

Attachment as a Predictor of Leadership and Follower Outcomes

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Leadership as Interpersonal

- Leadership does not exist without another person to lead
- Leadership emerges through some sort of relationship – to understand leadership is to understand the relationship dynamics between leader and non-leader
- However, most research has examined leadership from a ‘dispositional/personality’ perspective
 - May assume that leaders are ‘born not made’ – how can we then train leaders given that personality is relatively stable?
 - Personality focuses on the individual behaviour of the leader only – does not explain the relationship between leader and follower

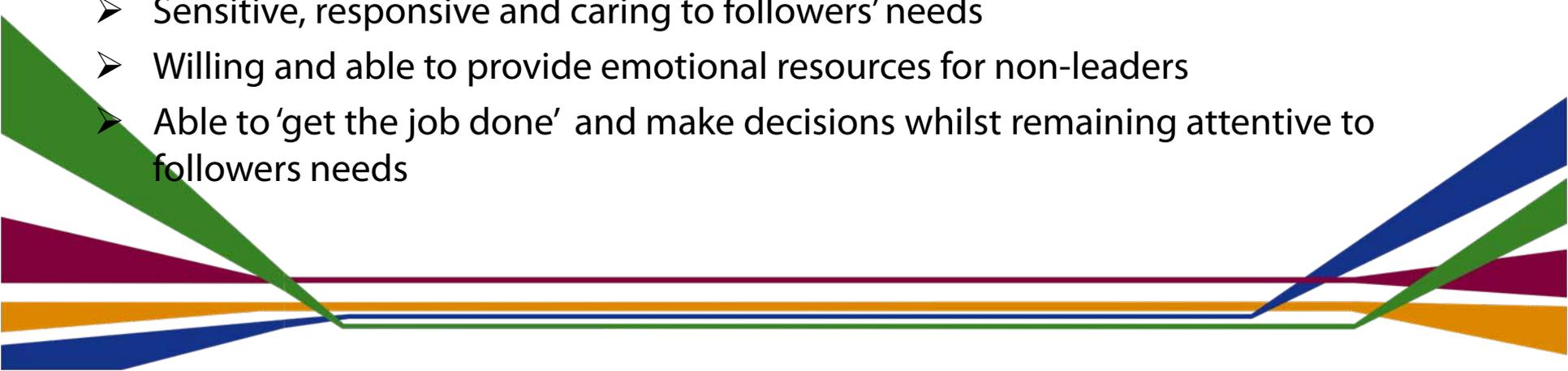
What is Effective Leadership?

Effective leadership is concerned with...

- Building strong, lasting relationships with non-leaders
- Teaching, guiding and directing non-leaders to optimal performance
- Nurturing growth and competency development
- Convey a sense of security to followers
- Fulfilling task requirements AND follower needs

Effective leaders are...

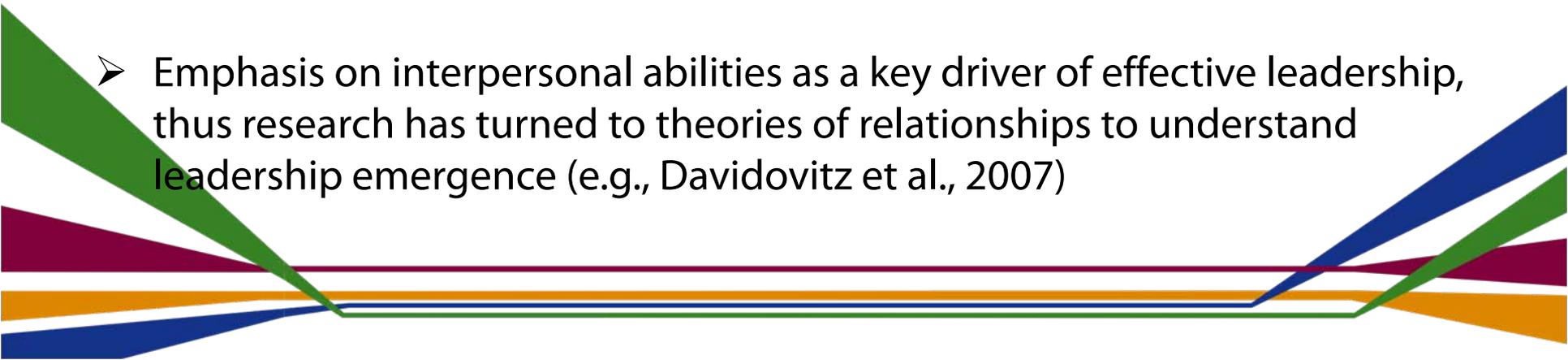
- Sensitive, responsive and caring to followers' needs
- Willing and able to provide emotional resources for non-leaders
- Able to 'get the job done' and make decisions whilst remaining attentive to followers needs



Leadership

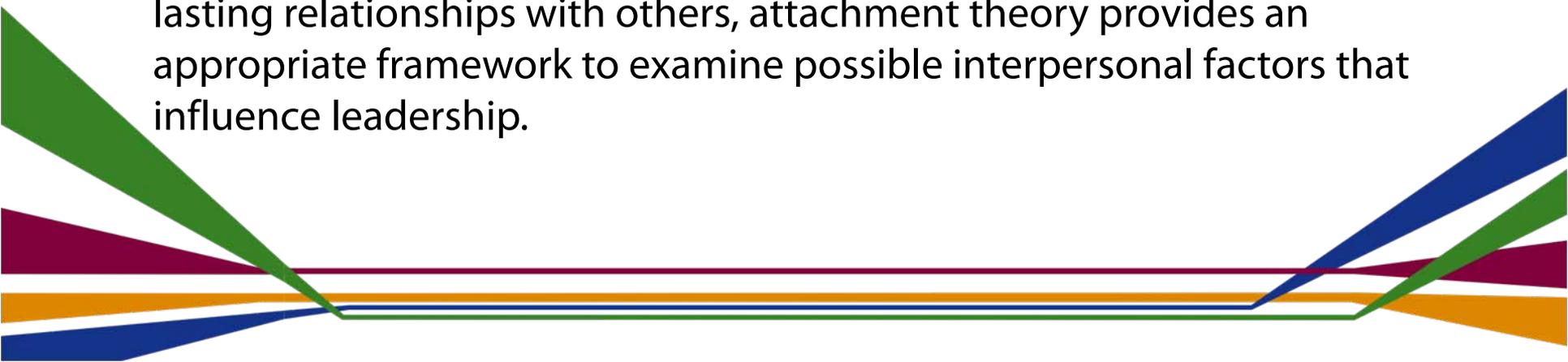
Transformational Leaders	Transactional Leaders
Intellectually stimulate followers to be creative and innovative	Rewards contingent on performance meeting organisational goals
Consider the individual needs and unique characteristics of each follower	Can monitor performance to anticipate employee mistakes
Demonstrate high moral standards	Simply offer criticism if performance standards are not met or problems emerge affecting task completion
Provide inspirational motivation	Blurred with management
'Transform' their followers to perform above and beyond expectations	

Why Leadership viewed as Interpersonal?

- Effective leaders parallel with parental figures e.g., guiding, directing, supporting and attending to the needs of team members
 - Similar dynamics between parent-child and leader-follower relationship (Popper & Maysel, 2003) i.e., followers want to be close to leaders who can provide advice and resources for personal development and advancement (Davidovitz et al., 2007)
 - Emphasis on interpersonal abilities as a key driver of effective leadership, thus research has turned to theories of relationships to understand leadership emergence (e.g., Davidovitz et al., 2007)
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Attachment Theory: An Interpersonal Framework

- Attachment theory explains how early behaviour shapes later behaviour in relationships
- Little is known about how the effectiveness of leaders is influenced by attachment processes, i.e., the developmental trajectory of effective leaders
- Yet, given that effective leadership is primarily concerned with building lasting relationships with others, attachment theory provides an appropriate framework to examine possible interpersonal factors that influence leadership.

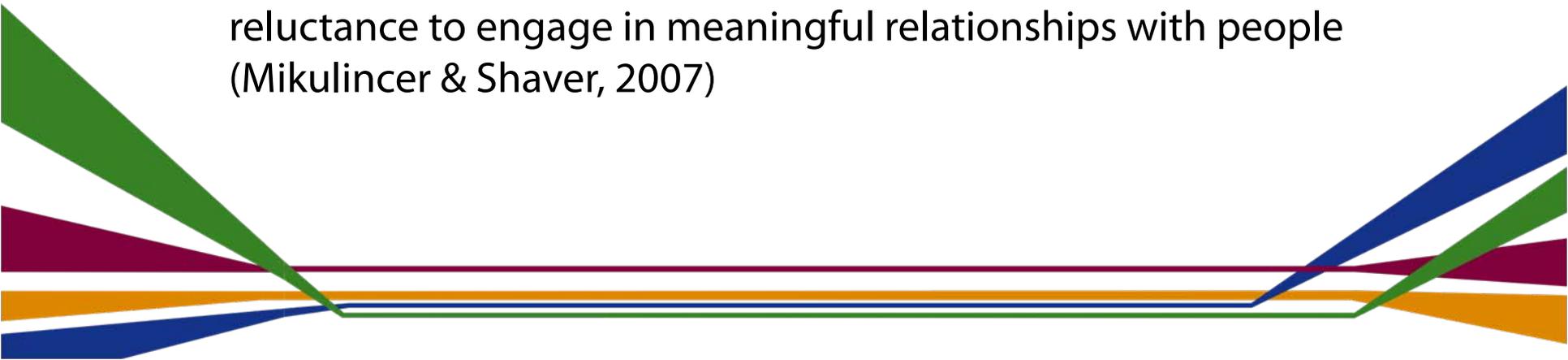


Attachment Conceptualisation

High Anxiety	High Avoidance
Worry about closeness	Uncomfortable with closeness
Doubt own abilities	Distrust of others
Are nervous and unsure about relationships, the presence and accessibility of a partner	Excessive self-reliance and downplay the importance of relationships
Require excessive reassurance	View relationships as secondary to task accomplishment
Preoccupied and worried about their own relationships	Tend to not recognise the needs of others
Help others to reduce own distress	

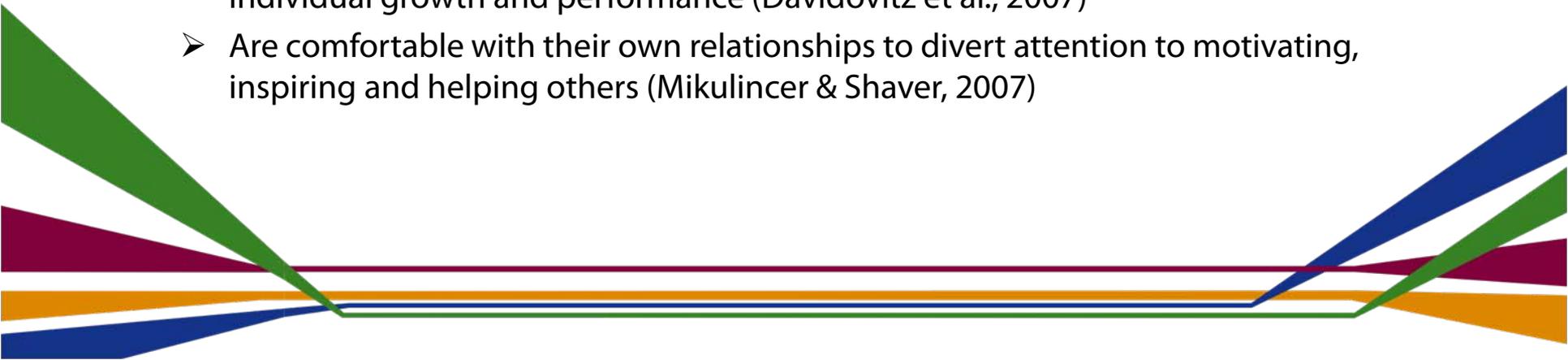
Attachment and Leadership

- Attachment anxiety
 - Unlikely to be perceived by followers as reliable, security enhancing leadership figures responsive to follower needs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)
- Attachment avoidance
 - Unlikely to be perceived as available, empathic or responsive because of their inability to recognise needs of others and their reluctance to engage in meaningful relationships with people (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)



Attachment and Leadership

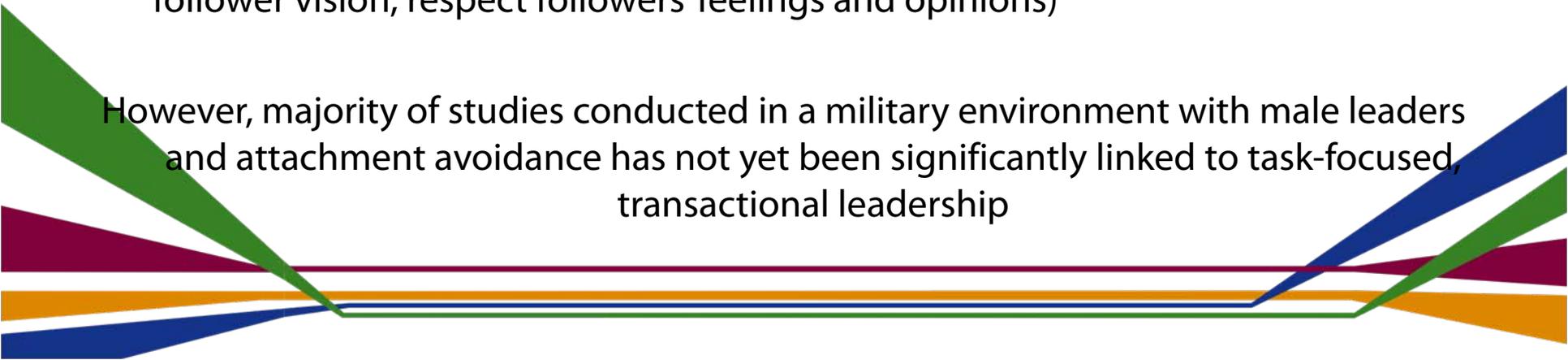
- Low attachment anxiety and avoidance = securely attached
- Theoretically likely to be perceived as effective leaders engaging in transformational leadership behaviours because such leaders...
 - Are able to forgo their own needs to attend to the needs of followers (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)
 - Are comfortable being close in a one-on-one situation with a team member to foster individual growth and performance (Davidovitz et al., 2007)
 - Are comfortable with their own relationships to divert attention to motivating, inspiring and helping others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)



Supporting Research

- Popper et al. (2000) = links between secure attachment and transformational leaders in Israeli Defence Force (IDF) members
- Popper et al. (2004) = securely attached IDF leaders rated as more effective leaders than insecurely attached IDF leaders
- Berson et al. (2006) = Team members reported their securely attached counterparts as more likely to emerge as team leaders than their insecurely attached team members
- Davidovitz et al. (2007) = Leaders high on attachment avoidance rated as exhibiting less social leadership behaviours (i.e., less likely to align leader and follower vision, respect followers' feelings and opinions)

However, majority of studies conducted in a military environment with male leaders and attachment avoidance has not yet been significantly linked to task-focused, transactional leadership



Aim and Hypotheses

- To investigate the links between manager attachment, follower ratings of transformational and transactional leadership and follower workplace outcomes (organisational citizenship behaviour)
 - Hypothesis 1 - Attachment anxiety and avoidance negatively associated with transformational leadership and in turn positively associated with follower work place outcomes
 - Hypothesis 2 - Attachment avoidance positively associated with transactional leadership and in turn negatively associated with follower work place outcomes



Method

Participants

46 leader-follower dyads (Victorian education institution, national telecommunications company & Victorian real-estate business)

Managers: 13 men, 7 women ($M = 48.5$ years, $SD = 7.78$)

Non-managers: 19 men, 25 women, 1 not given ($M = 43.92$ years, $SD = 8.72$)



Method

Materials

Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ, Feeney, Noller & Hanrahan, 1994)

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X (MLQ 5X, Bass & Avolio, 1995)

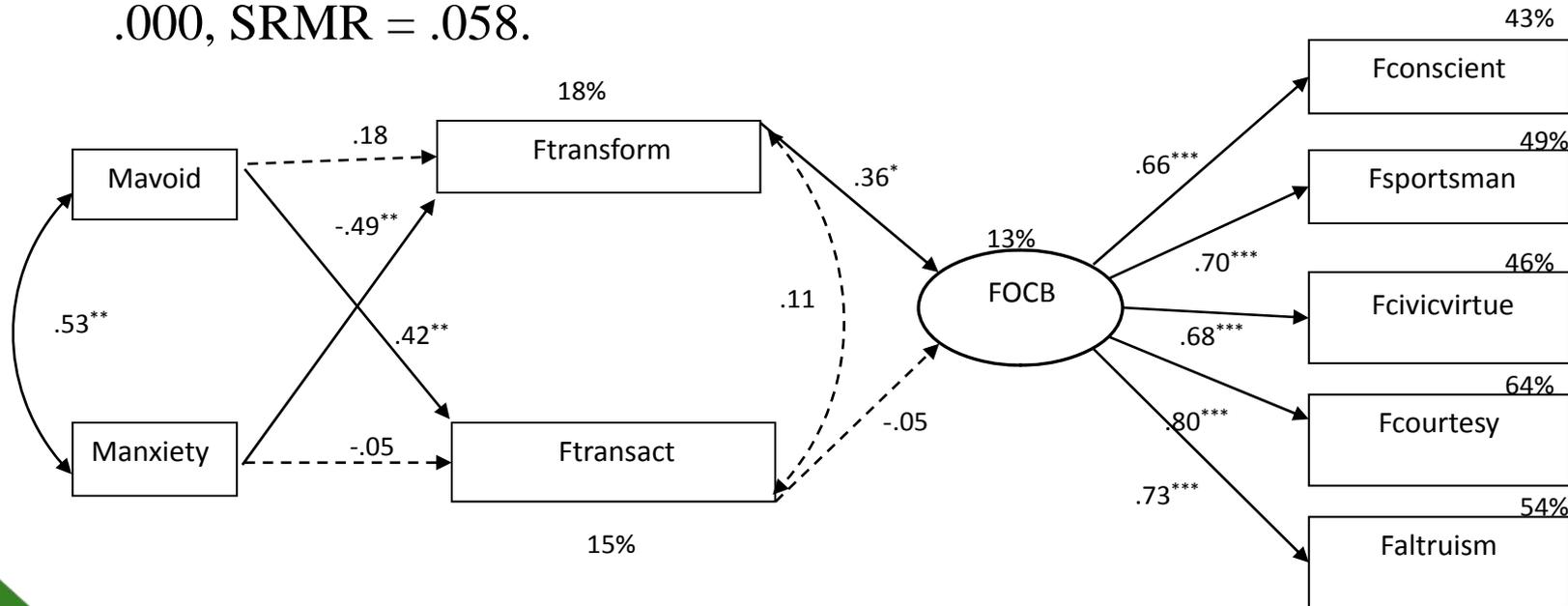
Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990)

Procedure

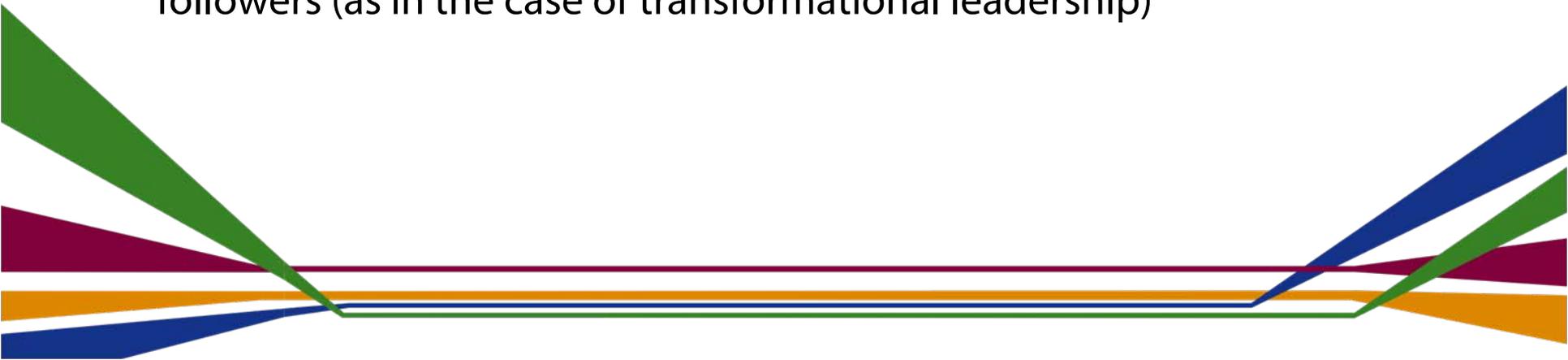
Introductory email (with URL linking to PLS & questionnaire) circulated via company mailing lists. Two versions created – manager version with the ASQ, self-rater MLQ & OCBS, follower version with the ASQ, rater MLQ & OCBS. Approximately 20 minutes

Results

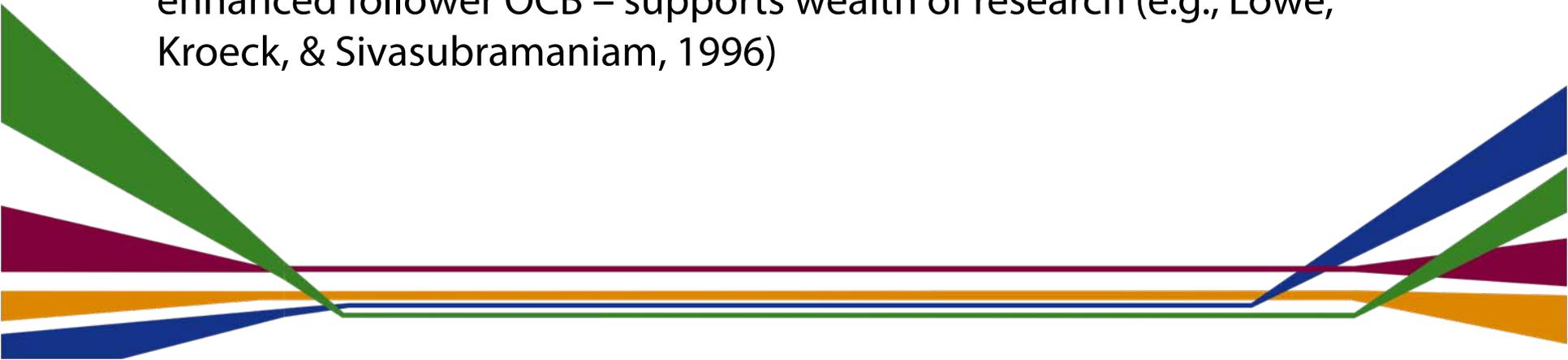
$\chi^2 (23, N = 46) = 15.757, p > .05, CFI = 0.991; TLI = 0.986; RMSEA = .000, SRMR = .058.$



Discussion

- Positive association between attachment *avoidance* and *transactional* leadership
 - This is the first study supporting this link – though some have proposed this link to exist (e.g., Popper et al., 2000)
 - Indicates that avoidant managers were rated as being primarily focused on task completion and contingent reward
 - Suggests that transactional leaders may prefer to maintain interpersonal distance, not focus on guiding and nurturing the individual needs of followers (as in the case of transformational leadership)
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Discussion

- Negative association between attachment *anxiety* and *transformational* leadership
 - Indicates that individuals high on anxiety were not rated as engaging in transformational behaviours such as inspiring vision, motivation or individualised consideration
 - Suggests that anxious managers may be too preoccupied with their own relationships to attend to the needs of others
 - Transformational leadership significantly positively associated with enhanced follower OCB – supports wealth of research (e.g., Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996)
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Limitations and Conclusions

- Most of our hypothesised relationships supported, however...
 - Non-significant (yet hypothesised) relationship between attachment avoidance and transformational leadership and transactional leadership and OCB, why?... Small sample size
- Attachment theory is useful in understanding the emergence of leadership behaviours and is likely to strengthen the theoretical understanding of leadership
- Effective leaders are able to relate to followers, foster their personal growth and development – critical for retaining human capital and building social capital

Implications

- Education in transformational-transactional leadership framework to increase self-awareness for leaders and followers, improve ratings of effectiveness and satisfaction
 - Training managers in a leadership framework that emphasises interpersonal skill development is crucial for fruitful leader-follower bonds in the workplace
 - Use attachment theory to shape leader appraisals, performance development, coaching
 - Emphasise importance of leadership for organisational success
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