks, 1977).

While the benefits of taking on many roles were reiterated by later research (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Ruderman et al., 2002), a holistic model of work–family enrichment (Figure 1) through the direct and indirect effects of multiple roles on each other was established by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) in their seminal paper. Work–family enrichment describes the idea that the work and family domains are interdependent and complementary. The authors still assume a coexistence of conflict, a psychological stressor, and enrichment, a phenomenon of development through transfer between roles or "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role" (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Between two roles, conflict and enrichment unfold their effects in all directions. Typically, enrichment outweighs conflict in its extent, resulting in a net enrichment. The authors distinguish between five groups of resources that lead to enrichment: Skills and perspectives, psychological and physical resources, social capital resources, flexibility, and material resources. Enrichment between roles may happen along two pathways. Direct improvement of performance happens through the instrumental path, while the positive influence of emotions leads to indirect enrichment along the affective path (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Greenhaus and Powell's model is still considered a valid and actual framework (Lapierre et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Recent research in the context adds the perspective of attachment theory pointing towards the within-person, daily study of leadership behaviour and work-family enrichment (McClean et al., 2021).

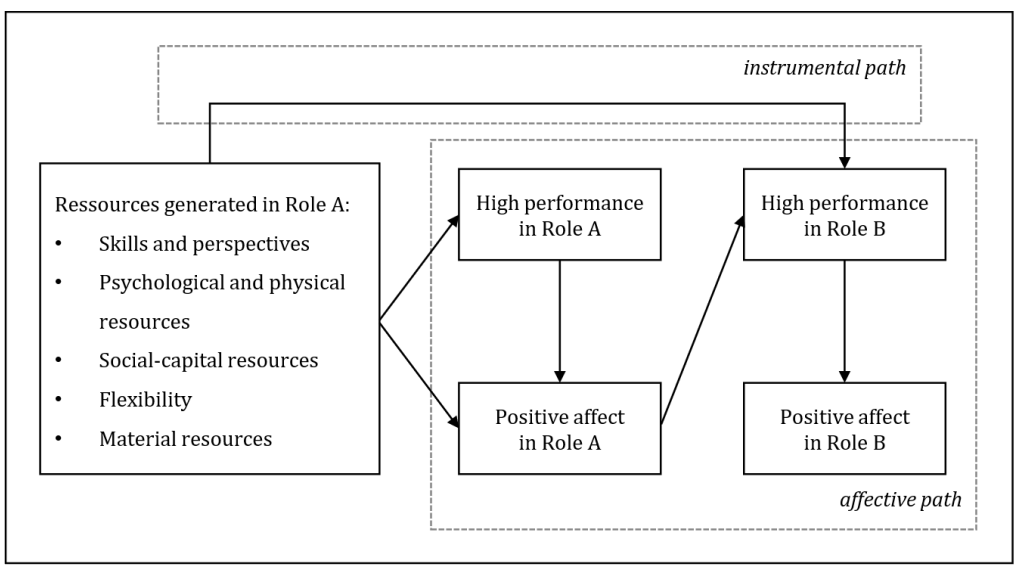


Figure 1: Model of Work-Family Enrichment (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006)

2.3 Leadership Measurement

There has been a long debate on the difference between leadership (leaders) and management (managers). A widely accepted separation suggests that leadership is about dealing with change (innovation, development, future, etc.), while management is about dealing with complexity (processes, administration, systems, etc.). Leadership typically follows a people-oriented approach, whereas management has a subject-oriented view (Zaleznik, 1977; Kotter, 1990; Kotterman, 2006). Still others argue that leadership is a role within management (Mintzberg, 1971). For the present research we rely on the literature and concepts on measuring leadership behaviours, as we believe that the people-orientation within changing environments is more relevant for fathers. Specifically, we focus on transformational leadership, as it dominates academic discourse (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 2012; Dumas & Stanko, 2017). In the present research, we mainly use the term "leader"

incorporating designations such as manager, supervisor, superior and boss.

To measure transformational leadership behaviours (TLB), we use the taxonomy of Yukl (2012), which is based on a meta-categorisation of a total of ten already existing and recognised questionnaires (C-K Scale, LBDQ-12, LOS, LPI, MBS, MPS, MLI, MLQ, MP, TLI). Yukl describes four meta-categories with a total of 15 specific TLB that leaders show:

- Task-oriented TLB

- Planning: *develops short-term plans for the work; determines how to schedule and coordinate activities to use people and resources efficiently; determines the action steps and resources needed to accomplish a project or activity.*

- Clarifying: *clearly explains task assignments and member responsibilities; sets specific goals and deadlines for important aspects of the work; explains priorities for different objectives; explains rules, policies, and standard procedures.*

- Monitoring: *checks on the progress and quality of the work; examines relevant sources of information to determine how well important tasks are being performed; evaluates the performance of members in a systematic way.*

- Problem solving: *identifies work-related problems that can disrupt operations, makes a systematic but rapid diagnosis, and takes action to resolve the problems in a decisive and confident way.*

- Relations-oriented TLB

- Supporting: *shows concern for the needs and feelings of individual members; provides support and encouragement when there is a difficult or stressful task, and expresses confidence members can successfully complete it.*

- Recognising: *praises effective performance by members; provides recognition for member achievements and contributions to the organization; recommends appropriate rewards for members with high performance.*

- Developing: *provides helpful feedback and coaching for members who need it; provides helpful career advice; encourages members to take advantage of opportunities for skill development.*

- Empowering: *involves members in making important work-related decisions and considers their suggestions and concerns; delegates responsibility and authority to members for important tasks and allows them to resolve work-related problems without prior approval.*

- Change-oriented TLB

- Advocating change: *explains an emerging threat or opportunity; explains why a policy or procedure is no longer appropriate and should be changed; proposes desirable changes; takes personal risks to push for approval of essential but difficult changes.*

- Envisioning change: *communicates a clear, appealing vision of what could be accomplished; links the vision to member values and ideals; describes a proposed change or new initiative with enthusiasm and optimism.*

- Encouraging innovation: *talks about the importance of innovation and flexibility; encourages innovative thinking and new approaches for solving problems; encourages and supports efforts to develop innovative new products, services, or processes.*

- Facilitating collective learning: *uses systematic procedures for learning how to improve work unit performance; helps members understand causes of work unit performance; encourages members to share new knowledge with each other.*

- External-oriented TLB

- Networking: *attends meetings or events; joins professional associations or social clubs; uses social networks to build and maintain favourable relationships with peers, superiors, and outsiders who can provide useful information or assistance.*

- External monitoring: *analyses information about events, trends, and changes in the external environment to identify threats, opportunities, and other implications for the work unit.*

- Representing: *lobbies for essential funding or resources; promotes and defends the reputation of the work unit or organization; negotiates agreements and coordinates related activities with other parts of the organization or with outsiders.*

Yukl's taxonomy does not come with a final questionnaire. Yet, we already successfully applied it by confronting survey respondents (leaders) with the 15 definitions and collecting their perceptions of change. Cronbach's alpha values for the questions were consistently above 0.87 level (Stellner, 2021). We are confident that the concept can also be applied to other observers like colleagues, employees, superiors of leaders, and externals.

2.4 Previous Research

Empirically, the enriching influence of parental experience on management/leadership performance has been shown in various studies. Ruderman et al. (2002) demonstrated the positive impact of multiple roles on the psychological well-being and managerial skills of females. Their interviewees frequently reported that multiple roles offer the opportunity to enrich interpersonal skills like understanding, motivating, listening, respecting, being patient and developing others. Mothers in particular stated that they learned and respected that each employee is akin to a child, requiring a high degree of attention for personal growth and development. Also, mothers reported feeling more comfortable in roles of authority. Ruderman et al. showed the positive effects of parenthood and rejected the scarcity theory, thereby facilitating the development of the work–family enrichment model (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Nevertheless, they assume the existence of limits beyond which taking on too many roles results in overload

and role stress, thus depleting overall performance. Based on a quantitative study involving male and female managers, Graves et al. (2007) tested Greenhaus and Powell's theory of enrichment. Similar to Ruderman et al. (2002), they found that commitment for the parental role and work performance of managers are linked for both genders. Nevertheless, their definition of leadership does not allow conclusions to be drawn on which specific leadership attributes change. Contrary to Graves et al. (2007), later research finds a gender difference, in that female managers show higher levels of improvement in leadership behaviour than males (Dumas & Stanko, 2017). Still, they argue that the skills needed for leadership and in a family role are analogous and transferable from family to work, and they found improved overall TLB. Other qualitative studies confirm this overall trend with a male sample (Grau Grau, 2017). More recent research confirms the mediating role of empathy and improved management skills with fatherhood experience (Nunes-Costa et al., 2020) and that family may increase the application of transformational leadership behaviours (McClean, 2021). Nevertheless, Pučėtaitė et al. (2020) also find that male managers experience high levels of conflict in the field of tension between work and family. Stellner (2021) validates the role of parental role commitment and (net) enrichment in a broad set of 15 TLB with a sample of 159 male managers from Central Europe. Both factors positively influence leadership skills. Stellner finds that 14 out of 15 behaviours improve significantly with fatherhood. While the behaviours supporting, recognising, and developing advance the most, only networking remains unaffected. As the study relies on self-perception of the managers only, it is subject to a potential positivity bias.

With regard to how management/leadership performance is assessed, previous studies differ in their methods and target groups. While Ruderman et al. (2002) and Graves et al. (2007) assessed the performance of leaders using a holistic approach that considered subordinates, peers and superiors, later research on male leaders had one-dimensional perspectives with supervisor ratings (Dumas & Stanko, 2017) and self-evaluations (Grau Grau, 2017; Nunes-Costa et al., 2020; Stellner, 2021). To our knowledge, there is still lack of a methodologically congruent assessment of TLB changes for men from the subordinates' and leaders' perspective.

3 Research Gap and Objectives

As discussed in chapter 2.4 positive effects through enrichment by parenthood have been shown in prior research. For fathers, the data are still relatively scarce. While recent studies (Dumas & Stanko, 2017; Nunes-Costa et al., 2020) applied a more general definition of leadership, Stellner (2021) chose a more granular, detailed approach with Yukl's 15 transformational leadership behaviours (Yukl, 2012). Although managers perceive significant improvement in most of their leadership behaviours (Stellner, 2021), there is a research gap on how other involved parties perceive changes in fathers' transformational leadership behaviour, if at all. Ruderman (2002) had pointed out this gap already when female leaders were examined. We consider direct employees close to what is happening in everyday leadership and eligible for evaluating their superiors' behavioural changes. Their perception of TLB change from the employees' angle provides an alternative view and fills a gap in research. Moreover, we respond to the call to examine leadership as a multi-faceted phenomenon (Nunes-Costa et al., 2020).

Motivated by literature that suggests that the transition to fatherhood acts as a change agent for behaviour of leaders (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Dumas & Stanko, 2017), this work should contribute to build the theoretical bridge between fatherhood and leadership. Specifically, this study sought to verify the work–family enrichment model from the angle of employees. By matching the results of this study with those of a previous one (Stellner, 2021), we aimed to compare the congruency of perceptions of employees and leaders. Therefore, we set up a series of hypotheses for testing. Moreover, we intended to gain a more detailed understanding regarding which attributes of employees and leaders change the perception of behavioural changes, using a linear regression model.

4 Hypotheses Development

Theory on work–family enrichment proposes that fatherhood leads to both enrichment and conflict at the workplace. Enrichment outweighs conflict in its effects. As a result, leaders can benefit at work from their fatherhood experience by both the affective and instrumental paths. Especially via the fields skills and perspectives, psychological and physical resources, and social capital resources enhanced leadership behaviour can be induced (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These positive influences of fatherhood on general leadership behaviour have been demonstrated by previous research (Graves et al., 2007; Dumas & Stanko, 2017; Nunes-Costa et al., 2020). Stellner (2021) showed that leaders perceive their aggregated, clustered, and 14 of 15 individual TLBs as improving with fatherhood. We assume that this general tendency of perception also holds true for employees of leaders who became fathers during their cooperation.

Hypothesis 1: Employees perceive an improvement of aggregated transformational leadership behaviour when their leader attains fatherhood.

Hypothesis 2: Employees perceive an improvement of task-oriented transformational leadership behaviour when their leader attains fatherhood.

Hypothesis 3: Employees perceive an improvement of relations-oriented transformational leadership behaviour

when their leader attains fatherhood.

Hypothesis 4: Employees perceive an improvement of change-oriented transformational leadership behaviour when their leader attains fatherhood.

Hypothesis 5: Employees perceive an improvement of external-oriented transformational leadership behaviour when their leader attains fatherhood.

Previous studies on leadership have shown mixed results regarding the significance of differences between self-evaluation and evaluation by observers. Even though observers' average rating tends to be higher (better) than leaders' self-rating, mean values were found to lie within one standard deviation of the normal distribution (Herbst & Conradie, 2011; Posner, 2016). Importantly, no such comparative studies are known regarding an event-related change of leadership style. Specifically, studies on changes in leadership behaviours caused by parenthood are not available in sufficient numbers and with consistent methodology to draw conclusions on the difference in perceptions of leaders and employees. It is solely for the direction of change in aggregated TLBs through fatherhood, therefore, that we assume conformity. We also expect conformity in terms of magnitude of change in transformational leadership behaviours.

Hypothesis 6: Employees and leaders perceive changes of transformational leadership behaviour conformably in terms of direction and magnitude.

5 Methods

5.1 Design

We follow an empirical-quantitative approach to test the hypotheses. Employees of leaders who became fathers were asked via an anonymous web-survey about their perception of changes of TLB. We methodically asked respondents to think of and focus on one specific leader, before confronting them with questions on this person. Someone was defined a leader in the professional environment if he, irrespective of his performance in the role and the scope of work, has at least one direct (in line) or project-related subordinate. As part of our study uses data from previous research, we want to clarify that we did not necessarily assess the same fathers.

5.2 Sample, Variables and Data Collection

The relevant population size (employees primarily resident in Austria and Germany who have a leader who has become a father during the cooperation) cannot be determined with precision. Nevertheless, we expect the number of individuals to be in the double-digit millions. Therefore, we estimated the minimum sample size with another method. Rules of thumb for linear regression would propose 100 responses (ten per predictor). A margin of error of 10% and confidence levels of 95% result in a similar minimum sample size (Cohen, 1992).

For the analysis of the work–family enrichment model and testing of the individual hypotheses, various data and items were collected. The 15 TLB by Yukl (e.g. clarifying, supporting, networking) and their definitions were individually presented to the participants. Then, they were asked to indicate their perception of change of TLB. We applied a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from "strongly improved" (1) through "unchanged" (3) to "strongly worsened" (5). Respondents could also choose "not applicable". Therefore, values below 3 suggest improvement of TLB. We created average scores for clustered TLB and aggregated TLB. Respondents were asked to spontaneously rate their supervisors' overall leadership performance on a scale with one to five stars. This item was collected before any question on change of TLB was asked, to reduce potential bias. Gender was of interest to cover potential differences in perception of change in the sample. We controlled for age in years of the employees to account for experience and difference in perception. Moreover, we asked about the estimated age in years at which the leader became a father. Weekly work hours of the employees were also collected, as that could have an influence on how much employees are affected by their supervisors' leadership behaviour. Education (seven categories from primary school to PhD) and relationship status (yes/no) were considered as demographic control variables. The employees' number of children was collected to control for potential effects of empathy with the superior. Current position (five categories from junior to CEO) and number of subordinates of the employee were also collected as one could perceive behaviours differently, if she or he is also in a leadership position.

Our questionnaire consisted of 30 questions in both English and German. We used the SurveyMonkey platform to both create and distribute the survey via different digital channels. We tapped both the authors' personal network (ca. 2/3 of the total sample) and a professional, external panel (ca. 1/3 of the total sample). No specific companies or industries were targeted. Geographically, the core area was Austria and Germany. Data collection was finished in Q2/2021, with 139 complete responses. By integrating various screening questions, we excluded respondents who did not fulfil our requirements. Moreover, unrealistically quick responses were eliminated.

6 Results

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

We tested for Cronbach's alpha values of the 15 items for TLB to ensure reliability. The alpha value was 0.91, which indicates a high internal consistency of the scale.

The overall final sample consisted of 139 participants and was primarily male (59%), 41 years old on average, married or in a registered partnership (61.9%), from Austria (48.9%) and Germany (45.3%), had none or up to two children (92.8%), held a Bachelors' degree or higher (61.2%), had a monthly household income ranging from €2.000 to €5.999 (61.2%), was middle manager (33.1%) or employee with experience (34.5%), and worked 43.1 hours weekly on average. The evaluated 139 leaders had a mean age of 35.8 years when the evaluated fatherhood event happened and received a spontaneous performance rating of 3.8 out of 5 stars. Average values of aggregated, clustered and individual TLB are indicated in the following sections of the paper.

6.2 Hypotheses Testing

Table 1 summarises the results of a sequence of Wilcoxon signed rank sum tests in which we tested collected data of aggregated, clustered and individual TLB against the null hypothesis with the value 3 ("unchanged" TLB). Values of TLB below 3 indicate perceived improvement, while values above 3 imply perceived worsening.

Hypothesis 1 related to the change in aggregated TLB. On average, employees' (M = 2.68) ratings were significantly lower than 3 ("unchanged") (Z = -6.34, p < .001). Employees' typical response was closer to 3 ("unchanged") than to 2 ("slightly improved") on the Likert scale. The distribution of the aggregated responses is visualised in Figure 2. Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 examined change in task-oriented TLB. As with the prior analysis, typical responses were significantly below 3 for employees (M = 2.70, Z = -4.82, p < .001). Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 considered changes in relations-oriented TLB. Again, employees (M = 2.49, Z = -7.66, p < .001) showed responses significantly different from 3. Responses were closest to 2 ("slightly improved"). Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Hypothesis 4 was concerned with changes to change-oriented TLB. The Wilcoxon signed rank tests found that responses were significantly different from 3 for employees (M = 2.71, Z = -4.98, p < .001). Ratings were closest to "unchanged", but still significantly different from the corresponding value. Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Hypothesis 5 addressed external-oriented TLB. Employees' responses (M = 2.89, Z = -2.17, p = .03) were again significantly below 3, yet closest to "unchanged". It is noteworthy that change in external-oriented TLB was the only cluster in which all individual behaviours were not significantly different from 3. The individual TLB networking and external monitoring showed no significant changes. However, Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

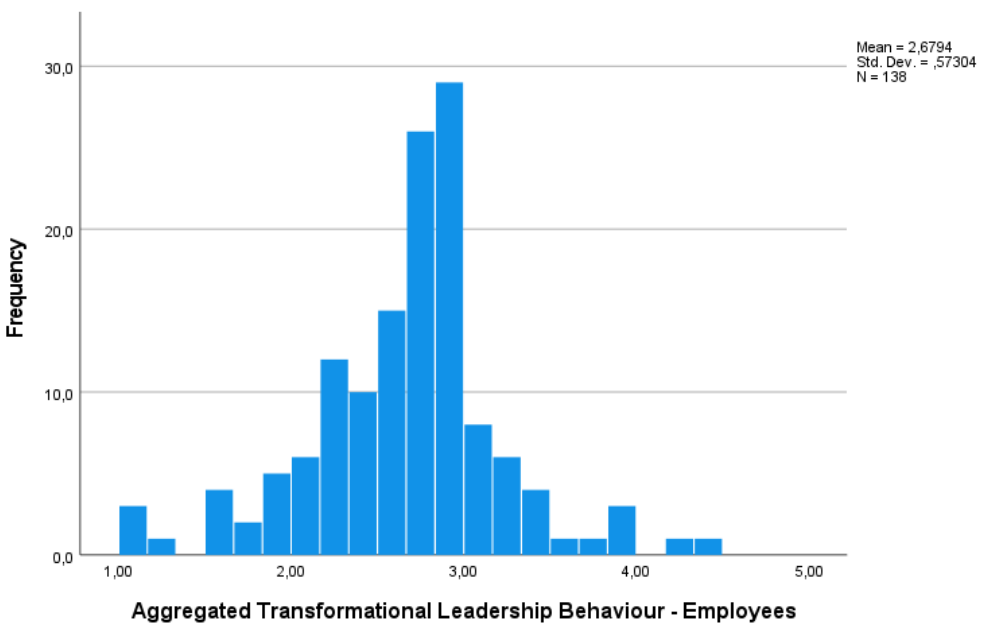


Figure 2: Histogram of Aggregated Transformational Leadership Behaviours of Employees

Table 1: Perceived Changes in Transformational Leadership Behaviour

Variable	*M*	*Z*	*p*
Aggregated TLB	2.68	-6.34	<.001***
Task-Oriented TLB	2.70	-4.82	<.001***
Planning	2.67	-4.08	<.001***
Clarifying	2.68	-4.00	<.001***
Monitoring	2.70	-3.61	<.001***
Problem Solving	2.72	-3.61	<.001***
Relations-Oriented TLB	2.49	-7.66	<.001***
Supporting	2.19	-7.57	<.001***
Recognising	2.45	-6.14	<.001***
Developing	2.69	-4.03	<.001***
Empowering	2.59	-4.80	<.001***
Change-Oriented TLB	2.71	-4.98	<.001***
Advocating Change	2.70	-3.81	<.001***
Envisioning Change	2.77	-2.87	.004**
Encouraging Innovation	2.61	-4.77	<.001***
Facilitating Collective Learning	2.71	-3.46	<.001**
External-Oriented TLB	2.89	-2.18	.03*
Networking	3.12	-1.27	.20
External Monitoring	2.88	-1.68	.09
Representing	2.64	-4.02	<.001***

Note. n = 139, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behaviour. Lower values indicate improvement, higher responses indicate worsening. Wilcoxon signed rank tests used to determine significant differences from 3 ("unchanged").

Hypothesis 6 was tested comparing current data with data of our previous research (Stellner, 2021). We determined whether there is a difference between perceived changes of TLB between employees and leaders. This is especially of interest since leaders have seemingly lower average ratings concerning hypotheses 1 to 5 (Stellner, 2021). Aggregated TLB ratings were directly compared for employees and leaders using a Mann-Whitney U test. Leaders' overall estimation of change in TLB was more positive (M = 2.41) than employees' (M = 2.68). This difference of 0.27 in absolute terms was shown to have high statistical significance (U = 7429.20, p < .001). Going beyond testing Hypothesis 6, which covers aggregated TLB only, and analysing the differences of the clustered and individual behaviours in greater detail with further Mann-Whitney U tests, we find that there is indeed congruity between employees' and leaders' perceptions. Averaged differences on the Likert scale of individual TLB range between 0.47 (developing) and 0.05 (networking). The cluster external-oriented TLB in particular is perceived conformably between leaders and employees. In Table 2 we show a detailed data analysis which also facilitates interpretation of Figure 3. Besides that, it appears that perceptions of individual TLB shift almost parallelly between the two samples. Direction of change is perceived similarly, while magnitude of change is not. A visual representation of this difference can be found in Figure 3. Overall, aggregated TLB is not perceived conformably between employees and leaders. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is rejected.

6.3 Regression Analysis

Moving into more exploratory analysis, a series of regression analyses was also carried out among employees, where changes in TLB were predicted from supervisor ratings and other collected control variables. We used the following attributes of employees: supervisor rating, gender, age, education, working hours, relationship status, current position, number of children and number of subordinates. Moreover, we added age of the leader when becoming a father as a control variable. Gender of participants was coded 1 = Male, 0 = Female. In keeping with the coding used for survey items, the control variables were coded such that lower numerical values reflected higher real-world

Table 2: Differences between Leaders' and Employees' Perception of Change

Variable	Employees' Responses (*n* = 130-138)	Leaders' Responses (*n* = 147-157)	*p*
Aggregated TLB	2.68	2.41	< .001***
Task-Oriented TLB	2.70	2.34	< .001***
Planning	2.67	2.26	< .001***
Clarifying	2.68	2.29	< .001***
Monitoring	2.70	2.54	.116
Problem Solving	2.72	2.28	< .001***
Relations-Oriented TLB	2.49	2.15	< .001***
Supporting	2.19	2.00	.054
Recognising	2.45	2.15	.002**
Developing	2.69	2.22	< .001***
Empowering	2.59	2.24	< .001***
Change-Oriented TLB	2.71	2.44	< .001***
Advocating Change	2.70	2.38	< .001***
Envisioning Change	2.77	2.52	.01**
Encouraging Innovation	2.61	2.36	.006*
Facilitating Collective Learning	2.71	2.52	.060
External-Oriented TLB	2.89	2.79	.389
Networking	3.12	3.07	.919
External Monitoring	2.88	2.77	.322
Representing	2.64	2.58	.777

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behaviour. Mann-Whitney U Test used to assess differences in perception. Data for leaders stem from our previous research (Stellner, 2021)

levels (e.g. for education 1 = "PhD" and 7 = "Primary school"). Supervisor ratings were coded so that lower values represented more positive ratings in data analysis. This gives them the same directionality as change in TLB responses and avoids confusion. Positive β means that a higher value of a variable relates positively to behavioural improvements.

6.4 Regression Analysis

Moving into more exploratory analysis, a series of regression analyses was also carried out among employees, where changes in TLB were predicted from supervisor ratings and other collected control variables. We used the following attributes of employees: supervisor rating, gender, age, education, working hours, relationship status, current position, number of children and number of subordinates. Moreover, we added age of the leader when becoming a father as a control variable. Gender of participants was coded 1 = Male, 0 = Female. In keeping with the coding used for survey items, the control variables were coded such that lower numerical values reflected higher real-world levels (e.g. for education 1 = "PhD" and 7 = "Primary school"). Supervisor ratings were coded so that lower values represented more positive ratings in data analysis. This gives them the same directionality as change in TLB responses and avoids confusion. Positive β means that a higher value of a variable relates positively to behavioural improvements.

Skewness and kurtosis fall within acceptable bounds for normality among all variables. The regression models were also shown to have acceptable homogeneity of variance and normally distributed residuals based on graphical analysis of the calculated residuals. No extreme outliers, or data values with high distance were observed. The models met the assumptions for acceptable linear regression.



Figure 3: Difference in Perceived Behavioural Changes between Leaders and Employees

The regression models for aggregated TLB ($F(10, 123) = 4.83$, $p < .001$), task-oriented TLB ($F(10, 123) = 5.19$, $p < .001$), relation-oriented TLB ($F(10, 123) = 2.96$, $p = .002$), change-oriented TLB ($F(10, 122) = 4.19$, $p < .001$) and external-oriented TLB ($F(10, 122) = 2.50$, $p < .01$) were all significant. The overall regression models accounted for 17% to 30% of total variance in the outcome variables, which is a high value compared to other studies (Ruderman et al., 2002). Results are summarised in Table 3.

Spontaneous rating of the supervisor ($M = 3.83$) was a highly significant predictor of outcomes, with β values ranging from .26 to .44. The higher the general rating, the stronger the perceived improvement of TLB with fatherhood. Gender significantly predicted change in aggregated ($\beta = .18$, $p = .04$), task-oriented ($\beta = .17$, $p = .04$) and change-oriented TLB ($\beta = .21$, $p = .01$). In these clusters, male participants perceived their leader's improvement as significantly higher than did female participants. Working hours was a predictor of change-oriented TLB, with low significance ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .04$). None of the other control variables were found to have predictive power on TLB.

As we deem the gender effect both interesting and problematic, we split up our sample into male and female portions. We then repeated the Wilcoxon signed rank test for all TLBs to account for possible peer support amongst men. It could be the case that male employees feel empathy for their male leaders and therefore report higher improved TLB. Females, on the contrary, could have a more objective perspective. The results in Table 4 indicate that females observe a significant improvement of TLB only for supporting ($p < .001$), recognising ($p < .001$), developing ($p = .05$), empowering ($p = .04$) and encouraging innovation ($p = .001$). We refrain from rejecting hypotheses 1 to 5, as males also form part of employees and we specifically investigated perception. Nevertheless, this finding could indicate that leadership performance (change) perception depends highly on the background and experience of the affected persons.

7 Discussion

7.1 Contribution

Our findings are consistent with and confirm previous research, in that they find a general tendency towards perceived improvement of TLB with fatherhood (Dumas & Stanko, 2017; Nunes-Costa et al., 2020). The work–family enrichment model seems to be valid also when tested from the perspective of employees. Nevertheless, directly compared to previous research with a sample of leaders (Stellner, 2021), we find that perceived improvement of TLB is less pronounced, with averaged differences on the Likert scale ranging between 0.47 (TLB developing) and 0.05 (TLB networking). We find that only external-oriented TLB is perceived equally by both employees and leaders. This is surprising, as one would expect self-eval-

Table 3: Prediction of Change in Transformational Leadership Behaviours of Employees

Outcome Variable	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*F*	*Df*	*p*	R^2
Aggregated TLB					4.83	10, 123	< .001	.28
Constant	-0.06	2.22		-0.03			.98	
Supervisor Rating	0.24	.04	**.44**	5.54			**< .001**	
Gender	0.20	.10	**.18**	2.13			**.04**	
Age	0.01	.00	.12	1.43			.16	
Education	-0.02	.04	-.06	-0.65			.52	
Working Hours	-0.01	.01	-.14	-1.51			.13	
Relationship Status	0.10	.12	.04	0.43			.67	
Current Position	-0.01	.05	-.03	-0.28			.78	
Number of Children	0.00	.05	.01	0.09			.93	
Subordinates	0.00	.00	.01	0.96			.34	
Age of Leader	-0.01	.01	-.01	-0.86			.39	
Task-Oriented TLB					5.19	10, 123	< .001	.30
Constant	-1.00	2.76		-0.36			.72	
Supervisor Rating	0.28	.05	**.41**	5.16			**< .001**	
Gender	0.24	.12	**.17**	2.06			**.04**	
Age	0.01	.01	.08	0.98			.33	
Education	-0.04	.04	-.08	-0.89			.37	
Working Hours	-0.01	.01	-.15	-1.60			.11	
Relationship Status	0.08	.15	.04	0.52			.60	
Current Position	-0.04	.06	-.06	-0.64			.52	
Number of Children	0.05	.06	.08	0.87			.39	
Subordinates	0.00	.00	.09	1.13			.26	
Age of Leader	-0.01	.01	-.11	-1.27			.21	
Relation-Oriented TLB					2.96	10, 123	.002	.19
Constant	1.00	2.63		0.38			.70	
Supervisor Rating	0.25	.05	**.42**	4.96			**< .001**	
Gender	0.19	.11	.15	1.69			.09	
Age	0.01	.00	.11	1.20			.23	
Education	0.02	.04	.04	0.37			.71	
Working Hours	-0.00	.01	-.03	-0.28			.78	
Relationship Status	-0.00	.14	-.00	-0.01			.99	
Current Position	0.02	.06	.03	0.26			.80	
Number of Children	-0.00	.06	-.00	-0.01			.99	
Subordinates	0.00	.00	.01	0.10			.92	
Age of Leader	0.01	.01	.05	0.57			.57	

Table 3: Prediction of Change in Transformational Leadership Behaviours of Employees (continues)

Change-Oriented TLB					4.19	10, 122	< .001	.26
Constant	-0.40	2.58		-0.15			.88	
Supervisor Rating	0.24	.05	**.39**	4.76			**< .001**	
Gender	0.28	.11	**.21**	2.48			**.01**	
Age	0.01	.00	.15	1.71			.09	
Education	-0.05	.04	-.10	-1.07			.29	
Working Hours	-0.01	.01	**-.20**	-2.11			**.04**	
Relationship Status	0.03	.14	.02	0.25			.81	
Current Position	0.02	.06	.03	0.34			.74	
Number of Children	-0.05	.06	-.09	0.96			.34	
Subordinates	0.00	.00	.09	1.04			.30	
Age of Leader	-0.00	.01	-.05	-1.54			.59	
External-Oriented TLB					2.50	10, 122	< .01	.17
Constant	0.20	2.87		0.07			.95	
Supervisor Rating	0.17	.06	**.26**	3.04			**.003**	
Gender	0.06	.12	.04	0.47			.64	
Age	0.00	.01	.08	0.85			.40	
Education	-0.03	.05	-.06	-0.63			.53	
Working Hours	-0.01	.01	-.10	-0.99			.32	
Relationship Status	0.10	.15	.06	0.65			.51	
Current Position	-0.06	.06	-.10	-0.98			.33	
Number of Children	0.02	.06	.04	0.38			.70	
Subordinates	0.00	.00	.07	0.83			.42	
Age of Leader	-0.02	.01	-.16	-1.80			.07	

Note. n for all 132 or 133. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behaviour, PRC = Parental Role Commitment. Statistically significant predictors and β values shown in bold.

uation to be more critical than observers' assessment (Posner, 2016). We interpret the high levels of perceived improvement in relations-oriented TLB as being due to generally increased orientation of leaders towards others (Dahl et al., 2012). On the other hand, a low level of perceived improvement of external-oriented TLB should have its cause in reduced time availability and attention, focus shift and a willingness to spend time for extra-professional affairs (Stellner, 2021). In sum, a key contribution of this study is that employees, compared to leaders, seem to perceive TLB changes similarly in terms of direction but not terms of magnitude. This notion requires work-family enrichment theory to add the perspective of stakeholder perception. If stakeholders perceive enrichment unequally, differences need to be explained and put into relation. Scholars could consider interpreting enrichment not as an objectively measurable parameter, but rather depending on the observer.

The regression analysis revealed a potential weakness of this and previous research (Stellner, 2021). Females rate in a less pronounced manner towards improvement, while males could evaluate with an empathy-based gender bias. Nevertheless, we refrain from rejecting hypotheses 1 to 5, as males also form part of employees and we are specifically investigating perception. Yet, the finding indicates that perceived leadership performance (change) highly depends on the background of the affected persons. Again, the consideration of stakeholders' perspective is needed in future theoretical models.

We also found that among employees, overall ratings of their supervisors was a strong predictor of change in aggregated TLB, and among all clustered behaviours. Acknowledging that this comes with a certain bias, as we deem it unlikely that a supervisor receives a poor overall rating first and an excellent rating of behavioural improvement with fatherhood afterwards, we may still reason that fatherhood does not stand in the way of good overall performance.

We contribute to managerial practice in various ways and agree with McClean et al. (2021) that companies need

Table 4: Perceived Changes in Transformational Leadership Behaviour Employees – Gender Separation

Variable		Male (*n* = 76-82)	*p*	Female (*n* = 52-57)	*p*
Aggregated TLB		2.63	< .001***	2.75	.006**
Task-Oriented TLB		2.64	< .001***	2.80	.08
	Planning	2.62	< .001***	2.74	.07
	Clarifying	2.62	< .001***	2.76	.07
	Monitoring	2.65	< .001***	2.79	.13
	Problem Solving	2.63	< .001***	2.86	.28
Relations-Oriented TLB		2.43	< .001***	2.57	< .001***
	Supporting	2.17	< .001***	2.21	< .001***
	Recognising	2.43	< .001***	2.48	< .001***
	Developing	2.65	< .001***	2.75	*.05
	Empowering	2.49	< .001***	2.75	*.04
Change-Oriented TLB		2.65	< .001***	2.79	*.04
	Advocating Change	2.65	< .001***	2.77	.10
	Envisioning Change	2.68	.003**	2.89	.40
	Encouraging Innovation	2.61	< .001***	2.62	.001**
	Facilitating Collective Learning	2.64	< .001***	2.82	.21
External-Oriented TLB		2.89	.08	2.88	.16
	Networking	3.21	.08	2.98	.95
	External Monitoring	2.85	.11	2.92	.50
	Representing	2.60	< .001***	2.70	.06

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001. TLB = Transformational Leadership Behaviour. Lower values indicate improvement, higher responses indicate worsening. Wilcoxon signed rank tests used to determine significant differences from 3 (“unchanged”).

to consider both workplace and home factors. First, companies should be aware of the potential conflicts, enrichment and resulting net effects of fatherhood on leaders. In most cases an improvement of TLB can be anticipated. Second, all parties involved should be prepared for the expected changes with sufficient lead time. Expectant fathers especially should receive coaching and support during this transition phase. Third, organisational measures like paternity leave, day-care and extra days off, which are already standard procedures when women become mothers, should also be consistently established for men. The policy of “returning to normal after two weeks” to avoid the negative effects of fatherhood on business may seem convenient and less complex, but ignores the reality.

7.2 Limitations

This study comes with several limitations. First, change in the behavioural patterns of individuals should ideally be studied using a longitudinal research design. Male managers and their behaviour should be tracked over years to grasp behavioural changes and their root causes. Our study, however, followed the approach of asking about perceptions of change to compensate for this lack of data, at the risk of biasing memories and perceptions. Second, we observed a significant gender difference with regard to perception of TLB change of leaders. This could partially also be explained by our research design which might attract participants who are also fathers and leaders. As a result, they could project their own aspirations onto their superior. The fact that our sample is 59% male increases the issue of bias and pulls perception of TLB more strongly towards improvement. Third, we draw a comparison with our previous study (Stellner, 2021). The evaluated leaders of the present study do not correspond 1:1 with the former ones. We deem this a minor problem. Nevertheless, it would have been beneficial to evaluate a fixed set of leaders from multiple perspectives. Fourth, as more than 60% of respondents held an academic degree, we need to regard our sample as over-educated. Additionally, more than 60% of participants were in a management position.

This indicates that managers are considerably overrepresented in the sample. Fifth, spontaneous rating of a leader with a 5-star rating system is a strong simplification, unidimensional, and covers subjective moods. Employees could tend to penalise or reward their leader for their general performance or grace when asked about changes in TLB with fatherhood. We believe that we avoided this issue in the best possible way by cascading survey questions. Nevertheless, there remains the issue that participants might feel bound by their absolute rating of an individual even when evaluating only change of behaviours.

7.3 Outlook

We suggest work-family enrichment theory to add the perspective of stakeholder perception, as there is ample evidence that enrichment is a group-specific phenomenon. In addition, work–family enrichment research finally needs studies with a longitudinal design. This gap should best be filled by cooperating with social security institutions or larger companies that have big sets of data covering both aspects of demography and evaluation of leaders over time. We encourage scholars to follow our approach to measure TLB with the taxonomy of Yukl and further develop this concept. This would simplify comparison of future results. Besides that, future studies should put fatherhood into a broader context with other factors that are known to shape leadership behaviours, such as professional experience, personal values, company background and type of work. Bearing in mind similarity attraction theory, research should test if gender in combination with having children influences perceptions of TLB. We would have needed a larger sample to do so in the present study. Finally, as already proposed (Stellner, 2021), we emphasise that leadership research should understand fatherhood in its social rather than biological meaning. Therefore, there is a need to investigate whether other paternal roles (adoption, mentoring, coaching) have similar effects on TLB at work.

7.4 Conclusion

Our study is a further confirmation of work–family enrichment theory. We show that perceptions of task-oriented, relations-oriented and change-oriented TLB change from the employees' perspective. Besides, we add further understanding on the differences in perception between employees and leaders. Moreover, we found a variance in perception between males and females of change in TLB, a still untouched phenomenon in work–family research. Therefore, we propose that future research around work-family enrichment puts an emphasis on the perspective of different stakeholders.

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