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The influence of female agentic and communal leadership on work engagement : vigour, dedication and absorption

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is investigating the influence of leadership on work engagement. The definition of leadership is primarily couched in culturally masculine terms (and known as an agentic leadership style) that disfavours women, who are often perceived as being communal leaders who are compassionate and humble. The research gap addressed is whether communal and agentic leadership styles of female leaders have positive associations with work engagement.

Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative study was undertaken by applying purposive non-probability sampling and using an online survey with screening questions to ensure the respondent reported to a senior female manager. The survey consisted of reliable and valid Likert scales: agentic and communal leadership styles were assessed using the Agency-Communion-Inventory (AC-IN) scale with 20 questions and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) with three sub-scales: vigour, dedication and absorption. The 153 usable responses in this study were used to conduct validity and reliability tests and to apply multiple regression to test associations.

Findings: Both agentic and communal leadership have a positive impact on work engagement when exhibited by a female. Although agentic leadership had an influence on all the elements of work engagement, communal leadership had a far stronger impact.

Originality/value: Female managers with communal leadership styles need to realise that they have more influence on their employees' emotional, physical and cognitive connections to their work than female managers with agentic leadership styles. Those with agentic leadership styles need to exhibit a communal style as well, so as to enhance the influence they have on their employees' work engagement.

Keywords: Gender; Diversity; Engagement; Organizational behaviour; Multiple regression; Women representation, Female leadership; Agentic; Communal

Introduction

The greater the level of employee engagement the higher their performance and retention (Gallup Inc., 2020; van Tuin, Schaufeli, and van den Broeck, 2021). Disengaged employees mean diminished work performance and increased turnover, leading to higher costs for the business (Geldenhuis, Laba, and Venter, 2014). Globally, it has been found that levels of work engagement are generally low (Gallup, 2013; Towers Watson, 2012).

Only 9% of South Africans reported to be actively engaged (SABPP, 2014). Addressing the lack of engagement is essential and this study focuses on the influence of leadership on engagement, in line

with recent research on leadership as antecedent to influencing employee engagement (Nikolova, Schaufeli, and Notelaers, 2019; Stubbings and Sethi, 2020).

According to Castrillon (2019), employees tend to be more engaged when led by females. Gender equality within senior leadership roles could therefore lead to decreased human resources costs and increased productivity through improved employee engagement (Moodley, Holt, Leke, and Desvaux, 2016; Wu and Cheng, 2016). By addressing the underrepresentation of women in senior leadership roles, businesses could discover opportunities for much-needed growth through gender-balanced cultures and engaged employees.

The exploration of agentic and communal leadership styles explicitly examine the gender narrative because of their direct association with the male and female genders respectively (Vasconcelos, 2018). Trapnell and Paulhus (2012, p. 52) describe agentic leadership by equating it to “wealth, pleasure, power, influence, competence, achievement, ambition, excitement, status, autonomy and superiority”. They equate communal leadership with “forgiveness, trust, humility, altruism, loyalty, politeness, harmony, honesty, compassion, civility, equality and tradition” (Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012, p. 52).

Existing literature appears to have neglected the potential relationship between communal or agentic leadership and work engagement. This, along with the existing association between communal leadership and female leaders, provided an opportunity for this study to approach work engagement from a different angle while also attempting to contribute to the discourse on female leadership.

Further to identifying if there is an association between the constructs, this study aims to identify which leadership style (agentic or communal) has a stronger association with work engagement when exhibited by a female manager. As the benefits associated with work engagement include increased involvement and proactiveness of employees (de Oliveira and da Costa Rocha, 2017), as well as increased job satisfaction, and decreased turnover and absenteeism (Kim, Kolb, and Kim, 2012; Strom, Sears, and Kelly, 2014; Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2014), the lack of work engagement within an organisation is a costly problem. Identification of the antecedents required to influence this construct is therefore vital.

While a recent meta-analytical study establishes that servant, authentic, transformational and ethical leadership styles have a positive impact on work engagement (Decuypere and Schaufeli, 2021), there is an interesting research gap when it comes to ascertaining whether communal and agentic leadership styles have positive associations with work engagement. The current study therefore aims to offer a deeper understanding of these associations.

The likelihood of women being promoted to leadership positions is limited. In a recent article, Eva, De Cieri, Murphy and Lowe (2020, p.1) explain that, “Girls, in contrast to boys, are exposed to socialization processes and culturally entrenched values that may make them less likely to view themselves as

(potential) leadership material, receive fewer signals that they are expected to become leaders, and are praised and labelled as leaders less frequently”. The consequences of this socialisation process are evident in the low representation of women in senior management roles. Indeed, in South Africa, only 29% of senior decision-making roles are occupied by women (Grant Thornton, 2018a). This percentage has grown from 26% in 2014; however, this growth may be misleading because although the percentage of businesses with at least one female in a senior role has increased, the proportion of women in senior roles has in fact declined (Grant Thornton, 2018a).

Of all the businesses in South Africa, 20% continue to have zero female representation in senior positions, which suggests that gender inclusivity within leadership roles is still being treated as a regulatory exercise (Grant Thornton, 2018b) rather than viewed as a necessary shift toward a gender-balanced workforce. The World Economic Forum (2018) argues that economies cannot afford to miss out on vital contributions from half the population. The South African population comprises 51% females and 49% males, yet only 44% of skilled roles in the job market are occupied by women (Stats SA, 2017).

The higher up in the hierarchy one climbs the lower the representation of females (Business Women’s Association of South Africa [BWASA], 2017). The financial benefits associated with more females working within senior leadership roles (Moodley *et al.*, 2016) indicate that South Africa is missing out on much-needed growth opportunities. There is therefore a need to strive for gender equality within South Africa and this country is thus the focus of this current study.

A theoretical framework that assists in understanding the dynamics around gender roles and leadership is the Eagly and Karau’s (2002) role congruity theory (RCT). Since the introduction of this seminal work a number of studies have made reference to the theory. RCT argues that senior leadership positions were traditionally masculine in nature and therefore men were seen to be more effective leaders in these positions (Griffiths, Roberts, and Price, 2019; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr, 2014; Schock, Gruber, Scherndl, and Ortner, 2019). The congruency referred to in the theory was achieved through the alignment of the male gender role and the expectations of leadership. The current study contributes to the body of literature on RCT by offering empirical data on the relationship between male (agentic) and female (communal) leadership styles by female leaders and work engagement of employees. The next section reviews the literature on RCT.

Literature review

Role congruity theory

The RCT highlights that incongruence exists when women exhibit agentic characteristics, as these traits are not aligned to the traditional female gender role (Rosette and Tost, 2010). The incongruence experienced when leaders violate gender norms could therefore lead to a backlash effect. This refers to

the phenomenon that a woman with an agentic leadership style tends to be viewed in a negative light due to role incongruence (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Zheng, Kark, and Meister, 2018). Furthermore, due to the perceived role violation, women in leadership positions seem to be evaluated more harshly than their male counterparts (Rosette, Mueller, and Lebel, 2015).

Akinola, Martin and Phillips (2018) state that female leaders found it more difficult to delegate than their male counterparts, due to the influence of gender-incongruence, that is, women associated delegation more with agentic traits than communal traits. In turn, this association cause women to have more negative associations with delegation than men, and feel greater guilt about delegation, causing lower-quality interactions with their employees. The level of engagement of these employees was not investigated in the study of Akinola *et al.* (2018). Women who exhibit higher agency and less communion at work would therefore violate stereotypical gender norms (Gabriel, Butts, Yuan, Rosen & Sliter, 2017), and could even experience increased incivility, that is, a low intensity form of deviant behaviour. These findings show that more research is required about the impact of females' agentic and communal leadership on their employees. Another interesting phenomenon noted in the literature is the paradox of female leadership (Zheng *et al.*, 2018). This theory refers to female leadership being lauded for its superior effectiveness, while there are still contradictory views that place men as natural leaders and dismiss female leadership styles as weak and soft. The question remains what the influence is of these perceptions of female leadership being weak and soft specifically on their employees' engagement. Female leaders are admired for their high-calibre leadership styles, yet continue to be met with the stereotypical view that only men are natural leaders. This paradox results in less women holding impactful leadership positions (Eagly, 2007; Krawczyk, 2017). Unfortunately, while gender equality may be increasing, it may not reflect actual changes in stereotypes content over time. Eagly, Nater, Miller, Kaufmann and Sczesny's (2020) and Eagly's (2021) recent studies in the USA show that most people now report that women and men are equal in their overall competence, but that women are still perceived (since 1946) as more communal and men as more agentic, confirming these stereotypes. Kao, Hsu, Rogers, Lin, Lee and Lian (2020) describe these gender stereotypes as core dimensions of social judgment, in which people believe or attribute behaviour to reflect differing underlying traits and abilities.

In their recent editorial, Eagly and Sczesny (2019) indicate that for leadership, gender makes a difference, given the definition of leadership is primarily couched in culturally masculine terms (and known as an agentic leadership style) that disfavours women. Communal leadership traits, associated with women, appear to be nice, but inessential add-ons for leaders.

Although some recent studies praise female leaders, and more specifically, feminine or communal leadership, as contributing to firm performance (Hoobler, Masterson, Nkomo, and Michel, 2018),

research continues to find that the stereotypical view of leadership, and traditional gender roles, still maintains a powerful level of influence.

As women begin to succeed in leadership roles, and as employees increasingly value feminine leadership styles, the gender stereotypes attached to leadership are starting to dissipate (Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014; Griffiths *et al.*, 2019). This, along with the fact that the leaders of tomorrow respond better to feminine leadership, indicates that the future of leadership may indeed have room and a need for female leaders (Gerzema and D'antonio, 2017). Having said that, within the discourse around female leadership, negativity continues to maintain a foothold and disadvantage female leadership.

Agentic and communal leadership styles

In 1966 David Bakan had already introduced the terms “agency” and “communion” into the world of psychology, through his book titled *The duality of human existence*. He described them as fundamental modes in which humans exist. He defined agency as isolated and self-focused with a drive to succeed, whereas he defined communion as a sense of togetherness, a focus on others and the desire to cooperate and collaborate (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014).

A major difference between communal and agentic leadership is that communal leaders focus on the wellbeing and development of others, whereas agentic leaders tend to be more concerned and focused on themselves (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014). Communion arises from the desire to integrate oneself into a larger society and therefore manifests itself through characteristics and behaviours such as friendliness, trustworthiness, interdependence, inspiration and networking (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014; Ergle, 2015).

Eagly and Carli (2007) identified a leadership style called androgynous leadership which refers to a blend of both masculine (agentic) and feminine (communal) leadership styles. They argue that leaders who utilise an androgynous approach are viewed as more effective. Female leaders tend to have higher expectations placed on them in contrast to their male counterparts. They are often expected to show agentic capabilities to be seen as effective leaders (Hoobler *et al.*, 2018; Wolfram and Gratton, 2014) which may lead to female managers exhibiting androgynous leadership styles. Zheng *et al.* (2018) support this, stating that leaders need the ability to blend both agentic and communal leadership styles to allow them to conform to the leader role.

Research by Wolfram and Gratton (2014) found that androgynous female leaders have positive impacts on group performance in the workplace as well as on intellectual stimulation. However, their research found this to be the same for masculine female managers as feminine female managers. They go on to state that female managers might be disadvantaged should they lack the gender-typical attributes within their leadership styles. Therefore, although the literature has reported that androgynous leadership styles

can be effective, Wolfram and Gratton (2014) found that the same can be said for a communal leadership style exhibited by female managers.

Work engagement

William Kahn was one of the first people to introduce the construct of work engagement in his 1990 study. He describes engagement as a physical, cognitive and emotional connection with one's work (Kahn, 1990). Maslach and Leiter (1997) add to this definition by equating work engagement to the positive side of a scale that features burnout as the negative side of that same scale. They state that if burnout is placed on the negative pole, and relates to exhaustion, decreased efficiency and increased cynicism, then work engagement would be placed on the positive side of the pole and refers to increased involvement and energy levels as well as efficiency in one's work.

Schaufeli (2013) spoke to two types of engagement, namely work engagement and employee engagement. He explains the differences between the two constructs, stating that work engagement refers to an employee's engagement with their work, and work alone, whereas employee engagement can also include an employee's relationship with their organisation. He does, however, observe that in most cases these two constructs are used interchangeably, a statement supported by a number of articles in which the terms are either used interchangeably or the constructs are defined in the same way (de Oliveria and da Costa Roch, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2012; Lee and Ok, 2016; Strom *et al.*, 2014; Wollard and Schuck, 2011). Schaufeli (2013) states that although the two terms are often used interchangeably, the construct of work engagement is more specific and therefore this construct, work engagement, will be used for the purposes of this study. Another reason why the Schaufeli's (2013) conceptualisation is used in the current study, is that it has been applied in several studies in South Africa and the current study endeavours to contribute to these existing empirical studies to collect local knowledge of work engagement in South Africa. The existing studies considered the influence of authentic leadership on work engagement with beneficiary contact as moderator (Scheepers and Elstob, 2016); and psychological contract breach and engagement (Van der Westhuizen, Scheepers, and Kele, 2018).

Through their structured literature review of 265 abstracts, Wollard and Shuck (2011) found that an employee's manager has an impact on their work engagement and thus one could hypothesise that the gender of the manager, and the leadership style they embody, could also impact their level of engagement with their work.

A large number of benefits have been associated with high levels of work engagement. These include increasing an employee's emotional attachment to their job which subsequently leads to increased involvement, proactiveness and responsibility toward their deliverables (de Oliveira and da Costa Rocha, 2017). Further research studies also found that increased work engagement leads to increased job satisfaction, and decreased turnover and absenteeism (Kim *et al.*, 2012; Strom *et al.*, 2014; Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2014).

An association between transformational leadership and work engagement has been identified in a number of preceding studies (Hawkes, Biggs, and Hegerty, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2012; Strom *et al.*, 2014). Transformational leaders inspire and stimulate employees to work toward a collective goal ahead of their own self-interests (Strom *et al.*, 2014). A transformational leader employs a relational approach with their employees, which fosters trust among employees toward the leader and the common goal (Wolfram and Gratton, 2014). Transformational leadership has been associated not only with effective leadership, but also with female leaders in general (Strom *et al.*, 2014; Griffiths *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, the traits of transformational and communal leadership have been likened to one another; an association between the two leadership styles has therefore been established (Griffiths *et al.*, 2019; Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014; Rosette and Tost, 2010; Rosette, Koval, Ma, and Livingston, 2016). Setia, Romadhona, Firdausi, Khairal and Abdullah (2021) called transformational leadership a “feminine leadership” in their study in Indonesia, which considered how transformational leadership styles of female leaders influenced how they engaged with their employees.

Since transformational and communal leadership have common traits, and transformational leadership are associated with work engagement, the question could therefore be asked as to whether there is a relationship between communal leadership and work engagement? Given the discussion on role congruity theory in the literature review, the communal orientated leadership of a female leader would likely be associated with caring and even mothering and we propose therefore that there might be a relationship between this communal role congruent leadership style of females and their employees’ work engagement. The researchers of the current study could not find existing research which investigated this specific relationship and therefore endeavour to address this gap by conducted this study.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership and their employees’ work engagement.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership and their employees’ vigour

Hypothesis 1b: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership and their employees’ dedication

Hypothesis 1c: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership and their employees’ absorption

Individuals continue to equate effective leadership with agentic leadership, and still associate leadership roles with masculinity (Griffiths *et al.*, 2019; Krawczyk, 2017). Transactional leadership is often equated to traditional leadership and has been likened to agentic leadership because of the common leadership traits across both leadership styles (Sugiyama, Cavanagh, van Esch, Bilimoria, and Brown,

2016; Wolfram and Gratton, 2014). The study of Maundu, Namusonge, and Simiyu (2020) showed that transactional leadership influences work engagement, therefore, we argue the due to the similar traits of agentic leadership and transactional leadership, agentic leadership will contribute to work engagement.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' work engagement.

Hypothesis 2a: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' vigour

Hypothesis 2b: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' dedication

Hypothesis 2c: There is a relationship between female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' absorption

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) went on to identify and name the three sub-constructs of work engagement, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. These three constructs were drawn and expanded upon from Kahn's original definition of work engagement, wherein vigour related to a physical connection, dedication to an emotional connection and absorption to a cognitive connection (Kahn, 1990; Geldenhuys *et al.* 2014). While there are opposing views to the work engagement subconstructs of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004); they offer a scale which is found to be valid and reliable within the South African context (Scheepers and Elstob, 2016; Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 2018) and therefore were appropriate for the current study.

For the purposes of this study, these well-utilised three sub-constructs by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) are used, in line with other international studies which also used this conceptualisation of work engagement (Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2004; Kim *et al.*, 2014; Strom *et al.*, 2014).

Vigour refers to an employee's levels of energy and stamina, their ability to face and work through challenges, and their willingness to exert effort toward their work (Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2014). When an employee shows vigour toward their work this leads to an increase in life and job satisfaction, improvement in their mental and physical health, and enhancement of their own job performance and, subsequently, that of the organisation.

Emotional connection to work, known as dedication (Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2014), refers to an employee's pride in their job, the meaningfulness of their work and enthusiasm they have toward the organisation (Strom *et al.*, 2014). Fostering dedication in employees is vital for optimal organisational performance because dedicated employees strongly identify, and are psychologically involved, with their work and thus perform better than employees who are not dedicated to their work (Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2014).

Hall (2014) speaks to ways in which leaders can drive dedication among their employees. These include being open and transparent with employees, having the ability to relate to and connect with them on a personal level, ensuring employees feel appreciated and valued, and setting appropriate expectations.

Communal leadership, one of the main constructs of this study, relates to a leadership style that embraces collaboration, a sense of togetherness, a focus on others, honesty, compassion and equality (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014; Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012). It would thus appear that an association could exist between fostering dedication within employees and that of communal leadership.

Although there may be an association between communal leadership and dedication, Hall (2014) also makes reference to the importance of a leader setting appropriate expectations for employees to drive dedication. This trait can be likened to that of agentic leadership because of the similarity with agentic traits such as efficiency, achievement and ambition (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014; Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012; Wolfram and Gratton, 2014).

The cognitive connection an employee has with their job is also known as absorption (Geldenhuis *et al.*, 2014). Absorption refers to a happy state of mind where an employee becomes completely engrossed and immersed in their work, to the point at which they struggle to disengage from it (Strom *et al.*, 2014).

Coetzee and Veldman (2016) believe that an employee's level of absorption is dependent on a number of factors including their manager's behaviour and credibility, positive relationships with those around them, the trustworthiness of their manager, the care shown to them, their desire to achieve and their need for autonomy. Some of these antecedents could be linked to agentic and communal leadership traits.

From a communal perspective, the individual's desire for a trustworthy manager, who cares for them, as well as their desire for positive relationships, could be aligned to those traits exhibited within a communal leadership style. The individual's desire to achieve and their need for autonomy, on the other hand, could be likened to agentic leadership style traits. Therefore, this research aimed to identify the association of both agentic and communal leadership with absorption, and thus work engagement.

The potential associations identified with both agentic and communal leadership supports the need to quantify these associations through this research. However, it is not clear whether communal leadership would have a stronger relationship with work engagement when exhibited by a female leader. According to role congruity theory, the communal leadership style is congruent with what is expected from a female. The female leader who exhibits agentic leadership style would also be subjected to the penalty for exhibiting gender-incongruent behaviour. We therefore propose that the communal leadership might have a stronger relationship with employee engagement.

The third hypothesis therefore highlights the question about the strengths of these relationships:

Hypothesis 3: There is a stronger relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership than female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' work engagement.

Hypothesis 3a: There is a stronger relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership than female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' vigour.

Hypothesis 3b: There is a stronger relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership than female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' dedication.

Hypothesis 3c: There is a stronger relationship between female leaders that exhibit communal leadership than female leaders that exhibit agentic leadership and their employees' absorption.

Figure 1 below highlights the conceptual framework of this study:

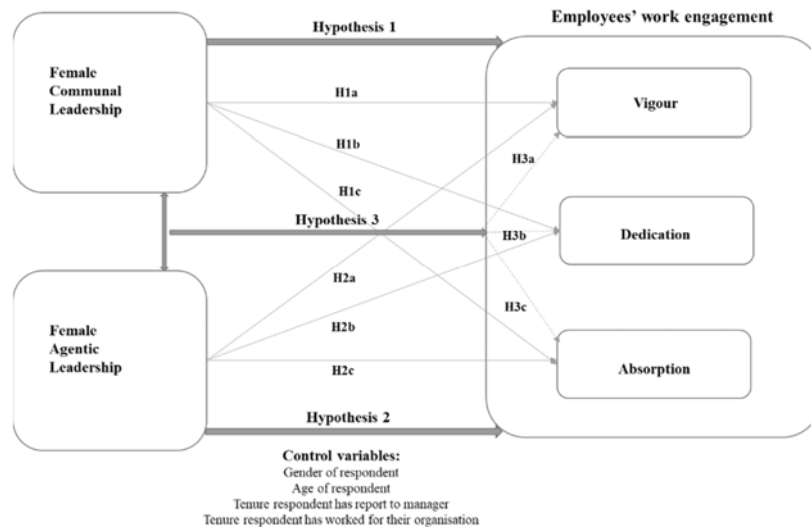


Figure 1: Conceptual model of study

The arrows represent the relationships between the constructs that were tested. For the purposes of this research, three hypotheses were analysed to identify the associations between female communal and agentic leadership with work engagement.

The study took several control variables into account, including respondent gender, age, tenure of reporting to current manager, and tenure at current organisation.

Method

The philosophy or paradigm chosen for this study was that of positivism. Positivism centres on the idea that true knowledge can only be derived from science (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). This philosophy was chosen due to the greater degree of objectivity or certainty it offers by virtue of the statistical measures employed. It was selected as this study aimed to identify whether female leaders exhibiting agentic or communal leadership traits would influence work engagement, with the aim of identifying which leadership style (agentic vs communal) had a stronger association with work engagement. The study followed an explanatory research design as it attempted to identify which leadership style had a stronger association with work engagement. Explanatory research moves beyond the descriptive approach, as it moves away from merely describing the phenomenon to attempt to explain it (Saunders and Lewis, 2018).

This study made use of the deductive approach as it started with existing theory around agentic and communal leadership as well as work engagement. Structured online self-completed questionnaires were used to allow for maximum reach to prospective participants. The questionnaire was made up of standardised questions which were sent out electronically via email and social media platforms. A pilot questionnaire was sent to a small sample group of 22 individuals in order to test for any problems or weaknesses, and to allow for any necessary editing prior to the formal distribution of the questionnaire. The respondents in the pilot sample matched the research target population of individuals working in South Africa, reporting to a female manager in a senior position. Their feedback led to changes that included the correction of spelling mistakes and removal of a duplicate question. To align with the mono-method quantitative approach chosen, a cross-sectional time horizon was chosen.

The reason for focusing on employees reporting to female leaders who were senior managers and above, was that the literature states that agentic leadership is favoured for top leadership positions in organisations (Abele, 2003; Ergle, 2015, Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014; Rosette and Tost, 2010; Rosette *et al.*, 2016), and that this has a direct impact on the number of females in senior leadership roles. The sampling method was purposive, non-probability sampling. The researchers sent out the link of the questionnaire to employees in corporate businesses in South Africa. Purposive sampling was applied, because the online questionnaire had been sent out to a broad population and began with screening questions to ensure that the correct type of individuals could be identified as appropriate respondents to ensure the sample was representative. The researchers created the screening questions to determine whether an individual would be representative of employees reporting to a female manager. The screening questions included whether the respondent worked in South Africa and reported to a female manager in a senior position or above. The respondents could choose whether to participate in the survey or not. To calculate the appropriate sample size, Wilson, Van Voorhuis and Morgan (2007) note that for regression analysis, as used in this study, a minimum of 50 participants is required.

They further recommend that there should be at least 30 participants per variable. As this study considered three variables, the sample size according should therefore consist of at least 90 participants. Each respondent was presented with a cover page explaining the purpose of the research and that participation was entirely voluntary. They were advised that they could exit at any point with no consequences. Once ethical clearance was received from the University, the link was shared with the researchers' networks. A total of 224 questionnaires were answered during the period of data collection. Of those responses 170 passed the three screening questions, regarding if they lived in South Africa and if they reported to a female manager in a senior position or above. Out of those 170 responses there were 23 that were partially complete, leaving over 50% of the questionnaire unanswered. These responses were removed from the dataset. The remaining 153 responses were complete and usable.

Measurement instrument

The scale used in this study for respondents to identify their managers' leadership styles, the Agency-Communion-Inventory (AC-IN) scale, was created by Abele, Hauke, Peters, Louvet, Szymkow and Duan (2016). It reliably measures the agentic and communal leadership traits exhibited by leaders. This scale was chosen because it has been validated across a number of different cultures and contexts, which was important (Abele *et al.*, 2016). The Agency Communal Value scale (ACV) was also considered, but was rejected for two reasons: it included the construct 'values' which was not a construct in this study, and contained 24 questions (Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012). The AC-IN scale focuses solely on the agentic and communal constructs which was a better fit for this study and contains 20 questions, thus shortening the time respondents would need to answer the questionnaire. The respondents evaluated their own levels of work engagement through the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Both scales reported high reliability and validity values in previous studies and both use Likert scales to record responses. Screening questions made up the first three questions, followed by two demographic questions on gender and age. The next two questions related to the respondent's tenure with their manager and organisation. The AC-IN scale had 20 questions, followed by nine questions from the UWES-9, which made a total of 36 questions in the questionnaire.

Sample items for the Agentic Leadership construct included:

Please indicate how the following characteristics apply to your manager: From "Have leadership qualities" to "Have no leadership abilities at all"; "Very capable" to "Little capable".

For the Communal Leadership construct, the sample items were:

Please indicate how the following characteristics apply to your manager: From "Very just" to "Not very just"; "Very considerate" to "Very inconsiderate".

The UWES-9 asks respondents to rate their level of work engagement through nine questions, uses a 7-point Likert scale ranging from almost never, rarely, sometimes, often, very often and always. Examples of items: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”; “At my job, I feel strong and vigorous”.

Several tests were run during the data analysis of this study, using the SPSS software programme (IBM’s commercial statistical package), including Cronbach’s alpha to test for reliability, Pearson’s 2-tailed correlation. In order to run confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) an SPSS extension called AMOS, was used. We ran an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to test for validity, and, finally, multiple regression to test the three hypotheses. When utilising multiple regression to test associations between interdependent and dependent variables, several key assumptions, namely linearity, normality and homoscedasticity, must first be met (Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2010).

The current study considered several control variables, identified in previous research, such as Markey’s (2014) finding that the longer an employee works for a company the less engaged they become. This relates directly to the relationship between the employees’ work engagement and their manager. From the perspective of age and engagement, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found a correlation between the two, showing that as employees age, they tend to be more engaged. This is supported by Kim and Kang (2016) who state that as an employee ages, the more engaged they are likely to become.

There are mixed views in the literature when it comes to gender and work engagement. Reissova, Simsova and Hasova (2017) found no significant differences between men and women when it comes to engagement, whereas Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that men score higher on the sub-constructs of dedication and absorption compared to women, while there is no significant difference when it comes to the sub-construct vigour.

Results

Of the 153 usable responses in this study, 74% were from female respondents while males accounted for 26% of the sample. 14% were aged between 20-29 years, 58% between 30-39, 18% between 40-49, 8% between 50-60, while 1% was aged 60 plus. 72% of the respondents were therefore younger than 40. 18% had worked for their organisations for less than one year, 12% for one to two years, 19% for two to four years, 17% for four to six years and the majority (34%) of respondents had worked for their organisations for more than six years. A total of 70% of respondents had therefore worked for their organisations for more than two years. From the perspective of the respondents’ tenure with their manager, the majority (32%) had reported to their manager for less than a year, 26% for one to two years, 22% for two to four years, 12% for four to six years and 8% of the respondents for more than six years. 80% of respondents had therefore reported to their managers for four years or less. Due to the nature of a cross-sectional survey all data was collected from the same respondents at the same time. This could have led to Common Method Bias (CMB) and therefore a Harman’s single test was utilised to test for this (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). A Harman’s single factor test was run

with all the constructs, with a single factor extracting 45.124% of total variance. Because this is below 50% a threat of CMB does not exist (Eichhorn, 2014).

See Table 1 for the item analysis in terms of each item's mean, standard deviation, Cronbach Alpha and EFA values.

Table 1: Questionnaire items with mean, standard deviation, reliability and validity per item

Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha reliability	EFA Factor loading	AVE from CFA	
					Factor loading	Factor loading Squared
Agentic: Resilience Never gives up easily	4.64	0.824	0.901	.682	0,66	0,4356
Agentic: Leadership qual Has leadership qualities	4.13	1.174	0.901	.516	0,72	0,5184
Agentic: Capability Very capable	4.60	0.814	0.901	.797	0,87	0,7569
Agentic: Clever Very clever	4.52	0.753	0.901	.852	0,81	0,6561
Agentic: Competence Very competent	4.48	0.947	0.901	.819	0,83	0,6889
Agentic: Smart Very smart	4.55	0.734	0.901	.800	0,84	0,7056
Agentic: Efficiency Very efficient	4.25	1.084	0.901	.550	0,73	0,5329
Agentic: Self-confidence Very self-confident	4.43	0.951	0.901	.777	0,43	0,1849
Agentic: Pressure Stands up well under pressure	4.01	1.219	0.901	.571	0,59	0,3481
Communal: Friendliness Very friendly	4.16	1.071	0.943	.841	0,81	0,6561
Communal: Just Very just	4.04	1.146	0.943	.563	0,73	0,5329
Communal: Trustworthiness Very trustworthy	4.08	1.097	0.943	.630	0,81	0,6561
Communal: Caring Very caring	4.07	1.204	0.943	.855	0,83	0,6889
Communal: Relations Very warm in relations with others	3.73	1.235	0.943	.840	0,76	0,5776
Communal: Empathetic Very empathic	3.80	1.253	0.943	.840	0,85	0,7225
Communal: Fairness Very fair	3.99	1.175	0.943	.606	0,84	0,7056
Communal: Consideration Very considerate	3.98	1.189	0.943	.740	0,91	0,8281
Communal: Affection Very affectionate	3.41	1.254	0.943	.815	0,73	0,5329
Vigour 1 At my work, I feel bursting with energy	4.97	1.310	0.900	.648	0,75	0,5625
Vigour 2	5.05	1.373	0.900	.769	0,84	0,7056

At my job, I feel strong and vigorous						
Vigour 3 I am enthusiastic about my job	5.12	1.466	0.900	.827	0,92	0,8464
Dedication 1 My job inspires me	5.02	1.558	0.877	.824	0,89	0,7921
Dedication 2 When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	4.80	1.668	0.877	.804	0,87	0,7569
Dedication 3 I feel happy when I am working intensely	5.52	1.198	0.877	.787	0,77	0,5929
Absorption 1 I am proud on the work that I do	5.83	1.224	0.831	.766	0,74	0,5476
Absorption 2 I am immersed in my work	5.59	1.290	0.831	.789	0,75	0,5625
Absorption 3 I get carried away when I'm working	5.24	1.437	0.831	.637	0,54	0,2916

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

A Pearson's correlation was run for all the items of the first construct, agentic leadership, and most items were found to be valid as their p-value was less than 0.05. The item testing for assertiveness showed p-values being above 0.05, and therefore the item referring to assertiveness was removed, and the correlation run again. The item referring to assertiveness was subsequently removed from all tests. Once the correlation was run again, all remaining items were found to be valid.

A CFA was run to test for convergent validity. For the agentic leadership construct, the AVE was calculated to be 0.536 (AVE had to be greater than 0.5). Prior to convergent validity being confirmed, the model fit of the CFA was examined through three indices, namely, CFI, RMSEA and Chisq/df.

Table 2 shows the thresholds of the indices and the indices of the agentic leadership construct.

Table 2 shows that the threshold for the RMSEA index is below 0.08, whereas the agentic leadership construct RMSEA was 0.147, far above the threshold. The CFI threshold was above 0.90, but the agentic leadership construct had a CFI of 0.892, which fell below the threshold. Finally, the Chisq/df index threshold was below 3.0 and the agentic leadership construct CFI was 4.29, which lay above the threshold. For the agentic leadership construct, the indices did not meet the thresholds. There was therefore poor model fit and an EFA had to be conducted to test for discriminant and convergent validity (Beavers, Lounsbury, Richards, Huck, Skolits, & Esquivel, 2013).

Table 2: Model fit indices for agentic leadership; communal leadership and work engagement

Model Fit Category	Index	Threshold	Value	Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom
Agentic leadership				115.5970	27
Absolute fit	RMSEA	<0.08	0.147		
Incremental fit	CFI	>0.90	0.892		
Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	<3.0	4.29		
Communal leadership				131.078	27
Absolute fit	RMSEA	<0.08	0.159		
Incremental fit	CFI	>0.90	0.909		
Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	<3.0	4.85		
Work engagement				121.994	27
Absolute fit	RMSEA	<0.08	0.152		
Incremental fit	CFI	>0.90	0.914		
Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	<3.0	4.52		

Prior to conducting the EFA, in order to determine the feasibility for a factor analysis, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) index and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were run. For factor analysis to be feasible the KMO result should be greater than 0.6 and the results from the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should be statistically significant. The KMO result of 0.903 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were significant and thus factor analysis was applicable for the agentic leadership construct. Components one and two account for 70.14% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.0. The scree plot depicts two components above the eigenvalue of 1.0. Given the data, two components were extracted as they represent the common variance explained by the nine variables. In this study, the items related to resilience, intelligence (CleverA and SmartA), competence, efficiency and capability all loaded on component one, whereas the rest of the items loaded on component two. The AC-IN scale created by Abele *et al.* (2016) split the agentic leadership construct into two separate constructs, namely agency-competence and agency-assertiveness. This study found that the agentic leadership construct was also represented through two components, but the items loaded slightly differently. The difference was that the item referring to resilience loaded on component one and not component two, therefore the components were renamed. The reasoning behind the new factor names came from analysing the items that loaded on each component. Component one was made up of character attributes, such as never giving up (resilience); capability, competence, being intelligent (clever and smart) and efficient. These character attributes talk to the capacity of the leader, and this component was therefore renamed agentic-capacity.

Component two was made up of qualities that require a high level of confidence, such as leadership qualities, self-confidence and the ability to handle pressure, and therefore this component was renamed as agentic-confidence. The item related to assertiveness was found to be highly correlated with three other items and was therefore removed from the scale. The remaining nine items had high loadings and were thus kept in the scale. When a PCA was run during the EFA, the agentic leadership construct then loaded on two factors. Another EFA was run with all items included and the item related to pressure loaded on the communal construct. Due to the misalignment in the original AC-IN scale, a decision was made to remove this item, leaving only two items loaded to agentic-confidence. As there was only a limited number of items loaded on the second factor, and the updated Cronbach's alpha was below 0.7, a decision was made to exclude the second factor (agentic-confidence) from the regression analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Reliability was confirmed for the remaining factor, renamed agentic leadership, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.901.

A Pearson's correlation was run for the second construct, communal leadership, for all its items and all items were found to be valid due to their p-values being less than 0.05. When testing for convergent validity using a CFA, the AVE must be greater than 0.5. For the communal leadership construct the AVE was calculated at 0.649. Prior to convergent validity being confirmed, the model fit of the CFA was examined through three indices, namely, CFI, RMSEA and Chisq/df.

The threshold for the RMSEA index is below 0.08, whereas the RMSEA for the communal leadership construct was 0.159, far above the threshold. The CFI threshold is above 0.90 and the communal leadership construct had a CFI of 0.909, which was within the threshold. Finally, the Chisq/df index threshold is below 3.0 and the communal leadership construct CFI was 4.85, which was above the threshold. For the communal leadership construct, the indices did not meet two out of the three thresholds. There was therefore poor model fit and an EFA had to be run. The KMO result was greater than 0.6 and the results from the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant. Factor analysis was thus applicable for the communal leadership construct.

The PCA indicates how each component explains the total variance. It can be seen that component one accounts for 69.016% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.0. The scree plot depicts one component above the eigenvalue of 1.0. Given the data, one component was extracted as it represents the common variance experienced by the nine variables. The component matrix showed that all nine items had factor loadings of more than 0.4. This resulted in all items being kept in the scale and therefore discriminant validity was met. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the communal leadership construct was 0.943 which is above 0.7 and therefore implies reliability.

The work engagement construct was examined using the UWES-9 (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Construct validity was tested using a Pearson's correlation and all items were found to valid and thus were kept in the scale (Swank and Mullen, 2017). A CFA was run to test for convergent validity, but

there was poor model fit and therefore an EFA was run (Beavers *et al.*, 2010). All items had high loadings and were thus kept in the scale. For the work engagement construct the AVE was calculated at 0.629. Prior to convergent validity being confirmed the model fit of the CFA was examined through three indices, namely, CFI, RMSEA and Chisq/df. Refer to Table 2 above for the thresholds of the indices and the indices of the work engagement construct.

The threshold for the RMSEA index is below 0.08, whereas the work engagement construct RMSEA was 0.152, far above the threshold. The CFI threshold is above 0.90 and the work engagement construct had a CFI of 0.914, which was within the threshold. Finally, the Chisq/df index threshold is below 3.0 and the work engagement construct CFI was 4.51, which was above the threshold. For the work engagement construct, the indices did not meet two out of the three thresholds, therefore there was poor model fit and an EFA had to be run. A KMO result of 0.918 was greater than 0.6 and the results from the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were statistically significant thus factor analysis was applicable for the work engagement construct.

The PCA indicates how each component explains the total variance. Component one accounts for 71.217% of the total variance, with an eigenvalue of 1.0. The scree plot depicts one component above the eigenvalue of 1.0. Given the data, one component was extracted as it represents the common variance experienced by the nine variables. All nine items had factor loadings of over 0.4 and were therefore included in the scale, therefore discriminant validity was met. Reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.936.

Table 3 displays the Pearson correlation coefficient results for the sub-scales, as well as the mean, standard deviation, Cronbach Alpha reliability and AVE for the main constructs in the study. All the correlations were significant at the 0.01 level. To test for discriminant validity the square root of AVE had to be greater than the individual dimensions and in table 3 the square root of AVE was offered in bold in the diagonal and indicated discriminant validity.

Table 3: Reliability, validity and Pearson correlation coefficient results

Dimension	Mean	STD	Reliability Cronbach Alpha coefficient	AVE	Agentic	Communal	Vigour	Dedication	Absorption	Engagement
Agentic	4.51	0.71	.901	.536	.732					
Communal	3.92	0.98	.943	.649	.539**	.806				
Vigour	5.05	1.26	.900	.756	.491**	.582**	.869			
Dedication	5.11	1.33	.877	.722	.477**	.523**	.857**	.850		
Absorption	5.56	1.14	.831	.646	.461**	.345**	.641**	.741**	.804	
Engagement	5.24	1.14	.936	.631	.553**	.535**	.919**	.955**	.860**	.794

Square root of the average variance extracted (AVE)(in bold) and correlations between constructs (off-diagonal).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

In running hierarchical regression specific assumptions had to be met: Linearity was assessed through the creation of a normal probability scatter plot to identify the degree of linearity between the variables. This check allows the researchers to identify whether the relationship is positive or negative, to identify the strength of the relationships and if there are any outliers (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The normal probability scatterplot, illustrates a positive linear relationship existed, and that the scatterplot follows a straight-line relationship (Hair et al., 2010) therefore the linearity assumption was met.

Assumption number two refers to multicollinearity. This would happen if the agentic and communal leadership styles (independent variables) are highly correlated to each other. If this were to happen it would show that the multiple regression model would not be reliable (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Hair *et al.* (2010) state that a tolerance value greater than 0.10 and a VIF value less than 10 would mean that no multicollinearity is present between the independent variables. The tolerance value and VIF were within the threshold for each construct, and therefore this assumption was met. In each of the tables which follows, the tolerance value as well as the VIF are offered.

Normality refers to the variables being normally distributed (Hair et al., 2010). The histogram depicts a bell-shaped curved graph implying normality; thus, this assumption was met. Furthermore, skewness and kurtosis were also examined. The final assumption is that of homoscedasticity, referring to the data values being scattered to a similar extent (Hair et al., 2010). The scatterplots shows that the assumption of homoscedasticity was met.

Hierarchical multiple regressions were run per dependent variable or sub-construct of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). The control variables were entered into model one; model two included the communal leadership construct and model three included the agentic leadership construct. The results from the multiple regression are displayed in Table 4.

The first regression was run on the dependent variable of vigour. The control variables were entered into model one; model two included the communal leadership construct and model three included the agentic leadership construct. (The same sequence was used for each of the multiple regressions). The results from the vigour multiple regression are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple regression results for the dependent variable: Vigour

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.113	.013	-.014	1.27228	.013	.481	4	148	.750
2	.591	.350	.328	1.03604	.337	76.191	1	147	.000
3	.632	.399	.374	.99948	.049	11.951	1	146	.001

These results illustrate that 37.4% (Adjusted R square in Model 3 in Table 4) of the variance of vigour is explained by the model where all the independent variables were added.

Table 4 shows that the independent variable of communal leadership has a significant relationship with vigour ($p < 0.05$). Table 4 shows that the independent variable communal leadership explains, according to Table 4 Adjusted Square 0.328 and 0.337, or 33,7% according to Model 2, R Square Change of the variance of the dependent variable of vigour. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a relationship exists between female leaders exhibiting communal leadership and vigour. With regards to agentic leadership and vigour, the R Square Change Statistic shows 0.049 of vigour is explained by agentic leadership (Model 3 in table 4).

The results in Table 5 illustrate that a significant relationship did not exist between the control variables and the dependent variable of vigour.

Table 5: Coefficients of Vigour

		Coefficients						Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	5.312	.226			23.459	.000		
	Gender	-.281	.236	-.098		-1.188	.237	.981	1.019
	Age	.062	.245	.022		.252	.801	.882	1.134
	TenureManager	-.070	.298	-.022		-.233	.816	.736	1.359
	TenureOrg	-.122	.241	-.048		-.507	.613	.732	1.366
2	(Constant)	2.218	.400			5.552	.000		
	Gender	-.139	.193	-.049		-.721	.472	.974	1.026
	Age	.036	.200	.013		.181	.856	.882	1.134
	TenureManager	-.313	.245	-.100		-1.279	.203	.726	1.377
	TenureOrg	.042	.197	.017		.214	.831	.725	1.379
	CommunalMean	.756	.087	.587		8.729	.000	.978	1.022
3	(Constant)	.841	.554			1.518	.131		
	Gender	-.149	.186	-.052		-.802	.424	.974	1.027
	Age	.056	.193	.020		.293	.770	.881	1.135
	TenureManager	-.375	.237	-.120		-1.584	.115	.722	1.385
	TenureOrg	.017	.190	.007		.090	.929	.724	1.381
	CommunalMean	.573	.099	.445		5.793	.000	.698	1.433
	AgenticMean	.471	.136	.265		3.457	.001	.700	1.428

a. Dependent Variable: VigorMean

The results illustrate that model 3 in Table 6, with all the variables included in the model, explains 0.366 or 36.6% of the variance in the sub-construct of dedication. Table 6 shows that the independent variable of agentic has a significant relationship with dedication ($p < 0.05$). Table 6 shows that the independent variable of communal leadership has a significant relationship with dedication ($p < 0.05$).

Table 6: Multiple regression results for the dependent variable: Dedication

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.169	0,028	0,002	1,33136	0,028	1,082	4	148	0,368
2	.552	0,305	0,281	1,12982	0,277	58,509	1	147	0,000
3	.605	0,366	0,340	1,08246	0,061	14,146	1	146	0,000

Table 6 that the independent variable, communal explains 27.7% (Model 2, R Square Change) of the variance of the dependent variable of dedication. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a relationship exists between female leaders exhibiting communal leadership and dedication. Table 6 shows that the independent variable, agentic, explains 6.1% of the variance of the dependent variable of dedication, according to the R Square Change statistic of Model 3. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a relationship exists between female leaders exhibiting agentic leadership and dedication.

The results in Table 7 illustrate that one of the control variables, the tenure the employee has reported to their manager, does have a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable of dedication ($p < 0.05$).

Table 7: Coefficients of Dedication

		Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5.381	.237		22.707	.000		
	Gender	-.365	.247	-.121	-1.474	.143	.981	1.019
	Age	.316	.257	.106	1.232	.220	.882	1.134
	TenureManager	-.329	.312	-.099	-1.053	.294	.736	1.359
	TenureOrg	-.041	.252	-.015	-.162	.871	.732	1.366
2	(Constant)	2.424	.436		5.564	.000		
	Gender	-.229	.211	-.076	-1.089	.278	.974	1.026
	Age	.292	.218	.098	1.339	.183	.882	1.134
	TenureManager	-.561	.267	-.170	-2.104	.037	.726	1.377
	TenureOrg	.116	.215	.044	.540	.590	.725	1.379
	CommunalMean	.723	.094	.532	7.649	.000	.978	1.022
3	(Constant)	.802	.600		1.336	.184		
	Gender	-.241	.202	-.080	-1.196	.234	.974	1.027
	Age	.316	.209	.106	1.511	.133	.881	1.135
	TenureManager	-.634	.256	-.192	-2.475	.014	.722	1.385
	TenureOrg	.086	.206	.033	.420	.675	.724	1.381
	CommunalMean	.507	.107	.373	4.731	.000	.698	1.433
	AgenticMean	.555	.147	.296	3.761	.000	.700	1.428

The model 3 in Table 8 explains 0.258 or 25.8% of the variance in the sub-construct of absorption. Table 8 shows that the independent variable of agentic leadership has a significant relationship with absorption ($p < 0.05$).

Table 8: Multiple regression results for the independent variable: Absorption

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.163	0,027	0,000	1,14117	0,027	1,011	4	148	0,404
2	.380	0,145	0,116	1,07332	0,118	20,304	1	147	0,000
3	.508	0,258	0,228	1,00288	0,114	22,374	1	146	0,000

As seen in Table 9, the independent variable of communal leadership has a significant relationship with absorption ($p > 0.05$), the R Square Change statistic shows 0.118 and therefore, 11.8% of absorption is explained by communal leadership. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a relationship exists between female leaders exhibiting communal leadership and absorption.

Table 8 shows that the independent variable, agentic leadership explains 11.4% of the variance of the dependent variable of absorption. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a relationship exists between female leaders exhibiting agentic leadership and absorption. The results in Table 9 illustrate that one of the control variables, age, does have a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable of absorption ($p < 0.05$).

Table 9: Coefficients of Absorption

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5.594	.203		27.539	.000		
	Gender	-.103	.212	-.040	-.484	.629	.981	1.019
	Age	.435	.220	.171	1.977	.050	.882	1.134
	TenureManager	-.086	.268	-.030	-.320	.750	.736	1.359
	TenureOrg	-.126	.216	-.056	-.586	.559	.732	1.366
2	(Constant)	3.939	.414		9.516	.000		
	Gender	-.027	.200	-.010	-.135	.893	.974	1.026
	Age	.421	.207	.165	2.036	.044	.882	1.134
	TenureManager	-.216	.253	-.076	-.851	.396	.726	1.377
	TenureOrg	-.039	.204	-.017	-.190	.850	.725	1.379
	CommunalMean	.404	.090	.347	4.506	.000	.978	1.022
3	(Constant)	2.049	.556		3.683	.000		
	Gender	-.041	.187	-.016	-.219	.827	.974	1.027
	Age	.449	.194	.176	2.321	.022	.881	1.135
	TenureManager	-.301	.237	-.106	-1.267	.207	.722	1.385
	TenureOrg	-.073	.191	-.032	-.383	.702	.724	1.381
	CommunalMean	.153	.099	.132	1.542	.125	.698	1.433
	AgenticMean	.646	.137	.403	4.730	.000	.700	1.428

The null hypothesis for hypothesis 3a is that a female leader, exhibiting communal leadership, does not have a stronger association with vigour, compared to a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership (H03a). The alternative hypothesis for hypothesis 3a is that a female leader exhibiting communal leadership does have a stronger association with vigour, compared to a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership (H13a).

The construct of vigour had a statistically significant relationship with agentic leadership and communal leadership. The R Square Change values in Table 4 showed that agentic leadership explained 4.9% of the variance of vigour, however communal leadership explained 33.7% of the variance of vigour. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a female leader exhibiting communal leadership does have a stronger association with vigour, compared to a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership.

The null hypothesis for hypothesis 3b is that a female leader, exhibiting communal leadership, does not have a stronger association with dedication, than a female leader, exhibiting agentic leadership (H03b). The alternative hypothesis for hypothesis 3b is that a female leader exhibiting communal leadership does have a stronger association with dedication, compared to a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership (H13b).

The construct of dedication had a statistically significant relationship with agentic leadership and communal leadership. The R square change values in Table 6 showed that agentic leadership explained 6.1% of the variance of dedication, whereas communal leadership explained 27.7% of the variance of dedication. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a female leader exhibiting communal leadership does have a stronger association with dedication, compared to a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership.

The null hypothesis for hypothesis 3c is that a female leader, exhibiting communal leadership, does not have a stronger association with absorption, than a female leader, exhibiting agentic leadership (H03c). The alternative hypothesis for hypothesis 3c is that a female leader exhibiting communal leadership does have a stronger association with absorption, than a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership (H13c).

The construct of absorption had a statistically significant relationship with agentic leadership. Absorption had a significant relationship with communal leadership. Therefore, at a 95% confidence level, the statistical analysis rejects the null hypothesis, and thus a female leader exhibiting communal leadership does have a stronger association with absorption, compared a female leader exhibiting agentic leadership.

Hypothesis two was accepted for the significant relationship between agentic leadership and work engagement, with regards to all the sub-constructs, namely vigour, dedication and absorption.

Hypothesis three was accepted and showed a stronger relationship between communal than agentic leadership with regards to engagement, for vigour, dedication and absorption.

For the total engagement dependent variable, the following significant relationships were found: The adjusted R Square in Table 10 showed 36.6% of the variance in engagement was related to both communal and agentic leadership. The ANOVA shows that there is a significant relationship with the

F-statistic being 15,600 and significant. Table 11 shows the results of the ANOVA, where model 1 showed the predictors: Tenure in the organisation, gender, age and tenure at the manager and model 2 shows the above as well as communal and agentic leadership.

Table 10 Multiple regression results for the independent variable: Engagement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.142 ^a	0,020	-0,006	1,14211	0,020	0,759	4	148	0,554
2	.625 ^b	0,391	0,366	0,90679	0,371	44,392	2	146	0,000

Table 11 ANOVA of Engagement

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3,960	4	0,990	0,759	.554 ^b
	Residual	193,054	148	1,304		
	Total	197,014	152			
2	Regression	76,964	6	12,827	15,600	.000 ^c
	Residual	120,050	146	0,822		
	Total	197,014	152			

Table 12: Coefficients of engagement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	5,429	0,203		26,706	0,000	5,027	5,831		
	Gender	-0,249	0,212	-0,097	-1,175	0,242	-0,668	0,170	0,981	1,019
	Age	0,271	0,220	0,107	1,231	0,220	-0,164	0,706	0,882	1,134
	TenureManager	-0,161	0,268	-0,057	-0,602	0,548	-0,690	0,368	0,736	1,359
	TenureOrg	-0,096	0,216	-0,042	-0,446	0,656	-0,523	0,330	0,732	1,366
2	(Constant)	1,342	0,486		2,762	0,006	0,382	2,303		
	Gender	-0,164	0,169	-0,064	-0,972	0,333	-0,499	0,170	0,973	1,028
	Age	0,244	0,175	0,096	1,397	0,164	-0,101	0,590	0,882	1,134
	TenureManager	-0,348	0,214	-0,123	-1,626	0,106	-0,771	0,075	0,726	1,377
	TenureOrg	-0,020	0,173	-0,009	-0,115	0,909	-0,361	0,322	0,721	1,387
	Agentic	0,576	0,128	0,367	4,499	0,000	0,323	0,829	0,626	1,598
	CommunalMean	0,366	0,096	0,315	3,828	0,000	0,177	0,555	0,616	1,624

In table 12 the coefficients of engagement show that the standardised beta was significant for agentic and communal leadership. The standardised beta for the relationship between agentic and engagement is 36,7% and for communal 31,5% and both are significant.

In summary, Table 13 shows that hypothesis one on the relationship between communal leadership and work engagement was accepted, with regards to vigour dedication, and absorption.

Table 13 Summary of hypotheses' results

Hypothesis	Significant relationship with DV	Variance of DV explained	Reject null hypothesis
1a	Yes	33.7%	Yes
1b	Yes	27.7%	Yes
1c	Yes	11.8%	Yes
2a	Yes	4.9%	Yes
2b	Yes	6.1%	Yes
2c	Yes	11.4%	Yes
3a	n/a		Yes
3b			Yes
3c			Yes

DV= dependent variable

Discussion

The regression for vigour found 39.99% of the variance explained to be due to both leadership constructs, the regression for dedication found 36.6% of the variance explained to be due to both leadership constructs and finally the regression for absorption found 25.8% of the variance explained to be due to both leadership constructs. This means that there was residual variance in each regression model that was not explained by the leadership constructs. Although this is outside the scope of this study, this residual variance could be due to the number the antecedents associated with the employees themselves, and not their managers, including their levels of charisma, levels of expertise, positive relationships at work, whether they feel valued, their ability to control resources and the power of their positions (Coetzee and Veldman, 2016; Hall, 2014).

Transformational leadership and communal leadership have been associated with female leaders specifically (Griffiths *et al.*, 2019; Abele, 2003; Rosette *et al.*, 2015). This meant that the communal leadership style, which had similarities with transformational leadership in for example, treating employees as individuals and ensure that employees feel cared for, had an impact on the employee's connection with their job.

The association identified between agentic leadership and vigour aligns with prior academic literature (Shirom, 2007) that drew associations between the antecedent of rewards and punishment and the ability

to drive an employee's level of vigour. The use of rewards and punishments is a strategy employed by leaders exhibiting a transactional style of leadership (Sungara Silva, & Mendis, 2017).

Hall (2014) speaks of antecedents to dedication, such as a leader's ability to be open and honest with their employee and setting appropriate expectations for their employees, while ensuring they feel valued. Agentic leaders are characterised by being efficient and goal-driven (Abele and Wojciszke, 2007; Rosette and Tost, 2010) and therefore a strategy an agentic leader could employ is to set appropriate expectations.

Absorption is defined as the cognitive connection employees have with their work (Geldenhuis *et al.*, 2014) with specific reference to becoming immersed in their work and sometimes struggling to disengage from it (Strom *et al.*, 2014). Coetzee and Veldman (2016) state that a manager's credibility, behaviour and trustworthiness, as well as the employees' work relationships, desire to achieve and be autonomous, and, finally whether they feel cared for, all influence their level of absorption in their work. The managers' credibility and the employees' desire to be autonomous and achieve are associated with an agentic leadership style because agentic leadership traits include influence, status, as well as the drive to achieve and be autonomous (Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012).

Absorption is the cognitive component of work engagement (Kahn, 1990; Geldenhuis *et al.*, 2014), whereas communal leadership approaches from an emotional perspective (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014; Rosette *et al.*, 2015).

The construct of vigour had a significant relationship with both the agentic and communal leadership styles, however, by comparing the percentage of variance explained by communal leadership style to that of variance explained by the agentic leadership style, the communal leadership style explains 33.7% of the variance in vigour compared to 4.9% by agentic leadership.

Female leaders who exhibit communal leadership styles have a stronger association with their employees' dedication. The construct of dedication had a significant relationship with both the agentic and communal leadership styles. The communal leadership style has a significant association with the construct of absorption, and agentic leadership explains 11.4% of an employee's level of absorption at work.

When female leaders lead in an agentic manner they can be met with the backlash effect. This phenomenon refers to women leaders being viewed in a negative light when exhibiting agentic leadership characteristics, according to the role congruity theory (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Zheng *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, due to the perceived role violation, women in leadership positions tend to be evaluated more harshly than their male counterparts (Rosette *et al.*, 2015). As the sample for the current study was employees reporting to female managers, the backlash effect could account for the lower

variance explained by the agentic leadership style of vigour, dedication and absorption. The antecedents related to dedication are better aligned to communal leadership, specifically those concerning open and honest leaders who ensure their employees feel valued (Abele and Wojciszke, 2014; Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012).

Communal leadership may be more effective than agentic leadership because of the current need for collaboration, communication and equality within the workplace (Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014). Studies have found that communal leadership is celebrated and appreciated over and above agentic leadership styles by employees and future leaders (Gerzema and D'antonio, 2017; Griffiths *et al.*, 2019). The variance explained by agentic leadership for absorption was 11.4% which was higher than that explained by agentic leadership for vigour and dedication, but still relatively low compared to the variance explained by communal leadership for vigour and dedication. A reason for this could be the age of the sample. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Kim and Kang (2016) the older one gets the more engaged one becomes in work. Age was the only demographic to have a significant relationship with absorption, but it had no significant relationship with the other two sub-constructs, therefore supporting the literature that shows that the older an employee, the more absorbed they become in their work. This means that the younger the employee, the less absorbed they are in their work. Respondent gender did not have a significant relationship with work engagement. This supports the findings of Reissova *et al.* (2017) who found no significant differences between men and women when it came to engagement.

The majority of respondents had worked for their organisations for more than six years. The demographic variable of tenure of employment did not have a significant relationship with work engagement. The majority of respondents (32%) had reported to their managers for less than a year. So although employees had only reported to their current managers for a brief period, those same employees had worked at their organisations for many years (the majority for more than six years). This could perhaps indicate a high level of manager turnover within the sample. The variable of a respondent's tenure with their current manager was not statistically significant for vigour or absorption, but was found to be statistically significant for dedication, with a negative correlation coefficient. This means that the longer employees work for their managers, the less dedicated they become.

The sample for this study included only employees who reported to female managers and these managers had a strong influence on their employees' levels of vigour, dedication and absorption toward their work.

Implications of research

The results garnered from this research emphasise that female leaders have a positive impact on their employees' levels of work engagement. Therefore, management should seek to hire more female managers in senior leadership roles to effectively promote work engagement. Although agentic

leadership had an influence on all the elements of work engagement, communal leadership had a far stronger impact on the three sub-constructs. Management should recognise the impact that not only female leaders, but female leaders who are perceived to be trustworthy, inspiring and compassionate (communal), can have on employee work engagement, and subsequently on the performance of an organisation.

Both agentic and communal leadership have a positive impact on work engagement when exhibited by a female. Communal leadership has a stronger influence on vigour, dedication, and on absorption. The influence of agentic leadership on all three sub-constructs, highlights the need for female managers with both leadership styles. Female managers with communal leadership styles need to realise that they would influence the emotional, physical and to a lesser degree their employees' cognitive connections to their work with their communal style, as compared to the agentic style. Female leaders should therefore take note of this research and not try to imitate their male colleagues' agentic leadership styles to fit into organisations and to be perceived as a masculine leader.

Female leaders who exhibit role incongruent behaviour of agentic leadership, should be careful of alienating their employees and lessen their impact on their employees' work engagement by not exhibiting their communal leadership behaviour.

Female managers with agentic leadership styles need to learn to engage in a communal style, so as to enhance the influence they have on their employees' emotional, physical and cognitive connections to their work. Therefore, management should look to employ female managers with the ability to engage in both leadership styles. The combination of both masculine and feminine leadership traits is referred to as androgynous leadership, which is known to be an effective style of leadership (Eagly and Carli, 2007).

The longer employees report to their managers the less emotionally connected they become to their work. This could be because of break-downs in the manager-employee relationship as time lapses. Managers should work toward maintaining healthy and productive relationships with their employees so as to promote their dedication, rather than erode it over time.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

Only female managers and only agentic and communal leadership styles were considered. The cross-sectional design of this study could have resulted in a snapshot of the respondents' perceptions. The techniques of non-probability and snowball sampling were utilised. These can result in sections of the population not being able to partake, while those respondents who did partake could have been similar to one another, resulting in similar responses.

Future studies could evaluate a few different leadership styles in conjunction with gender, so as to understand the landscape of leadership and work engagement more holistically. A potential avenue to

explore could be the employees' intrinsic motivations and how these could impact their levels of work engagement. Finally, future studies could evaluate both managers and employees separately to account for any personal bias that employees may have toward their leaders.

In conclusion, the low levels of both work engagement and female representation in leadership roles within organisations in South Africa prove to be ongoing challenges with negative consequences. The benefits associated with improving these levels provide an incentive for management to work toward higher female representation within senior leadership positions as well as higher levels of work engagement among employees.

The results of this study provide insights into the benefits of female leaders who exhibit both agentic and communal leadership styles, with regard to promoting work engagement, and thus contribute to the discourse on the importance of both female leadership and engaged employees.

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