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**Transformational leadership and depressive symptoms: Validation
of a short transformational leadership scale**

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Working conditions have changed over the last decades resulting in reduced traditional workplace hazards, whereas conditions as work-stress, mental strain and depression have become more critical. Depressive disorders, which are multifaceted (Prisciandaro and Roberts, 2005) and not always clearly recognisable (Perko, Kinnunen and Feldt, 2014) are common in the general population (Jacobi et al., 2004). An important modifiable risk factor for employee's psychosocial well-being in the workforce context is leadership (Kuoppala et al., 2008). Especially high levels of TL have been associated with reduced depressive symptoms (Munir, Nielsen and Gomes Carneiro, 2010; Perko, Kinnunen and Feldt, 2014). There is evidence that certain TL dimensions (PAM, FAG and AV) could represent core TL behaviour with respect to mental health (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Heinritz and Rowold, 2007). Thus, this study employs the multidimensional TLI to assess TLI. Increasing resources or decreasing job demands could mediate the association in the sense of the job demands-resources theory (JD-R); (Arnold et al., 2007).

This study aimed to a) test the psychometric properties of TL, its dimension, and the core TL in a German population, and b) to test the associations of core TL with depressive symptoms.

The study was performed on the overall workforce of a middle-sized German company. Leadership was assessed with the German version of the TLI; (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Bommer, 1996; Heinritz and Rowold, 2007), assessing five dimensions of TL: AV (five items), FAG (four items), PAM (three items), IS (four items) and ISN (three items). Depressive symptoms were assessed using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS); (Zigmond and Snaith, 1983; Hinz and Schwarz, 2002).

Analyses revealed a relationship between lower levels of TL, and higher ratings of depressive symptoms, with a stronger effect for male employees. The core TL model proved to be a valid and useful instrument to measure TL.

The results support the theory that the three dimensions of TL: AV, FAG and PAM represent an underlying core TL that explains most of the association of TL and depressive symptoms in the present study. Leadership which provides an authentic model for employees to follow promotes cooperation among employees towards a particular goal and is inspiring is associated with reduced risk of depressive symptoms in employees. It is feasible to use the shortened TLI which consists of 12 items as opposed to 19 items in the full version as an economic tool for research and training purposes in the context of TL and depressive symptoms in employees.

Prospective studies in different work-environments and populations are needed to further explore the potential directions of causality and generalizability of the assumptions. In addition, gender differences in the relationship between TL and depressive symptoms should be explored.