

THE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON
INDIVIDUAL IMPROVISATION MODERATED THROUGH AUTONOMY,
EMPOWERMENT AND PROACTIVENESS.

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Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of
Master in Human Resource Management and Organizational Consultancy

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October 2019

Abstract

This study was conducted to gain more comprehensive insights on *improvisation* on an *individual* level. Hence, the main topic of this work focuses on whether *transformational leadership* have an effect on *individual improvisation*, and what are the mechanisms by which this effect works. The literature indicated a void in knowledge around the mediating variables *autonomy*, *empowerment* and *proactiveness* in this context. The data that were used for this study was collected by conducting a survey amongst 92 participants from different nationalities, age and occupations. The findings underscore that *individual improvisation* is driven by the activation of individual attitudes that can be induced by the behavior of a leader. Furthermore, both *autonomy* and *proactiveness* mediate the relationship between *transformational leadership* and *individual improvisation*. However, a leader that promotes *empowerment* in individuals, will not increase *individual improvisation* behaviors.

Keywords: *Individual Improvisation, Transformational Leadership, Autonomy, Empowerment, Proactiveness.*

Abstrato

Este estudo foi realizado para obter uma visão mais abrangente sobre *improvisação* ao nível *individual*. Desta forma, o tópico principal deste trabalho concentra-se em saber se a *liderança transformacional* afeta a *improvisação individual* e quais são os mecanismos pelos quais esse efeito funciona. A literatura revela um vazio de conhecimento em torno das variáveis mediadoras de *autonomia*, *empoderamento* e *proatividade*. Os dados utilizados para este estudo foram recolhidos por meio de um questionário distribuído por 92 participantes de diferentes nacionalidades, idades e ocupações. Os resultados realçam que a *improvisação individual* é promovida pela ativação de atitudes individuais que podem ser induzidas pelo comportamento de um líder. Além disso, tanto a *autonomia* quanto a *proatividade* medeiam a relação entre *liderança transformacional* e *improvisação individual*. No entanto, um líder que promove o *empoderamento* dos indivíduos não aumentará os comportamentos de *improvisação individual*.

Palavras-chave: Improvisação Individual, Liderança Transformacional, Autonomia, Empoderamento, Proatividade.

Acknowledgements

To be honest about this work: it has been challenging from time to time to combine a full-time job in a fast paced startup with writing a Master thesis. Moreover, I am enjoying very much the work that I am doing - which translates into investing a lot of time in it. Although my peers and myself were warned by the program director to be cautious when taking on such challenges - it took the challenge with passion. This resulted in moments of mental fatigue. However failure or quitting is obviously not an option. This reflected for a while in my lack of creativity to get this work done with the *brio* it required and deserved. However, the fact is that this thesis is delivered in the end, and, more importantly, it became a work that lives up to the expectations I have from myself. I hope that, my dear reader, share this opinion.

And this, to be frank, has to be accredited to the enormous support and guidance I had from my thesis supervisor, Professor António Abrantes. I can't express my gratitude for all the help during times that I was stuck or had to adjust the course of my research, no matter what medium we had to use or where you were located. Thank you for everything.

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Introduction

Rapidly changing landscapes and increasing demands from organizations go hand in hand with the growing need to face unexpected and emergent issues. Over time, this has attracted the interest of both scholars and practitioners in developing a better understanding on how individuals and organizations activate spontaneous and creative behaviors (i.e., improvisation) to deal with such kind of events (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Kamoche & Cunha, 2001). However, there are several variables that foster this. For starters, the leadership one is confronted with at the workflow is essential. Leadership is considered to be a process of social influence, in which leaders influence their workforce by determining what should be realized and providing the appropriate means and guidance to accomplish these goals (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010).

Over the decades the literature published by researchers have focused their attention to different types of leadership and multiple definitions have been given. During the last decades, the research interest focused its attention on two leadership styles, namely *transactional* and *transformational leadership*. The first one is based on contingent reward, active and passive management - by exception (Hater and Bass, 1988), whereas the latter is theorized to be composed of charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999). For the purpose of this research, *transformational leadership* is the style that is the focal point. The reasoning behind this choice is based on that some of the main *transformational leadership* traits, such as a leader's ability to encourage its subordinates, to mentally challenge them and to express personalized concern towards each of them, are key ingredients for the achievement of ideal organizational performance ratings (Hoon Song, Kolb, Hee Lee, & Kyoung, 2012; Para-González, Jiménez-Jiménez, & Martínez-Lorente, 2018).

In the context of organizational performance ratings, it is important for employees to be self-starting and be able to think on their feet and act accordingly. However, that in itself is not an end goal in the greater scheme of the organizational context. The need to be able to improvise in an era where time is a scarce commodity is related to the organizational output -

that is a goal on itself. Highly performing individuals are necessary for an organization to achieve their goals and finally to achieve competitive advantage (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). This can be reached through different means such as sales performance (Crant, 1995) and entrepreneurial behaviors (Becherer & Maurer, 1999). Tasthan and Davoudi (2015) described job performance of an employee as critical importance for an organization to improve their performance results and also to achieve organizational goals. This means that it should be an important matter in the organizational context.

Subsequently the question rises through what means a leader can foster higher levels of *individual improvisation* behaviors amongst his followers. This concept leans on the improvisational action of an individual through a creative and spontaneous process that allows novel and useful solutions to emerge on the spur of the moment (Crossan, P Cunha, Vera, & Cunha, 2005). Hackman and Oldham (1976) developed the job characteristics model (JCM) where they used five core job dimensions. These job dimensions would have an effect on multiple psychological states, which in turn lead to different personal and work outcomes (including performance). One of these job dimensions is *autonomy*. For this research this variable will be tested to find out if it has a mediating role.

Organizations have to know how to stimulate creativity to be innovative to enhance their performance. It is widely accepted in the literature that this can be achieved through empowering employees. *Empowerment* has been recognised as an important determinant of creativity, because individuals are more creative when they perceive more personal control over how to accomplish given tasks (Amabile, 1996).

Lastly *proactiveness* is taken into account when it comes to fostering *individual improvisation* by stimulating certain behaviors by leaders. This kind of behavior is essential in contemporary organizations, because of the rapid developments that are taking place throughout the continuum. *Proactive* behavior and initiative have therefore become more important indicators of organizational success (Crant, 2000). Many organizations even examine *proactive* behavior of employees as essential for remaining competitive and relevant in a constantly changing environment.

Previous researches have shown that the usage of *empowerment* is the most effective way for leaders to stimulate innovation and creativity. It was found that *empowerment* is a well-developed concept with a long history and extensive foundational literature. Previous studies have examined how *empowerment* has mediated the relationship between different leadership styles and organizational outcomes (Maynard, Gilson, & Mathieu, 2012). Also, there has been research conducted in the field of the other variable such as *proactiveness* and its mediating effect on *individual improvisation* (Magni, Palmi & Salvemini, 2018). However, as to the knowledge of the author, no research had been conducted that combined the several variables and analyzed the mediating effect they might have on the relationship between *transformational leadership* and *individual improvisation*. This is important, because this can indicate or highlight under-explored areas in the literature. This could be a population or sample (size, type, location, etc.), research method, data collection and/or analysis, or other research variables or conditions. Based on the findings of these explorations, suggestions can be made for practical purposes, such as to managers or future research indications to scholars.

Research question and conceptual model

As mentioned in the previous section, the gap that was identified was around the mediating role of the variables *empowerment*, *autonomy* and *proactiveness*. This research will aim to gain more insights regarding this problem by using a quantitative research method. This led to the design of the following research question:

“Does transformational leadership have an effect on individual improvisation, and what are the mechanisms by which this effect works?”

The mechanisms that are tested are stated above. Below (figure 1) a visualisation of the conceptual model is added.

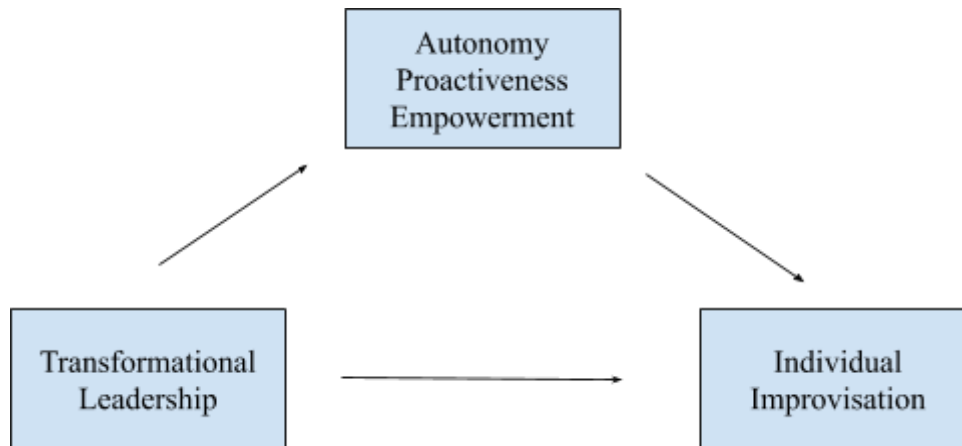


Figure 1: *Conceptual model of research question.*

Research scope

The aim of this research is to grasp a better understanding of the influence of a *transformational leader* in the contemporary organizational context to achieve a greater level of *individual improvisation*. In order to be more conclusive, the variables *autonomy*, *empowerment* and *proactiveness* are tested to examine the potential influence they have in the relationship. The participants are collected through snowball sampling throughout different nations and in different age categories. It is desired to give practical and theoretical implications based on the findings of this research.

Research outline

This chapter started with the introduction of the topic of this master thesis. The research question was formulated based on the literature gap. Moreover, the focus and scope of this research was defined. Chapter two will be a literature review of the concepts: *transformational leadership*, *individual improvisation*, *autonomy*, *empowerment* and *proactiveness*. This review will provide insight into what is already known in the existing literature. Based on this, the hypothesis development is designed. The choice of methodology to conduct research will be discussed in the chapter that follows. The results of this study will be presented and discussed in and the main research question will be answered in the following chapter. The theoretical and practical implications, limitations and recommendations for future research will be discussed in the final section.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership

Leadership is one of the key factors to positively influence a variety of employees' attitudes, such as subordinates' motivation (Masi & Cooke, 2000), employee satisfaction, commitment and trust (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996). Leadership is often associated with change, because leadership can transform the views, beliefs, attitudes and motivations of followers. Therefore, it can be stated that leadership can lead to organizational change by using influence to change the activities and relationships of people within the organization (Parry, 1998). In the present research, the definition of Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massarik (1961; as cited in Mullins, 1995) is used: *"leadership is defined as the influence of leaders on the behavior of employees through a communication procedure, for achievement of particular, common purposes"*.

Within the spectrum of leadership there are different approaches and schools that are researched and described. However, the leadership style that will be explained in this paper is *transformational leadership*. Hater and Bass (1988) developed a definition of transformational leadership: *"focused on charisma, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation."* This leadership style is also called by the authors: charismatic leadership style. Subsequently, the authors define charisma as: *"the leader instils pride, faith, and respect, has a gift for seeing what is really important and transmits a sense of mission"*. Leaders who display charismatic behaviour have been described as providing followers with a clear vision of the future, expressing high expectations for follower performance and displaying confidence in their followers' ability to accomplish challenging tasks. In the context of this work it is very important to point the last part out, because there will be a special focus on the role of a leader in the *empowerment* of employees.

In the contextual relation it is important to briefly address the aforementioned other schools of leadership. Especially transactional leadership is a concept that is often named and researched in the same context with *transformational leadership*. Burns (1978) was a pioneer

to bring the term *transformational leadership* to table in relation to *transactional leadership* in his study on political leaders. According to his research, *transformational leadership* is a procedure during which leaders and subordinates support each other in order to progress to higher degrees of inspiration and morale. The relationship between leaders and followers is seen as an interactive connection in order to accomplish a common cause. Burns' study describes that, the nature of this interactive relationship can be either transactional or transformational.

Transactional leadership is based on bureaucratic processes and exercise of authority. These leaders focus their attention on the completion of job tasks and employee obedience and link job performance to rewards (or punishments) by ensuring that employees have the needed resources to complete their tasks (Zhu, Chew & Spangler, 2005). However, contemporary work settings together with global competition require leaders that go beyond the basic transactional styles, which are characterized by management-by-exception and contingent reinforcement, to leaders that are more inspirational, stimulating and charismatic (Avolio et al., 1999).

Transformational leaders can motivate and inspire their followers to accomplish outstanding outcomes and, during the procedure, develop their own leadership abilities (Bass and Riggio, 2006). These kind of leaders respond to subordinates' individual needs, pay attention to employees' personal development and encourage them to grow into leaders by aligning the goals of the employees, the leaders and the organization. In addition, they stimulate people to perform better than originally intended or originally thought possible. They set challenging goals for employees and generally can accomplish better organizational outcomes. Therefore, they are capable of *empowering* their followers by coaching and by providing challenge and support. Transformational leaders' followers are more likely to be more committed and fulfilled (Bass & Riggio, 2006)

In the organizational context, leadership should also be distinguished from management (e.g. Bass, 1981; Waldman, Bass & Yammarino, 1990). There is some shared value between the two terms, but each one includes a marked set of features. In a wider scope, managers have activities associated with organizing, scheduling and controlling, whereas leaders are

involved with the interpersonal features of a manager's position; their role is to provide motivation, inspiration, emotional support and guide their subordinates towards a common goal. In addition, leaders create a vision and strategic plan for their organizations; on the other hand, managers are only responsible for the implementation of this vision and strategic plan (Bass, 1985). Zaleznik (1992) states that managers are interested in the way things are performed, whereas leaders are more concerned about what these things mean to employees. Thus, the distinction between them is that leaders affect the employee's commitment, while managers mainly exercise control and carry out their job duties. In that sense, *transactional leadership* (Bass, 1985), can be regarded as a synonymous to the term 'management' and *transformational leadership* as a synonymous to the concept of 'leadership'.

Transformational leadership has generated a significant amount of empirical and theoretical models. This style is based on trust, respect, and inspiring working together towards a common goal. *Transformational leaders* are guided by values, have faith in their followers, are courageous and lifelong learners. In addition, they are able to confront with complex and ambiguous situations (Tichy & Devanna 1986) and they cause a transformative shift in employees' perceptions based on their own vision (Bass and Avolio, 2000). This style includes four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Leaders can apply just one of these components, some of them or all together, in order to attain superior organizational outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Idealized influence: the leaders are regarded as role models by their followers because of their behavior and are highly respected and trusted (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Followers also identify with their leaders and want to imitate them. They also consider them to have outstanding abilities, determination and willpower. Moreover, the idealized influence consists of two features that reveal that this dimension is based on interaction: (a) it is part of the leader's behavior and (b) it is embodied in employees' perception about it. Finally, leaders with idealized influence take risks that are based on consistency do the right thing and possess high ethical and moral principles.

Inspirational motivation: the leaders behave in ways that inspire and stimulate their followers by making employees' job more meaningful and challenging. They are enthusiastic, optimistic and encourage team spirit by using interactive communication and discussion. Finally, they build relationships with their employees by clearly creating and communicating a shared vision. Therefore this encouragement and creation of a shared vision makes people committed to the company cause.

Intellectual stimulation: Transformational leaders can stimulate their subordinates' efforts to be creative by redefining problems and by showing them new ways of dealing with old situations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Their intention is to encourage subordinates to be innovative, try new approaches and think of difficulties as opportunities instead of problems.

Individualized consideration: leaders pay close attention to employees' distinctive needs and their coaching and mentoring is targeted to each employee individually. They recognize and accept employees' differences, with the result that people feel being valued (Pillai, Schriesheim & Williams, 1999). For example, some employees may receive more encouragement and some others more *autonomy* in performing their tasks. The leader's interactive relationship with each employee separately is personalized; he/she listens carefully to his/her subordinates, remembers previous conversations and he looks at them as persons rather than just members of the team (Avolio et al., 1999).

As mentioned previously, job resources play an extrinsic motivational role, as resourceful working environments advance employees' eagerness to dedicate more effort and skills to their job tasks (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Thus, in these working environments, tasks are more likely to be completed with success. For example, supportive colleagues or supervisors are resources that can increase the probability of achieving work goals. In this sense, transformational leadership is related to supervisory support and is treated as a job resource.

Individual Improvisation

Improvisation is of crucial importance when an individual needs to deal with activities that cannot be entirely planned in advance, and which may require to behave differently from their established routines (Giustiniano & Cunha, 2016; Kamoche & Cunha, 2001). Improvisation is defined as the process of composing creative solutions to emergent issues within a short timeframe; thus, improvisation can be considered as the convergence of spontaneity and creativity (Vera & Crossan, 2005). According to Thomke and Reinertsen (1998), high-speed environments demand flexible, extemporaneous, fast (re)actions. For this work we focus on the individual level of improvisation, thus the following definition is applied. At the individual level, improvisation happens when “*employees adjust their work in real time to emerging information or are stretched beyond their routines to deliver a novel solution to the problem*” (Hadida and Tarvainen, 2014, p. 11).

Over the past decades, more and more research has highlighted the need to shed some light on the forefathers of improvisation by considering both the individual and the team (e.g., Kamoche, Cunha, & Vieira da Cunha, 2003). However, for this research we focus solely on the results that focus the individual level, in which an individual actor improvises. A predisposition to engage in *improvisation* within the organization, denotes a positive individual attitude toward *improvisation* (Magni et al. 2010). It is important to understand why *individual improvisation* is considered to be important in an organization. One reason can be found in the area of strategy. Crossan et al. (1996) and Perky (1991) highlight the benefits of *improvisation*, because of the flexible, open, and unpredictable nature of the business environment. This highlight includes risk mitigation in situations that require unplanned action.

Cunha, Miner, and Antonacopoulou (2015), suggested that in order to better understand the mechanisms that trigger individual improvisation, there is the need to embrace a broader approach that takes into account both the team in which individuals are embedded in and the individual mechanisms. This developing perspective on individual improvisation, is implicitly grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which represents a theoretical

framework adopted to predict a wide range of human behaviors across several settings (e.g., Ackermann & Palmer, 2014; Bagozzi, Wong, Abe, & Bergami, 2000).

TRA aims at providing a framework to better understand the process through which individuals' behaviors are formed by rooting them to attitudes and beliefs and by relying on two main principles. First, the individual's decision to enact a specific behavior is based on the individual attitudes toward that behavior. Attitudes can be defined as individual dispositions to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a given object or situation (e.g., a specific person, thing, or mental concept) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 2010). According to the TRA, attitudes carry with them behavioral implications, such that individuals who develop a positive (negative) attitude toward a situation tend to engage in behaviors that foster (suppress) that kind of condition (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Second, according to the TRA, attitudes are molded by the individuals' beliefs concerning the environment they are immersed in, thus suggesting that team beliefs influence the activation of an individual's positive or negative response toward a specific situation (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 2010; Glisson & James, 2002). For that reason, TRA highlights that an individual's behavior is forecasted by individual attitudes, and individual attitudes represent the process through which the team affects individual behavior.

Proactive attitude can be conceived as an individual favorable disposition toward taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones in order to face barriers and setbacks (Crant, 2000; Greenglass, Schwarzer, Jakubiec, Fiksenbaum, & Taubert, 1999). The reliance on certain attitudes is consistent with TRA, which underscores the need to focus on attitudes that would enable individuals to respond appropriately when a specific situation occurs.

Autonomy

Over time *autonomy* has been described in various, but overlapping, ways. Hackman and Oldham (1976) described *autonomy* as part of the job characteristics model as “*The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out*” (p.

256). Langfred (2004) used in his study the definition of individual *autonomy* as the amount of freedom and discretion an individual has in performing assigned tasks. Parker (2014) describes it as the degree to which a job provides discretion over daily work decisions, e.g. when and how to do tasks. These definitions are in line with the description of in-role behaviour, which is behaviour that is described in employees' job descriptions (Williams & Anderson, 1991). The freedom of determining how and when performing assigned tasks (these are in job descriptions) is related to an employee's in-role behaviour.

Recently, job *autonomy* has been identified as important in the employee's evaluation of the job (Geldenhuis, Laba, & Venter, 2014). As mentioned, Hackman and Oldham (1976) show in their job characteristics model that job *autonomy* is one of the characteristics that can significantly influence employee behaviour. *Autonomy* in the job refers to the extent to which a job allows freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions and choose the methods used to perform tasks (Barrick, Mount, & Li, 2013). Thus, a job with high *autonomy* allows individuals to engage in divergent and creative mental activities (Barrick et al., 2013). Gagné, Senecal and Koestner (1997) suggest that feelings of competence and *autonomy* are needed to experience feelings of intrinsic motivation. According to the self-determination theory of Ryan (1991), these feelings of competence and *autonomy* need to be satisfied in order to experience intrinsic motivation. Job *autonomy* is suggested to lead to employees increased feelings of responsibility for one's actions (Gagné et al. 1997). Thus, feeling responsible could enhance employees' feelings of perceived influence through work behaviour. Employees that experience greater *autonomy* in their job have greater freedom to explore and experiment with alternative methods at work and to satisfy their curious nature. When the work situation has high *autonomy*, open individuals who are striving for *autonomy* find the situation highly meaningful (Barrick et al., 2013).

Empowerment

Numerous scholars have studied the construct *empowerment* using different perspectives. These perspectives can be classified into three main approaches: the structural approach, the motivational approach and the leadership approach (Menon, 2001). The structural approach describes *empowerment* as the attribution of power and decision-making authority. The

motivational approach approaches *empowerment* on the individual level and mainly focuses on the psychological state of the individuals being empowered. It perceives *empowerment* as a process and relates *empowerment* to the intrinsic motivation of individuals (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). The leadership approach views power as energy. The focus lies on how leaders inspire, challenge and energize their followers to feel empowered by providing an exciting vision for the future (Burke, 1986; Yukl, 1989). This study takes the leadership approach as a starting point, since it is closest to the core of this study. However, the motivational approach will also be taken into account, because this study wants to know how leaders can enhance their employee's feelings of *empowerment* on the individual level, which in turn should enhance their creativity.

Interestingly enough, *empowerment* as a construct was initially seen as one-dimensional. It contained issues such as: taking away conditions that foster powerlessness (Conger & Kanungo, 1998), and gaining self determination (Macher, 1988). Eventually scholars started to elaborate on these definitions and in this line with this thought, Spreitzer (1995, p. 1444) defined *empowerment* as: “*a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact*”. The four aforementioned dimensions together reflect on the perception of an employee to accomplish their work. To paraphrase this, empowered individuals have the believe that they are able and allowed to influence and shape their work situation.

Furthermore, the implication of this definition is that “*empowerment is a continuous variable*” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1444). In less abstract terminology, this means that means that followers can only be considered more or less empowered, but not, empowered or not empowered. *Empowerment* is not binary in that sense. Lee and Koh (2001) further argue that the follower's feelings of *empowerment* are a result of the empowering behaviour that is displayed by their leader. They defined *empowerment* as: “*the psychological state of a subordinate perceiving four dimensions of meaningfulness, self-efficacy, self-determination and impact, which is affected by empowering behaviours of the supervisor*” (Lee & Koh 2001, p. 686). They included the role of the supervisor in their definition, which is an important aspect for this study. Therefore this thesis will draw on the definition of Lee and Koh (2001).

Proactiveness

Grant and Ashford (2008) define proactivity “*as the anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments*”. Existing research provides extensive evidence of the different ways in which employees express *proactive* behavior, including seeking feedback (Ashford, Blatt, & Vandewalle, 2003), taking initiative in pursuing personal and organizational goals (Frese & Fay, 2001), actively adapting to new environments (Cable, & Kim, 2005; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), expressing voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), selling ideas (Dutton & Ashford, 1993), taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), acting in advance to influence individuals and groups (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988), expanding roles (Nicholson, 1984), revising tasks (Staw & Boettger, 1990), crafting jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), breaking rules (Morrison, 2006), implementing ideas and solving problems (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006), harming individuals and organizations (Griffin & Lopez, 2005), and building social networks (Morrison, 2002).

As shown, the literature on the topic of *proactive* behaviour is extensive and does not skew in favor of a positive nor negative output. For this study, the paper by Parker et al. (2006) is used, because it shows the importance of cognitive-motivational variables as mediators of the effects of personality and the work environment on *proactive* behavior.

Frese and Fay (2001) describe proactivity as a long term focused working orientation. Individuals who show a *proactive* attitude present a favorable willingness to take initiative and develop different courses of action by challenging the status quo, rather than passively following the consolidated pathways (Crant, 2000). Indeed, since *proactive* attitude refers to the individual favorable judgment to actively shape the course of action, individuals who present higher levels of *proactive* attitude will tend to depart from routines and embrace behaviors that are more spontaneous and creative in nature. This is consistent with previous research outlining that individuals who present a *proactive* attitude are focused on finding a solution to problems regardless of their origin (Greenglass et al., 1999). Since a *proactive* attitude facilitates individuals to look for opportunities and act on them, such individuals are more apt to embrace spontaneous action when they see the chance, and they will craft a novel

solution by relying on existing resources. Past research suggests that this *proactive* behavior can be influenced by features of the work environment, such as job design (Frese, Garst, & Fay, 2007), leadership (Burriss, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008). Especially the latter is important for this study.

Hypothesis development

Transformational leaders can motivate and inspire their followers to accomplish outstanding outcomes and, during the procedure, develop their own leadership abilities (Bass and Riggio, 2006). This can be achieved through several means. According to the same authors, this leadership style has four different components. One of the components is focused on the intellectual stimulation of the employee. Their intention is to encourage subordinates to be innovative, try new approaches and think of difficulties as opportunities instead of problems. This way they empower people to become more creative and solution oriented. Simultaneously the individual is being considered and valued according to their potential and skills. They recognize and accept employees' differences, with the result that people feel being valued (Pillai et al., 1999). The authors take the example of giving more *autonomy* to certain workers. Bass and Riggio (2006) also describe that *transformational leaders* stimulate people in their behavior and growth to contribute to the organization. In addition, they stimulate people to perform better than originally intended or originally thought possible. It is also argued that the follower's feelings of *empowerment* are a result of the empowering behaviour that is displayed by their leader (Lee & Koh, 2001). For these reasons we hypothesise the following:

Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c: Transformational Leadership is positively correlated to a) empowerment, b) proactiveness and c) autonomy.

In order to understand better how the mediating variables are potentially influencing the relationship between *transformational leadership* and *individual improvisation*, some context is provided. Improvisation is defined as the process of composing creative solutions to emergent issues within a short timeframe; thus, *improvisation* can be considered as the convergence of spontaneity and creativity (Vera & Crossan, 2005). Employees that experience greater *autonomy* in their job have greater freedom to explore and experiment with alternative methods at work and to satisfy their curious nature. These explorations and experiments lead to creative solutions. Cunha, Da Cunha & Correia (1999) also argue that abandoning first and second order control, such as supervision would *de facto* foster more

improvisation in workers. *Empowerment* plays a big role in this as well. The focus lies on how leaders inspire, challenge and energize their followers to feel empowered by providing an exciting vision for the future (Burke, 1986; Yukl, 1989). This means that empowered individuals are allowed to influence and shape their work situation. Furthermore, *proactive* attitude refers to the individual favorable judgment to actively shape the course of action, individuals who present higher levels of *proactive* attitude will tend to depart from routines and embrace behaviors that are more spontaneous and creative in nature. The study of Zhang and Bartol (2010) has confirmed this relationship, by demonstrating that intrinsic motivation mediated the relationship between *empowerment* and employee creativity. Thus, it is hypothesized:

Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c: a) Autonomy, b) empowerment, and c) proactiveness are positively related to individual improvisation.

Earlier in this paper, it was established that *individual improvisation* is the way that individuals respond to situations that are different from the usual and which may require to behave differently from their established routines (Giustiniano & Cunha, 2016), thus it is the convergence of creativity and spontaneity (Vera & Crossan, 2005). The effectiveness of this response is largely dependent on the creativeness that an individual is allowed to exhibit in his/her job. According to Hackman and Oldham (1976) this behavior is largely related to the *autonomy* of the work of an employee. According to Barrick et al. (2013) *Autonomy* in this sense entails to which extent to which a job allows freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions and choose the methods used to perform tasks. One of the key dimensions of *transformational leadership* is ‘individualized consideration’, it is characterized as a way of paying close attention to the specific needs of employees. Differences are recognized and accepted by the leader and this ultimately leads to a situation in which employees feel valued. According to Avolio et al. (1999), one way to consider the individual is to grant more *autonomy*.

Lee and Koh (2001) argue that *empowerment* is a construct that consists of four different cognitions: *meaningfulness, self-efficacy, self-determination and impact*. These four are fostered by the behavior of the leader towards the employee. In fact, the cognitions are

leading in how an individual perceives its own ability in accomplishing their own work. *Empowerment* is a well-established determinant of creativity due to its positive influence on employee's intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1996; Spreitzer, 1995).

Another key factor that is embedded in the behavior of a transformational leader, is the so-called 'intellectual stimulation'. According to Bass and Riggio (2006) this means in practice that subordinates' input is encouraged in order to redefine problems and design creative solutions for them. This encouragement is intended for subordinates to be innovative, try new approaches and think in opportunities instead of problems. In this way, leaders stimulate a *proactive* attitude towards problem solving in situations that require adaptation. Vera & Crossan (2005) argue that his stimulated creativity is the rootcore of individual improvisation. Besides that, Burris et al. (2008) suggest that the features of the work environment influence the *proactive* behavior. Hence, the following is hypothesized:

Hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c: The relationship between transformational leadership and individual improvisation is mediated by a) empowerment, b) autonomy and c) proactiveness

Methodology

Research philosophy

For constructing this specific study, the philosophy that is chosen is an interpretive epistemology. This approach refers to how social phenomena are explored, based on constructed assumptions about the ways the world functions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Furthermore, in terms of approaches this paper is using a deductive approach. This means that the (nine) hypotheses are formulated according to theory and are subsequently tested through quantitative data collection and analysis - in this case an online survey.

Procedure

To test the nine hypotheses that were established in the early phase of the research, an online survey study was conducted. Participants were recruited through a convenience sample with a snowball technique. The participants were approached via e-mail, Facebook, WhatsApp and Slack - in the workplace environment. This message contained a link that lead them to the online survey that was uploaded on Google Forms. This tool offers several advantages, as it guarantees easy and anonymous access, it is time-effective in distribution and it allows the direct data exportation to the statistical program used for this paper (SPSS). Subsequently, participants were encouraged to share the survey with their colleagues, friends and family members. Before participating, the participants received a short explanation about the research and a letter of consent which informed them about the anonymity of the research and that they could retract their participation at any moment of the research. The study is cross sectional, as the study is based on the observation of a sample of a population within a certain period of time, namely the respondents were collected from 11th of September until 23th of September. The respondents were first asked to fill in basic questions regarding their gender, age and occupation. After that the survey consisted of different topics, to know:

- Individual Improvisation
- Empowerment

- Autonomy
- Proactiveness
- Transformational Leadership

The items were chosen from validated and reliable scales used in previous empirical studies; a questionnaire is validated when it is tested for test retest reliability and construct validity.

At the end, they were thanked for their participation. They did not receive any compensation for filling in the survey.

Design and sample

The survey was conducted in English, so participants had to master the English language in order to participate and successfully answer the questionnaire. Furthermore, a minimum age of 18 years was required to participate. A total of 92 participants started the survey and completed all the topics, all of them working in different positions in a variety of organizations (e.g. educational, IT, law and healthcare). In terms of gender, the distribution was almost equally divided, with a total of 48.9% male participants ($n = 45$) and 51.1% female participants ($n = 47$). The youngest person that participated in this survey was 18 years old and the oldest was 51 years old. The average age of the 92 respondents was 26.73 ($SD = 4.487$) years old.

Table 1: *participant information*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age	92	18	51	26.73	4.487
Valid N (Listwise)	92				

Measurement instruments

In the first place it is important to note that the reliability of the measurement should be taken into account, because this means the measured data are consistent and can be generalized to the entire population. All the items that are included in each topic should meet the reliability criteria; cronbach's alpha should be higher than .7. There is no universal minimally acceptable reliability value. An acceptable reliability value depends on the type of application, and furthermore, the focus should be on the population reliability value and not on the sample reliability value (Bonett & Wright, 2014). However, 0.7 is commonly used as the rule of thumb. The table (3) below displays the means, standard deviation and cronbach's alpha of the different variables.

For all of the items Likert-type scales are applied, with seven points ranging from 'very strongly disagree' to 'very strongly agree'. Some items could be answered in a five points ranging from 'rarely' to 'very often'. To ensure reliability, existing validated scales from previous empirical studies were used. Every variable is measured as a single construct.

Individual Improvisation: to measure this, seven items were extracted from a questionnaire developed by Vera and Crossan (2005). The response options ranged from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). Some example items are: 'I deal with unanticipated events on the spot', 'I think on my feet when carrying out actions' and 'I take risks in terms of producing new ideas in doing my job'.

Empowerment: the scale is composed of four subdimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These four subdimensions add up to a total of twelve items that have been described in Spreitzer (1995; 1996). The instrument has been used successfully in more than 50 different studies in contexts ranging from nurses to low wage service workers to manufacturing workers. Some example items are: 'My impact on what happens in my department is large', 'I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job' and 'I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities'.

Autonomy: in order to measure *autonomy*, the paper written by Breugh (1989) was used. In this case there are three different forms of *autonomy* that are measured: Method Autonomy, Scheduling Autonomy and finally Criteria Autonomy. For all three dimensions response options ranged from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). Some example items are: ‘I am allowed to decide how to go about getting my job done’, ‘I have some control over the sequencing of my work activities’ and ‘My job allows me to modify the normal way we are evaluated so that I can emphasize some aspects of my job and play down others’.

Proactive attitude: the scale is composed of four items that are introduced by Bateman and Crant (1993). The four items tapped into the individual favorable orientation toward embracing self-starting actions when a problem emerges in order to reach the established goals. Also in this situation a Likert-type scale with seven points was implemented. An example item is: ‘No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen’.

Transformational Leadership: in order to measure this construct, seven points were introduced by Carless, Wearing and Mann (2000) that are based on the paper from Podsakoff, Todor, Grover & Huber (1984). Also here response options ranged from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). An example item is: ‘The principal coach fosters trust, involvement and co-operation among team members.’

Reliability Analysis

A scale analysis has been performed to measure the reliability of the constructs. This is important, in order to see whether the items belonging to the same scale measure one underlying construct. This means that they were tested for internal consistency. The common way of testing this, is to perform a Reliability Analysis. The indicator used for internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha coefficient (it should be $> .7$). Any value below that number indicates a less reliable scale.

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha overview

Variable	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Reliable
Individual Improvisation	.792	Yes
Empowerment	.908	Yes
Autonomy	.872	Yes
Proactive attitudes	.661	Debatable
Transformational Leadership	.928	Yes

In the table above, it is presented that four variables have a good internal consistency with an α higher than 0.7. This indicates that the constructs have a good reliability and they seem to be measuring one underlying construct. Of those six, *Individual Improvisation* has the lowest internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .792).

Lastly, the variable *Proactive Attitudes* has shown after analysis that the α is arguably on the low side (Cronbach's alpha = .661), but it was decided to proceed. The reasoning behind this has to do with the interest to assess how it behaves. As mentioned earlier, the barrier of 0.7 is no universal rule, but is used as a rule of thumb.

Results

Correlation analysis

After the reversion of negatively worded items and the calculation of the mean scale scores, a correlation analysis is performed to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables. The relationships between the variables were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Pearson correlation coefficients (r) can take values from -1 to $+1$ (the sign indicates a negative or positive correlation). If the sign is ignored, the absolute value indicates the strength of the relationship. Table 3 shows the correlation amongst the variables (2-tailed):

Table 3: *Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for all the variables in this study*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Transform. Lead	5.278	1.087	1				
2. Empowerment	5.219	1.009	.489**	1			
3. Autonomy	4.925	0.968	.272**	.610**	1		
4. Proactiveness	5.641	0.781	.337**	.574**	.371**	1	
5. Individual Improvisation	5.289	0.808	.267*	.585**	.554**	.520**	1

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

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

The correlation matrix reveals that *transformational leadership* and *empowerment* have a strong positive correlation ($r = .489$ $p < .01$) and also with *Autonomy* ($r = .272$ $p < .01$). The same can be seen in the analysis regarding *proactiveness* ($r = .337$ $p < .01$).

It is analysed to see the positive correlation between *Individual Improvisation* and the three variables of *Proactiveness*, *Autonomy*, *Empowerment*. The matrix reveals that there is a positive correlation between *Proactiveness* and *Individual Improvisation*, ($r = .520$ $p < .01$).

Also, *Autonomy* correlates positively with *Individual Improvisation* ($r = .554$ $p < .01$). The same can be said about the correlation between *Empowerment* and *Individual Improvisation* ($r = .585$; $p < .01$).

Hypotheses 1 is split in three parts that are looking for the correlation between *Transformational Leadership* and the mediators a) *empowerment*, b) *proactiveness* and c) *autonomy*. These are tested, and accordingly the data that are presented in Table 4a. *Transformational leadership* in fact correlates positively with *empowerment* ($\beta = .47$; $p < .05$), thus hypothesis 1a is **accepted**.

Secondly the analysis shows ($\beta = .24$; $p < .05$) a positive correlation between *transformational leadership* and *proactiveness* and is statistically significant. We can **accept** hypothesis 1b.

Finally the table shows that ($\beta = .26$; $p < .05$) the hypothesis 1c can be **accepted** as well. There is a positive correlation between *transformational leadership* and *autonomy*.

Table 4: *Direct effects*

a. Transformational leadership on the three mediators

	β	se	t	p
T.L → Emp.	.4668	.845	5.5269	.0000
T.L → ProA	.2381	.0718	3.3181	.0013
T.L → Aut	.2577	.0885	2.9116	.0045

b. Thee mediators on individual improvisation

	β	se	t	p
Aut. → I.I.	.2340	.0844	2.7721	.0068
Emp. → I.I.	.1863	.0978	1.9053	.0601
ProA → I.I.	.3084	.1022	3.0170	.0034

Hypotheses 2 aims to clarify whether a) *Autonomy*, b) *empowerment*, and c) *proactiveness* are positively related to *individual improvisation*. In order to test the hypotheses above, we take a look at the analyses presented in table 4b.

The first hypothesis assumes that *autonomy* is positively correlated to *individual improvisation*. The analysis ran in the SPSS PROCESS macro (model 4) by Hayes (2012) shows a confirmation ($\beta=.23$; $p <.05$) of this. Thus we can **accept** hypothesis 2a.

Subsequently hypothesis 2b assumes a positive correlation between *empowerment* and *individual improvisation*. Interestingly enough the data ($\beta=.27$; $p =.06$) indicates that there is no statistically significant evidence to accept this. This, hypothesis 2b is **rejected**.

Finally, the table above shows that the final hypothesis 2c can be **accepted**. Indeed there is a positive correlation ($\beta=.31$; $p <.05$) between *proactiveness* and *individual improvisation*

Effects of Transformational Leadership on Individual Improvisation.

In order to test hypotheses 3a, 3b and 3c, the SPSS PROCESS macro (model 4) by Hayes (2012) was used as well. A 95% confidence was applied with 5000 bootstrapped samples. The outcome of the statistical analyses show that *transformational leadership* on itself does not have a positive impact on *individual improvisation* ($\beta = -.01$, [-.15;.13]). The table below shows that the direct effect is negative and almost zero. The figure 0 fall in the bootstrap interval. In other words, being a transformational leader does not guarantee that employees improvise better.

Hypothesis 3a proposes that *empowerment* mediates the relationship between *transformational leadership* and *individual improvisation*. The indirect effect of *transformational leadership* through *empowerment* ($\beta = .09$, [-.04;.23]) shows that zero is within the interval of the bootstrap (Table 5). This means that it is not conclusive that *empowerment* mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and individual improvisation, thus the hypothesis 3a is **rejected**.

Hypothesis 3b proposes that the relationship between *transformational leadership* and *individual improvisation* is mediated by *autonomy*. The indirect effect is statistically significant ($\beta = .06, [.00; .14]$) and the effect is positive. Thus, hypothesis 3b is **accepted**.

Lastly, hypothesis 3c proposes that *proactiveness* mediates the relationship between *transformational leadership* and *individual improvisation*. Again, the indirect effect is significant and positive ($\beta = .07, [.01; .16]$), thus *proactiveness* mediates the relationship. Hypothesis 3c is **accepted**.

Table 5: Direct and indirect effects of transformational leadership on individual improvisation

Direct effects					
β	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-.0101	.0682	-.1477	.8829	-.1457	.1255
Indirect effect(s) of T.L. on I.I.					
	β	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	.2207	.0596	.1066	.3409	
Empowerment	.0870	.0681	-.0368	.2341	
Autonomy	.0603	.0356	.0002	.1396	
Proactiveness	.0743	.0393	.0116	.1646	

Discussion

The present study researched through which mechanisms *Transformational Leadership* affects *Individual Improvisation*. In particular we analysed the mediating role of *Autonomy*, *Empowerment* and *Proactiveness*. The findings underscore that individual improvisation is driven by the activation of individual attitudes that can be induced by the behavior of a leader. It was found that a leader that promotes *autonomy* in individuals increases *individual improvisation* behaviors. The research also shows that a similar mediation effect with *proactiveness*. However, an important notice is that a leader that promotes *empowerment* does not increase *individual improvisation* behaviors.

Theoretical Implications

Prior studies have indicated how *individual improvisation* is influenced by team characteristics (e.g., Magni, Proserpio, Hoegl & Provera, 2009). Magni and colleagues found that team level antecedents, such as team behavioral integration and cohesion, influence the process of resource exchange among individual team members, and consequently positively affect individual improvisation too. Besides them, another theory in the same spectrum is about *team innovative climate*. First, team innovative climate has been recognized as one of the main drivers of individual attitudes and behaviors (James & Jones, 1974; Schneider, 2000) especially in settings characterized by uncertain circumstances (e.g., Hülshager, Anderson, & Salgado, 2009; West & Anderson, 1996), making it suitable for studying the improvisation phenomenon. Another, more recent example is the study by Abrantes, Passos, Cunha & Santos (2018) that focuses on team adaptation. It leads to the conclusion that teams need to be adaptable and improvise in order to not only maintain, but increase their performance levels.

However, all of these studies focus on team aspects. Others have covered individual characteristics such *risk averse attitudes*. This specific characteristic is connected to improvisation by Cable & Judge (1994). Their study shows that individuals who present a

risk averse attitude toward a situation, develop an unfavorable judgment about that situation and tend to withdraw from such circumstances. Yet, little is known about the effect of leadership. Our paper will contribute to this discussion by revealing the effect of *transformational leadership* on *individual improvisation* through the mediating role of *autonomy*, *empowerment* and *proactiveness*. Our study provides two major contributions regarding how *transformational leaders* can stimulate individuals to adjust their work in real time to emerging information or are stretched beyond their routines to deliver a novel solution to the problem. In the first place this is achieved by granting them with *autonomy*. Decades ago it has been shown that *autonomy* has significant importance. For example, in their review of productivity improvement experiments, Cummings and Molloy (1977) found the most frequently changed of all variables was the degree of *autonomy* or discretion that employees have over their work. The second contribution is regarding *proactiveness*. Previous research highlighted the impact of individual *proactive* attitude in several domains and on different outcomes, such as job performance (Frese & Fay, 2001), career success (Greenglass et al., 1999) and organizational innovation (Parker, 1998). For those reasons it is important for leaders to stimulate this behavior, because it provides beneficial outcomes for the organization.

Interestingly enough, in opposition of the hypothesis the research shows that promoting *empowerment* in individuals does not positively contribute to *individual improvisation*. It was based on the argument that leaders inspire, challenge and energize their followers to feel empowered by providing an exciting vision for the future. This made individuals feel that they can shape their work. The results contradict this and past literature sheds some light on this. To a certain extent, employee *empowerment* may even be counterproductive to an organization. The reasoning behind this concern is that the attribution of *empowerment* practices signifies that a certain amount of authority and *autonomy* is handed over to employees. Some employees may become overconfident, and this false confidence will lead to management losing control over certain employees. These employees may even abuse their power owing to misjudgments in their work (Choi, Goh, Adam & Tan, 2016). This sense of overconfidence may make these individuals over trusting the ability of routines to overcome unexpected disruptions and, therefore, not feel the need to improvise a new solution. In other words, they are too confident in the routine they created themselves.

The findings in this paper have implications for research on improvisation, particularly by providing a better understanding of the mechanisms through which individuals embrace spontaneous and creative behaviors influenced by leadership.

Managerial implications

Our findings hold important implications for organizations, in particular for leaders. The research has shown that change, and disruptive events make it hard for employees to execute a strategic decision or implement a plan. Especially because time becomes an increasingly scarce commodity, people are expected to think on their feet, and furthermore, people are encouraged to do so. However, this desired behavior can be triggered or stimulated by a leader that is transformational. Thus, the research has shown that an organization should be invested in either training their leaders to adopt transformational skills or recruit leaders that are specifically selected on those behaviors. Our study has shown that *proactiveness* and *autonomy* increase *individual improvisation*.

However, there are also other ways to increase this improvisational behavior on the individual level. According to Andriopoulos (2001), there are five factors that enhance creativity in a workplace: 1) organizational climate, 2) leadership style, 3) organizational culture, 4) resources and skills and 5) the structure and systems of an organization. We will highlight two of those factors. For the latter, leaders must put in place certain systems and procedures that emphasize that creative input is a top priority within the organization (Amabile, 1998). It is proposed that those structures about either formal or informal processes that are embedded in the company (Cook, 1998). Systems include rewards, recognition and career systems. To encourage creative achievement, Brand's (1998) research with 3M suggests that senior management must have a long-term commitment with regard to their employees' careers. Another area to focus on is the attraction of certain talent that fits the creative mindset (Cook, 1998), because an organization can lose its competitive advantage otherwise. Building on this, after having attracted this talent it is very important to keep developing them and be invested with their intellectual capital (Brand, 1998).

However, it must be noted that *individual improvisation* should never be a standalone goal. It should be part of organizational and process improvement and as shown in the implications above, some individual behaviors can also lead to negative behaviors. *Empowerment* is an example of this.

To be conclusive, individuals that are considered to be *transformational leaders*, are charismatic and give employees the trust, tools and opportunity to be creative and act on their feet when the situation demands that. However, there are several ways to achieve this e.g. implementation of reward systems and the focus of creative individuals during the recruitment process.

Limitations and and directions for future research

Given the cross-sectional nature of this study, a limitation should be taken into account in the present research. It is not possible to make causal inferences because of the aforementioned cross-sectional nature of the data. Longitudinal studies should be conducted in order to detect suitable time lags for effects and their causal order.

Another limitation could arguably derive from the small sample size (N=92). For this reason, the significant correlations should be handled and interpreted with caution before reaching generalizations. It is suggested to future researchers to increase the sample size in order to avoid this limitation.

This indicates that the constructs are measuring more than one underlying construct. Secondly, the variable *Proactive Attitudes* has shown after analysis that the α is arguably on the low side (Cronbach's $\alpha = .661$), but it was decided to proceed. This decision was made because it was still interesting to assess how it behaves. However, the results are interpreted with this notion in mind.

Furthermore, another limitation of this study is the use of a survey. Such design gives rise to the potential of *common method bias*, because participants can engage in hypothesis

guessing. Next to that, it occurs that participants answer the questionnaire in a way that is considered socially desirable (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). The data were single-source and self-report. Although self-reports of cognitive-motivational states is rather appropriate, *common method bias* is a methodological threat for the antecedents and outcomes. A potential way to counteract this is by involving direct colleagues and supervisors into future research. However, gauging employee proactivity from other people, such as supervisors or colleagues, has its own disadvantages, including egocentric bias as means of impression management (e.g., supervisors reporting that “of course, their subordinates are proactive”) and observational bias (e.g., employees’ maybe have more proactively when they are being observed). A recommendation for future research could be to conduct the same survey again after a periods of five months to tackle *common method bias*.

Since the effects that were found are not considered to be very impressive, it is recommended to repeat this research. Improvements can be mainly focused on the sample size, the pool and it is recommended to repeat the survey to avoid *common method bias*.

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Annex 1: Survey questions

All the questions below were answered on a 1-7 Likert type scale varying “very strongly disagree” to “very strongly agree”

Individual Improvisation

- I deal with unanticipated events on the spot
- I think on my feet when carrying out actions
- I respond in the moment to unexpected problems
- I try new approaches to problems
- I identify opportunities for finding new solutions
- I take risks in terms of producing new ideas in doing my job
- I demonstrate originality in performing my tasks

Empowerment

- I am confident about my ability to do my job
- The work that I do is important to me
- I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job
- My impact on what happens in my department is large
- My job activities are personally meaningful to me
- I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department
- I can decide on my own how to go about doing my own work
- I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job
- I have mastered the skills necessary for my job
- The work I do is meaningful to me
- I have significant influence over what happens in my department
- I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities

Autonomy:

- I am allowed to decide how to go about getting my job done

- I am able to choose the way to go about my job**
- I am free to choose the method(s) to use in carrying out my work**
- I have control over the scheduling of my work**
- I have some control over the sequencing of my work activities**
- My job is such that I can decide when to do particular work activities**
- My job allows me to modify the normal way we are evaluated so that I can emphasize some aspects of my job and play down others**
- I am able to modify what my job objectives are (what I am supposed to accomplish)**
- I have some control over what I am supposed to accomplish (what my supervisor sees as my job objectives)**

Proactiveness:

- When I have a problem, I tackle it head-on**
- No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen**
- Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality**
- I find easy to respect my purposes and reach my goals**

Transformational leadership:

- Our coach communicates a clear and positive vision of the future**
- Treats players as individuals, supports and encourages their development**
- Gives encouragement and recognition to players**
- The principal coach fosters trust, involvement and co-operation among team members**
- Coach encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions**
- Coach is clear about his values and practices what he preaches**
- The coach instils pride and respect in others and inspires me being highly competent**