MASTER

MASTERS IN MANAGEMENT

MASTER´S FINAL WORK

THESIS

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CAN HUMBLE LEADERSHIP LEAD TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT? THE MEDIATING ROLE OF LEADER EFFECTIVENESS

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MARCH - 2024

To my mom who always
encourages me to fly, to
Lexie who always flies
beside me and to Gui, who is
always there to catch me.

Can Humble Leadership Lead to Employee Engagement? The Mediating Role of Leader Effectiveness

ABSTRACT

Humble leadership has reinforced a prominent position, both at academic and business levels, mainly due to ethical scandals and the new expectations of workers towards organizations and their superiors. Previous research has linked humble leadership to several advantageous employee outcomes, including employee engagement. However, the mechanisms through which humble leadership contributes positively to employee engagement are still under-researched. This study aims to analyze the impact of humble leadership on employee engagement in the Portuguese organizational context and tests leader effectiveness as the link between the two variables.

To achieve this objective, an online questionnaire survey was released, which allowed a sample of 132 individuals to be obtained. The results indicate that, for perceptions of humble leadership, the lowest means occurred among individuals from older age groups and who were not single. For leader effectiveness, the lowest means were found again in those from older age groups, as well as for those who had a non-fixed contract. Concerning engagement, the lowest means were found for those from younger age groups, for females, for those who were single, who were not qualified professionals, and who did not have a management position. Using a structural equation model, the results indicate the existence of a positive association between humble leadership and leader effectiveness and between leader effectiveness and employee engagement. Additionally, it is confirmed that leader effectiveness mediates the relationship between humble leadership and employee engagement. The developed conceptual model explains 60.2 % of the variance for Leader Effectiveness and 18,8% for Employee Engagement.

KEYWORDS: Humble leadership; Employee Engagement; Leader Effectiveness.

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RESUMO

A liderança humilde reforçou uma posição de destaque nos últimos anos, tanto a nível académico como empresarial, principalmente devido aos escândalos éticos e às novas expectativas dos trabalhadores em relação às organizações e aos seus superiores. Pesquisas anteriores associaram a liderança humilde a vários resultados positivos para os funcionários, incluindo o compromisso no trabalho. No entanto, os mecanismos através dos quais a liderança humilde contribui positivamente para o compromisso dos colaboradores ainda são pouco investigados. Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar o impacto da liderança humilde no compromisso dos colaboradores no contexto organizacional português e testar a eficácia do líder como a ligação entre as duas variáveis.

Para atingir este objetivo, foi lançado um inquérito por questionário online, que permitiu obter uma amostra de 132 indivíduos. Os resultados indicam que, para percepções de liderança humilde, as menores médias ocorreram entre indivíduos de faixas etárias mais elevadas e que não eram solteiros. Para a eficácia do líder, as médias mais baixas foram novamente encontradas nos grupos etários mais elevados, bem como nos indivíduos que tinham contrato sem termo. No que diz respeito ao compromisso, as menores médias foram encontradas para aqueles de faixas etárias mais jovens, para os de sexo feminino, para os solteiros, para os que não eram profissionais qualificados e para os que não ocupavam cargos de gestão. Utilizando um modelo de equações estruturais, os resultados indicam a existência de uma associação positiva entre liderança humilde e eficácia do líder e entre eficácia do líder e compromisso dos colaboradores. Adicionalmente, confirma-se que a eficácia do líder media a relação entre a liderança humilde e o compromisso dos colaboradores. O modelo conceitual desenvolvido explica 60,2% da variância para Eficácia do Líder e 18,8% para Compromisso no Trabalho.

PALAVRAS CHAVE : Liderança Humilde; Compromisso; Liderança Eficaz.

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1. Introduction

Humble leadership has reinforced a prominent position, both at academic and business levels, mainly due to ethical scandals and the new expectations of workers towards organizations and their superiors (Owens & Hekman, 2012). This leadership style is defined as "the leadership that involves viewing oneself accurately, providing an appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and modelling teachability" (Owens and Hekman 2016, p. 1088).

Previous research has linked humble leadership to several advantageous employee outcomes, including employee engagement (Ma et al., 2019). Employee engagement is characterized as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002), p. 74) and, according to Christian, Garza, & Slaughter (2011), is the most reliable indicator of performance success. Shaufeli and Salanova (2007) argued that engagement is essential in light of the numerous difficulties that modern organizations encounter. May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) consider that engagement is primary to the problem of workers' lack of commitment and motivation".

Although previous research has shown that humble leadership contributes positively to employee engagement (Basford et al. 2014; Cheung et al., 2020; Chiu et al., 2016; Ding et al., 2020; Owens et al., 2013, 2015; Yang et al., 2019; Zhong et al., 2019) the mechanisms through which this impact occurs are still under-researched. This study will test leader effectiveness as a mediator between the two variables. Leader Effectiveness is the subordinates' perception of their leaders' ability to effectively guide and impact their actions towards achieving the desired goal (Dabke, 2016). Thus, we consider that leader humility impacts engagement by enhancing the perception of leader effectiveness.

Given the framework presented, this study aims to analyze, in the Portuguese organizational context, whether employees perceive their leader as humble and whether this impacts their engagement through their perceptions of leader effectiveness. Therefore, the main objectives are defined as follows:

- Analyze the levels of perception of humble leadership, leader effectiveness, and employee engagement.
- Analyze whether there are significant differences in the variables under study in different groups of the sample (e.g., gender, age, level of education).
- Analyze the relationships between humble leadership, leader effectiveness, and employee engagement.

Following the stated objectives, this dissertation is structured into four chapters. The first consists of this introduction, and the second consists of the literature review, where the concepts under study are developed as well as the established relationships between them. The third chapter presents the empirical study, which includes a description of the method, the characterization of the sample, the instruments used, and the analysis of the results. Finally, chapter four is dedicated to the study's conclusions, contributions, the limitations found, and suggestions for future investigations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces the different constructs that comprise the topics under study: humble leadership, leader effectiveness, and employee engagement. It contextualizes what makes up the leadership environment and humility, followed by framing leader effectiveness and employee engagement. A mention of previous studies on the relationships between these constructs is also provided.

2.1. Humble Leadership

2.1.1 Definition

The Latin word "humilis" is where the English term "humility" originally came from, meaning "on the ground" (Owens and Hekman 2012; Rego et al. 2017).

Leader humility is a characteristic of a leader that involves "a manifested willingness to correctly view himself or herself, an appreciation of others' strengths, and teachability" (Owens and Hekman 2016). This characteristic aligns with Kant's theory that humility encourages and stimulates people to recognize their worth and strengthens their capacity for moral thinking (Grenberg 2005).

Nielsen and Marrone (2018) thoroughly analyzed the idea of humility. They found three essential elements frequently mentioned in the literature: precise self-awareness, respect for other people's abilities and contributions, and receptivity to criticism and learning.

Humble leaders are thought to have a more realistic, objective appraisal of their abilities and weaknesses as team members (Owens and Hekman, 2012) and also exhibit a high level of openness when interacting with others on a personal level (Ou et al., 2018; Owens et al., 2013). Leaders who move beyond a self-absorbed perception tend to be more equipped with empathy, a crucial component of successful leadership (Goleman, 2004; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

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Humble leaders are willing to accept advice from others because they acknowledge their shortcomings, make mistakes, and fail (Owens and Heckman, 2012). They are open to fresh data, concepts, or paradigms (Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004), considering criticisms and opposing viewpoints (Rego et al., 2017). Because they are conscious of their shortcomings and imperfections, humble leaders are eager to grow (Ou et al., 2018) and favour inclusive, cooperative, and adaptable decision-making methods (Nielsen and Marrone, 2018).

This illustrates how humble leaders can recognize their followers' contributions and abilities, are receptive to learning from others, welcome feedback from other individuals, and have an honest perspective of themselves (cf., Owens and Hekman 2012, 2016; Owens et al. 2013).

It is anticipated that humble leaders prioritize the group's welfare and followers' interests ahead of their self-interest and personal gain (Frostenson 2016; Morris et al. 2005). Due to their interpersonal and other-centred nature, humble leaders draw attention to and offer opportunities to learn from followers, forming a bottom-up follower growth process (Owens and Hekman 2012).

One drawback of the humble leadership model is that it needs a higher level of legitimacy than other related leadership constructs like authentic leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership. From a theoretical perspective, authentic leadership focuses on leaders who demonstrate transparency in their interactions with others and have high degrees of internal coherence between their ideas and behaviours (Lemoine et al., 2019). Servant leaders view themselves as servants before considering themselves as leaders. The emphasis of servant leadership is, in fact, "the development of followers as an end, in and of itself, not merely a means to reach the leader's or the organization's goals" (Ehrhart, 2004, p. 69). A critical distinction between humble and servant leadership is that the former emphasizes the development process, while the latter emphasizes serving others. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, can defined by leaders who encourage and inspire employees to reach elevated performance and personal development goals. Additionally, charisma, intellectual stimulation, personalized consideration and inspirational motivation are characteristics of transformational leaders (Bass, 1985).

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Numerous research studies have utilized inductive techniques to identify the fundamental components of humility regarding leaders. The first of these was carried out by Owens and Hekman (2012), who separated the dimensions of humble leadership into three dimensions: 1—willingness to see oneself accurately, 2—appreciation of others' strengths, and 3—contributions and teachability.

Willingness to see oneself accurately includes items such as "My leader actively seeks feedback, even if it is critical", "My leader admits it when he/she does not know how to do something", and "My leader acknowledges when others have more knowledge and skills than him or herself". These items focus on the leader's capacity to accept responsibility for their errors, own up to mistakes, and remain receptive to criticism and personal development. Appreciation of others' strengths includes items such as "My leader takes notice of others' strengths", "My leader often compliments others on their strengths", and "My leader shows appreciation for the unique contribution of others". These questions gauge the leader's tendency to appreciate and acknowledge their team members' skills, contributions, and assets. Lastly, contributions and teachability include items such as "My leader is willing to learn from others", "My leader is open to the ideas of others", and "My leader is open to the advice of others". These elements concentrate on the leader's readiness to seek knowledge from others, pay attention to their followers, and consider their recommendations (Owens and Hekman, 2012).

2.1.2 Consequences

When leaders show humility, followers will understand that this behaviour is encouraged and accepted. Because of this, workers are more likely to act humble and fit in with their environment. Studies indicate that a humble leader can inspire others to follow in their footsteps (Nielsen and Marrone, 2018; Rego et al,. 2017) Humble workers are more likely to act in ways that support their desire for personal growth, which improves wellbeing (Zawadzka and Zalewska, 2017). Furthermore, humble people usually get along well with their supervisors or coworkers because they ask for help, feedback, or new ideas from others.

Additionally, humble leadership boosts morale among staff members. It has a beneficial impact on followership traits like empathy (Naseer et al., 2020), authenticity

(Oc et al., 2020), gratitude (Naseer et al., 2020), contentment (Krumrei- Mancuso & Rowatt, 2021; Owens et al., 2013), and sentiments (D'Errico, 2019; D'Errico, 2020). Similarly, humble leadership raises the well-being of followers (Luu, 2020a; Zhang & Song, 2020; Zhong et al., 2019). These include increased follower meaning (Luu, 2020b), flourishing (Ding & Chu, 2020), and improved follower self-efficacy (Mao et al., 2019).

According to research, followers who experience humble leadership are more likely to seek comments from others (Qian, Liu, & Chen, 2020). Additionally, humble leadership positively impacts followers' work independence and proactive behaviour (Chen et al., 2018; Chen, Liang et al., 2021). Furthermore, there is a negative correlation between inactive behaviours like turnover and retreat and humble leadership (Qian, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020).

Humble leadership is demonstrated to positively link to employee organizational citizenship behaviour, just like morally oriented leader behaviours do (OCB; Cho et al., 2021; Ding et al., 2020; Qian, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020; Tuan et al., 2021), prosocial conduct (Carnevale et al., 2019; Luu, 2021; Owens et al., 2019), and moral behaviour (Naseer et al., 2020). Additionally, several studies have shown that it lessens undesirable behaviours, including deviant behaviour (Qin et al., 2020), concealed information (Zhong et al., 2019), and unethical conduct (Owens et al., 2019).

On an organizational level, it has been discovered that team psychological safety and creativity are favourably correlated with a humble leadership style (Hu et al., 2018). When staff members believe their supervisor regards them as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and kind, they will try to meet these positive standards (Livingston, 2003). By giving their staff a sense of authority, humble leaders help them overcome their "psychological hurdles" and encourage them to speak up.

Humble leadership is also advantageous for groups and organizations; it has been demonstrated to support positive group and organizational components like psychological capital (Gonçalves & Brandão, 2017; Rego et al., 2017) team-supporting norms (Chiu et al., 2020), ethical culture (Cortes-Mejia et al., 2021), viability (Chiu et al., 2020), and opinions regarding the efficiency of the team (Rego & Simpson, 2018). Previous research on humble leadership's influence on leaders has shown contradictory results, even though humble leadership benefits followers, teams, and organizations. Yang et al. (2019)

discovered that leaders' work-family conflict and turnover intentions are positively correlated with humble leadership, which can be draining. Further, Zapata and HayesJones (2019) discovered that humble leadership gave the impression of being more communal (focused on interpersonal interactions) rather than agentic (focused on organizational outcomes) and being less agentic negatively impacted views of a leader's efficacy, even as commonality helped to improve them.

When the person in charge shows humility, encouraging discourse, debate, and communication inside the workplace, he or she may encourage employees to reevaluate established patterns, put forth fresh concepts, or be creative, fostering innovation.

Humble leadership invigorates followers beyond behavioural results. (Luu, 2020a) Furthermore, humble leadership leads employees to be more engaged (Ou et al., 2014; Owens et al., 2013; Walters & Diab, 2016; Yuan et al., 2018), more devoted (Ou et al., 2014), more tenacious (Zhu et al., 2019) more prone to helping (Cojuharenco & Karelaia, 2020), more willing to impart knowledge to others (Nguyen et al., 2020). It also increases their confidence (Cojuharenco & Karelaia, 2020).

Lastly Owens (Owens et al., 2013) also concluded that humble leadership is associated with higher task performance, fulfilment at work, and employee retention.

2.1.3 Mesurements

Studies on humble leadership usually use scales and rater perceptions to measure the construct. Petrenko et al. (2019) were an exception, drawing their assessment of humble leadership from leaders' video records.

Most of the studies that utilized a Likert scale for assessing humble leadership used the Owens et al. (2013) scale, with the Ou et al. (2014) scale being the second most commonly used one (Kelemen et al., 2022). Scholars who utilized humble leadership survey measures have, for the majority of the time, addressed the concept of humility as unidimensional in their investigations and have rarely examined individual facets (Ashford et al., 2018, being an exception). This approach has produced consistency throughout the literature. However, given the maturity of the literature, it might be

warranted to look at the elements of humble leadership to determine if they influence outcomes differently (Kelemen et al., 2022).

Using empirical data, the Owens et al. (2013) scale was the first quantitative study to examine the advantages of leaders' humility in an organizational setting. Their investigation identified three characteristics of humble leadership: (1) willingness to see oneself accurately, (2) appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and (3) teachability (Owens et al., 2013). Each dimension is then subdivided into three dimensions.

To expand this scale, Ou et al. (2014) utilized the nine elements developed by Owens et al. (2013) and added ten questions (a total of 19 items). They included three aspects in their ten new items: low self-focus (propensity to place more emphasis on outside variables or other people's well-being and less emphasis on themselves and their own needs, wants, or concerns), self-transcendent pursuit (overcoming one's personal boundaries and establishing a connection with something bigger or more universal) and, lastly, transcendent self-concept (comprehension or view of oneself in connection to more extensive or profound facets of life).

2.2. Leader Effectiveness

2.2.1 Definition

The efficacy of a leader pertains to their ability to effectively guide and impact their actions towards achieving the desired goal (Dabke, 2016). Some researchers believe leaders are effective when the organization they oversee performs well, achieves its objectives, and produces positive outcomes (Riggio et al., 2003); others believe leaders are effective if other individuals think highly of them (Lim & Ployhart 2004). In other words, leader effectiveness is a construct that may be measured using a range of indicators and examined from different angles, objectively (through organizational indicators) or subjectively (through perceptions of subordinates) (Madanchian et al.,.2015).

However, it is arguable that the view that the efficacy of the leader can be measured only on the organizational results may be a distorted measure as the organizational results may be achieved and impacted by variables outside the leader, such as the outside

environment or the traits and actions of one specific group member, it can be deduced that even organizations with weak leaders can produce outstanding outcomes (Prochazka et al., 2018)

Therefore, a fundamental way to assess a leader's efficacy is to look at indicators of unhappiness among the workforce, especially when it comes to attitudes and views held by staff members that are determined by a variety of factors, the degree to which leaders satisfy the requirements and expectations of their followers, the capacity to improve the standard of business life and followers' skills, the capacity to support followers' psychological growth respect and appreciation that followers have for their leaders, opinions on how honest leaders are, readiness and dedication to comply with requests from leaders, tardiness, resignation, complaints, hiccups, and sabotage devices (Yukl, 2013).

We decided to use the perceptions of the subordinates in order to measure leader effectiveness. A leader's effectiveness might change based on the circumstances, the followers, and the organizational setting (Prochazka et al.,.2018). Subjective measurements, which record continuous views and experiences of leadership effectiveness throughout time, can facilitate investigating these dynamic features. Subjective metrics can also help leaders become more effective and modify their leadership style to better suit the demands of their followers and the organization by providing insights into their areas of strength and improvement.

2.2.2 Consequences

Effective leadership has a major impact on organizational dynamics and the motivation and commitment of employees. According to Lowe et al. (1996), effective leadership increases employee motivation and commitment, encourages selflessness, and motivates people to produce excellent work.

As Hogg (2001) suggests, the effectiveness of leadership affects the opinions, attitudes, norms, values, and behaviours that workers display towards the organization. Conger (1999) underscores the importance of leader effectiveness in establishing an organization's future vision, guaranteeing its people's commitment to it, and their focus on it.

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According to Ghasemy et al. (2018), a key factor in enhancing performance is the relationship between a leader and their subordinates, provided that the organization ensures effective leadership is practised there. Bass (Bass, 1985) emphasizes the significance of effective leadership since it has been shown to help small businesses perform even better than expected.

Furthermore, there is a reciprocal relationship between engaged workers and effective leadership. ACAS & Purcell (2010) suggest a theoretical connection between good leadership behaviours and employee engagement, viewing the latter as a positive consequence of the former.

In conclusion, effective leadership develops employee dedication, motivation, and engagement, shaping the organization's vision and culture. This leads to increased performance and overall success for the company.

2.2.3 Measurements

Erhart and Klein (2001) measure leader effectiveness through follower's perception of the leader's effectiveness. The assessment is a five-point scale that questions the subordinates on the degree to which they respond to a little or no extent to a great extent. The measure includes six questions that outline leader effectiveness: (1) subordinates' willingness to work at a high level of performance for the leader, (2) how much the subordinates enjoy working for the leader, (3) how well they get along with the leader, (4) the degree to which they admire the leader, (5) the degree to which they find their work styles compatible with the leader, and (6) whether they have similar ideals as the leader. The Cronbach's alpha for Erhart and Klein's leader effectiveness scale for this study was .94.

The Dhar and Mishra (2001) measure for leader effectiveness measured it in a service organization and had 24 items, assessing a leader's effectiveness using seven factors. Factors include facilitating, being accountable, influencing, inspiring, motivating, having a positive attitude, and monitoring. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, which asks employees to evaluate from a little or no extent to a great extent.

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The Yulk measure to assess the leader's effectiveness (Yukl, 2008) was completed by superiors as a measure of the superiors' assessment of the leader's effectiveness. The Yukl measure is a single-question questionnaire that asks the evaluator to rate a leader's effectiveness regarding his knowledge of other leaders. This measure of leader effectiveness was the first to be used to assess if standard method variance had the potential to be considered an issue in the study as it compared study results to leader effectiveness assessed by subordinates and supervisors.

Individuals are more effectively and efficiently represented thanks to the leader effectiveness organization (Yorges et al., 1999). As a result, several methods are used to assess a leader's efficacy in objective metrics, such as objective financial standards, sales, profit margins, market share, and stakeholder feedback (Prochazka & Smutny, 2011).

Developed by Bass and Avolio (1995), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is a commonly used instrument for evaluating transactional and transformational leadership behaviours. The MLQ includes 45 items, the last nine of which assess three leadership outcomes: effectiveness (4 items), extra effort (3 items), and satisfaction (2 items).

We chose to create a new measure as it enables us to customize the items and questions to more accurately capture effective leadership's essence and examine it from the standpoint of humble leadership. Since the other measurements were created more than 15 years ago and may not apply to current issues, we thought creating and evaluating a new measure would promote innovation and improvement in leader effectiveness research methodology.

2.3.Engagement

2.3.1 Definition

In his research on personal engagement, Kahn (1990) claimed that "the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles" constitutes engagement and that "people in engagement employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). Disengagement, on the other hand, entails removing employees from their job positions. "In disengagement, people withdraw

and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances"
(Kahn, 1990, p. 700).

In a broader sense, engagement refers to the mental state of being present when
performing an organizational function (Kahn, 1990, 1992). People behave and feel
attentively, connectedly, integrated, and purposefully when emotionally engaged with
their roles (Kahn, 1992). Individuals differ in how much they rely on themselves to fulfil
their functions or what Kahn (1990) considers "self-in-role." Consequently, when
someone is engaged, they stay true to the part they are currently playing.

More recently, and according to a recent systematic review of 214 engagement studies,
Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker's (2002) definition of employee
engagement is the most dominant in the literature (Bailey et al., 2015). They define
engagement as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by
vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74).

Although opinions differ among researchers on what constitutes employee
engagement, and many definitions have been proposed through the years, it is generally
agreed upon that employee engagement is a desired concept with organizational goals and
psychological and behavioural components (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

According to Gallup (2013), engaged workers have a significant favourable influence
on their companies because of their commitment, enthusiasm, and engagement in their
work. These employees are said to be devoted, passionate, and fully engaged in their
work, greatly enhancing the organization's performance (Gallup, 2013). This viewpoint
highlights the significance of employee engagement in promoting organizational
performance and the need to develop a workforce that is devoted to their jobs and
passionate about them.

2.3.2 Consequences

According to Kahn's (1992) model of psychological presence and Macey et al.'s
(2009) employee engagement value chain model, increased job performance is
anticipated to correlate directly with employee engagement. However, do performance
and employee engagement go hand in hand? Studies connecting employee engagement to

organizational results like return on assets (ROA) and profit are abundant. As stated by
Leiter and Bakker (2010), the impact of employee engagement on employees'
performance is extensive. When workers are engaged at work, they have the energy and
concentration to give their jobs their all. Their primary tasks are performed better because
of this intense focus. They possess the ability and drive to focus solely on the job.

According to academic research, workers may also become so engrossed in their work
that they bring it home (Bakker et al., 2013). Work-life difficulties and workaholism may
result from this (Van Beek, Taris, & Schaufeli, 2011).

Additionally, academics contend that employee engagement positively affects
turnover intention (Caesens et al., 2016). Engaged workers may believe that their
employer needs to value the considerable effort they put into their work. They may hunt
for other employment (Caesens et al., 2016). However, many academics contend that
there is a negative correlation between strong employee engagement and the intention to
leave (Halbesleben, 2010). In conclusion, opinions regarding the relationship between
behavioural correlates and employee engagement can differ significantly. Furthermore,
although the relationships between job engagement and its achievement and mental
outcomes are more precise, there is still much variation in these relationships across
research (Christian et al., 2011).

Engaged individuals perform better both within and outside of their roles (Alfes and
Shantz, 2011; Ariani, 2013), have more extraordinary inventiveness (Chughtai, 2013),
increased productivity (Chaurasia and Shukla, 2013), decreased absence rates and fewer
intentions to quit their jobs (Chughtai, 2013). Conversely, disengaged workers claim to
be dissatisfied with their careers yet fail to participate in their jobs actively (Gallup, 2013).

Macey et al. (2009) have highlighted the virtues of employee engagement as a critical
factor influencing not only organizational efficiency, efficacy, retention, profitability, and
even return on investment but also individual attitudes, conduct, and efficiency, and that
engagement can provide businesses with an edge over their competitors. Macey et al.
(2009) demonstrated that the highest 25% engagement score of an examination of 65
businesses across multiple sectors had a more significant profit margin, a greater return
on assets (ROA), and an intrinsic value over twice as high as the bottom 25%.

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The Job Demand-Resources model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) is an experimentally proven, straightforward model that explains the links between leadership, employee well-being, job (and personal) traits, and outcomes. It states that having job resources and effective management techniques benefits employee engagement. Positive emotions, a solid commitment to their work, and a high level of vigour and excitement when completing tasks are all indicators of engaged personnel. The model states that because employees are driven to go above and beyond in their jobs, actively seek out possibilities for growth, and contribute to the company's success, engaged employees are more likely to display higher levels of job performance. Finally, because engaged workers experience higher levels of fulfilment, satisfaction, and a sense of connection to their work and organization, the model also links engagement to improved well-being, including lower stress levels, burnout, and desire to leave.

2.3.3 Mesurements

Some recent models and ideas in the literature have produced a framework for measuring and improving employee engagement. For instance, according to his anthropological research, Kahn (1990) proposed that psychological safety, availability, and meaningfulness are the three characteristics that determine individual engagement.

May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) implemented Kahn's psychological states and designed a scale to evaluate how people express themselves emotionally, cognitively, and physically in their work. May et al. (2004) also looked into Kahn's (1990) three engagement-related psychological requirements.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, created by Schaufeli and Bakker in 2004, was initially designed to conceptualize employee engagement as the antithesis of burnout. Using exploratory factor analysis, they discovered three unique components of employee engagement consistent with their conceptualization: vigour, dedication, and absorption, which are the opposites of cynicism, inefficacy, and exhaustion, respectively. Though the UWES still has the same basic scale structure, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) have since pointed out that engagement is different from burnout.

Currently, the UWES is the most widely used tool for evaluating employee engagement at work (Shuck, 2011), so we decided to use it in this study. The 17-item

scale will be employed in this study instead of the 9-item measure since it has more empirical support and because the 9-item measure tends to exhibit a slightly weaker fit than the 17-item scale for Schaufeli et al.'s notion of employee engagement for the majority of samples analyzed.

2.4.Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

In this section, the hypotheses developed in the study will be presented and justified by the literature review. These hypotheses concern the relationships established between humble leadership and leader effectiveness and between leader effectiveness and employee engagement, which resulted in the conceptual model used in the empirical study. Firstly, three theories applied to various relationships in the developed model will be presented.

2.4.1 Humble Leadership and Employee Engagement

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the associated reciprocity norm (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) explain the connection between employee engagement and leader success. The theory suggests that when specific "rules of exchange" are followed, employees actively participate in relationships characterized by trust, loyalty, and mutual commitment. Thus, when managers exhibit behaviours that benefit the company, they foster an environment where workers view their workplace as supportive. Workers reciprocate this perception by participating fully in work practices and acting cooperatively, which benefits the company. According to social exchange theory, when workers believe their leaders are establishing an equitable workplace where their contributions are valued, they will respond favourably by acting in a way that increases employee engagement.

Various articles have found a positive relationship between humble leadership and employee engagement (e.g., Basford et al. 2014; Ding et al., 2020; Cheung et al., 2020; Owens et al., 2013; Owens et al., 2015; Chiu et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2019; Zhong et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2019). Drawing from them, the first hypothesis studied was the following:

H1: The perception of Humble Leadership is positively related to employee engagement.

2.4.2 *Humble Leadership and Leader Effectiveness*

The Social Information Processing Theory, created by Salancik and Pfeffer in 1978, is the most frequently used to investigate humble leadership.

This theory's basic premise is that the internalisation of social information from other actors' shapes attitudes and behaviours. Within the framework of humble leadership, Wang, Owens, et al. (2018) aptly note that "the social cues provided by the leader in displaying humility reflect salient and relevant information that helps followers interpret the meaning of their environments and shapes their social construction of the workplace". Several academics use social information processing theory to explain humble leadership. (e.g., Naseer et al., 2020; Wang, Owens, et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2019). For example, Chiu et al. (2016) utilise this theory to demonstrate how team member participation in shared leadership is impacted by humble leadership. Ou et al. (2014) assert that a humble CEO's influence is a process that shapes followers' attitudes and actions. They also note that CEO humility has a beneficial impact on empowering leadership behaviours, which affects the integration of the top management team (TMT). The theory of social information processing is a valuable prism through which followers' cognitive reactions to humble leadership can be viewed.

Several studies have discovered a positive connection between humble leadership and effectiveness (e.g., Chiu et al. 2016; Ou et al. 2014; Owens and Hekman 2016; Rego et al. 2017). In light of this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: The perception of leader humility is positively related to leader effectiveness.

2.4.3 Leader Effectiveness and Employee Engagement

The JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) paradigm classifies effective leadership as a job resource. Good work environments are facilitated by supportive and empowering leadership behaviours such as giving constructive criticism, acknowledgement, growth opportunities, and open communication. Workplace engagement, motivation, and feeling appreciated increase when employees view their leaders as capable and supportive. Effective leaders can also lessen supervisory expectations that might lead to employee stress and disengagement. Leaders who tackle these issues foster a more favourable work atmosphere where workers can concentrate on their responsibilities without feeling overburdened or burned out, which raises employee engagement. Employee engagement and commitment to accomplishing company objectives are higher when employees believe their work has a purpose and aligns with their beliefs. In addition to fostering psychological safety and trust, effective leaders encourage risk-taking, open communication, and teamwork among their followers. Employee engagement is higher when employees feel psychologically comfortable sharing ideas, speaking opinions, and expressing problems without fear of retaliation.

A few articles were found that studied the relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee engagement (Gyensare et al., 2019; Moore and Hanson, 2022; Theriou et al., 2020); however, these were found in fewer numbers than those relating humble leadership to employee engagement and humble leadership to effectiveness, as so, and in an effort to contribute to future studies, the following hypothesis was tested:

H3: The perception of leader effectiveness is positively related to employee engagement

Considering that humble leadership has the capability to lead to leader effectiveness, we decided to add an extra test and evaluate the mediator role of leader effectiveness between humble leadership and employee engagement.

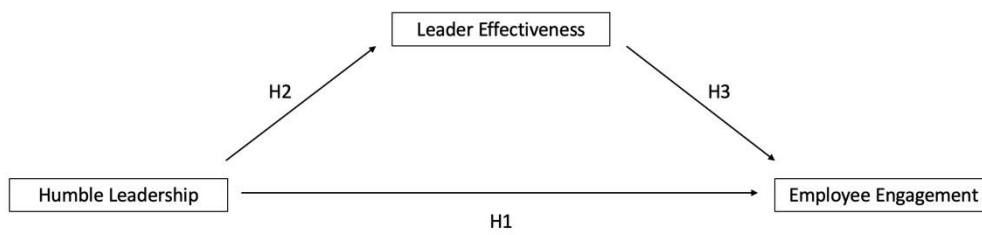Can Humble Leadership Lead to Employee Engagement? The Mediating Role of
Leader Effectiveness

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Adopted from Zhong et al. (2019)

3. EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1.Method

The present study was carried out using a quantitative methodology. The questionnaire survey method was utilized to gather the required quantitative data as it is an inexpensive strategy that makes data processing easier later on. The questionnaire was prepared and published through the Qualtrics online platform, and its dissemination was facilitated by sharing it on Instagram and WhatsApp groups. The data was collected in a one-month time period between the 17th of December 2023 and the 17th of January 2024.

3.1.1 Participants

The present study sample includes the contribution of 132 individuals.

Of the total respondents, 71% were female, 59% were male, and two considered themselves as other.

The age range of respondents was very diverse, with 12,1% aged between 18 and 30 years old, 15,2% between 31 and 40 years old, 24,2% between 41 and 50 years old, 26,5% between 51 and 60 years old, and 22% were older than 60 years old.

Of the respondents, 24,2% were single, and 75,8% had other marital status (such as married 59,8%, divorced 12,9%, widowed 2,3%, or other 0,8%). Of them, 73,5% had children, and 25,8% did not.

Regarding education, 41,7% of respondents have a bachelor's degree, 28% have secondary education, 24,2% have a master's degree, and 6,1% have a doctorate.

As for the current occupation, 64,4% of respondents reveal that they are in open-ended employment contracts (effective), followed by 20,5% of independent workers, 5,3% fixed-term employment contracts (not effective), and 9,9% interns or other.

Regarding the sector of work, 64% of respondents mentioned they occupied a position in the private with profit sector, 23% as of the present moment work in the public sector and 13% work in the private non-profit sector.

Of the total number of respondents, 34,8% have worked in the present company for more than 20 years, 23,5% have worked there between 1 and 5 years, 15,2% for less than a year, 14,4% between 11 and 20 years, and 12,1% between 6 and 10 years.

At the position inside the company level, 34,1% of respondents are qualified professionals, 18,9% are highly qualified professionals, 15,9% are team leaders/ coordinators, 15,2% are middle managers, 10,6% are top managers, and 4,5% are unqualified professionals.

When asked if the participant occupied a management position, 57,6% answered that they did not, and 42,4% said yes.

Lastly, 53,8% of respondents have a male leader, 36,4% have a female leader, and 8,3 do not specify the gender of their leader.

3.1.2 Data Collection Instruments

In the present study, three scales were used for all the questionnaires.

To measure Humble Leadership, Owens et al. (2013) 9-item scale was used. This scale was translated/ utilized and validated in the Portuguese language by Ribeiro (2015) and is divided into three parts: willingness to see oneself accurately (items 1,2 and 3), appreciation of others' strengths and contributions (items 4, 5 and 6) and teachability (items 7, 8 and 9), some examples of questions in the questionnaire are "My leader acknowledges when others have more knowledge and skills than him or herself" and "My leader shows appreciation for the unique contribution of others". For this questionnaire, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.936 was verified for the variable as a whole, and a Cronbach's alpha for each dimension was also tested to check for individual reliability. The dimension Accurate presented a value of 0.817, the dimension Appreciation a value of 0.841 and lastly, the dimension teachibility presented a value of 0.911 as Cronbach's alpha.

Seven items were used to measure Leader Effectiveness, the first five based on a questionnaire used in a paper by Lopes and Reis (2019) and two more developed for this study ("Helps you develop your strong points" and "Encourages information sharing among team members"). A Cronbach's alpha of 0.915 was verified for the variable as a whole, and between these seven questions, all questions had a total scale greater than 0.2.

The UWES scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) was used to measure Employee Engagement. Some examples of questions in this questionnaire are "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work" or "At my work I, always persevere, even when things do not go well". This scale was used in Portuguese (Angst, Benevides- Pereira, e PortoMartins, 2009); however, some words were modified to accommodate Portuguese wordage from Portugal. For this questionnaire, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.916 was verified for the variable as a whole, and all questions had a total scale greater than 0.2. The three dimensions inside the variable were also tested individually to check for individual reliability. For the dimension Absorption, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.791 was verified; for the dimension Dedication, a value of 0.858 was verified; and lastly, the dimension Vigour presented a Cronbach's alpha of 0.777 was verified.

A 5 point Likert scale was used for all the measures, where 1= Completelly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Do not agree or disagree, 2= Agree and 5= Completely agree.

3.2.Results

3.2.1 Mean and standard deviation in the total sample

After checking the scales' reliability, each variable's mean was calculated in the total sample. A five-point Likert Scale was used for all study variables, so the theoretical midpoint considered was 3. The results can be analyzed in detail in Appendix II.

All study variables denote a mean value in the total sample higher than the theoretical midpoint (3), with particular emphasis on the Engagement Dedication variable that presented a mean of response of 3.92 points and the variable Humbleness Accurate being the one with the lowest mean of all the questionnaire with a mean of response of 3.63 points. It can be noted that, on mean, the questionnaire respondents did not demonstrate problems in the total sample as all variables had a mean above the theoretical midpoint.

3.2.2 Analysis of Significant Differences in Sample Subgroups

Applying the Student's t-test and the ANOVA variance test, significant differences between sample subgroups were examined to address the second purpose stated in the introduction, which can be seen in greater analysis in Appendix II.

T-test is used to compare the mean of two groups, which is why Gender and marital status were included in the current study using it as a variable. An ANOVA variance test was performed for the other variables, as recommended for comparing two or more groups (Marôco, 2014).

When a group's differences are deemed significant, the significance value (p) must be less than 0.05. Given that there is a 95% likelihood that the sample's subgroups differ significantly from one another (Marôco, 2014).

Regarding Age, the variable humble leadership did not present significant differences (p=0.09). The dimensions of the variable were also tested and there are significant differences in the dimension Humbleness Appreciation (p=0,05), where respondents who are plus sixty years of age have the higher mean of response, with an above four mean (4,02) and respondents between 51 and 60 years of age presented the lowest mean of the respondents, with a value of 3.39 the dimensions Humbleness Teachability (p=0,86), Humbleness Accurate (p=0,34) were also tested but no significant differences were found.

The variable leader effectiveness did present significant differences (p=0,03), with the above sixty-year-old respondents having an above four mean (4,15) and the respondents with ages between 51 and 60 years presenting the lowest mean of response (3,49).

The variable engagement did also present significant differences (p=0,02) where above sixty-year-old respondents also had an above four mean (4,01), and the respondents between the ages of 18 and 30 years of age presented the lowest mean of response (3,40). The dimensions of the variable were also tested, and significant differences were found in the dimension Engagement Vigour (p=0,02), where above sixty-year-olds again present the highest mean of respondents with an above four mean (4,01) and respondents with ages between 18 and 30 years presented the lowest mean (3,39). Significant differences were also tested for the dimensions of Engagement Dedication (p=0,53) and Engagement Absorption (p=0,61), but they were not found.

Regarding Gender, the variable humble leadership did not present significant differences (p=0,20). The dimensions of the variable, Humbleness Accurate (p=0,28), Humbleness Appreciation (p=0,31), and Humbleness Teachability (p=0,97), were all tested and did not present significant differences.

The variable leader effectiveness did not present significant differences (p=0,24).

The variable engagement presented significant differences (p=0,02), where male respondents present a higher mean (3,85) than female respondents (3,62). The dimensions of the variable were also tested, and there are significant differences in the dimensions of Engagement Vigour (P= 0,01), where male respondents present a higher mean (3,82) than female respondents (3,54) and Engagement Dedication (P=0,026), where male respondents have a higher mean (4,05) than female respondents (3,82). The dimension Engagement Absorption (p=0,06) did not present significant differences.

Regarding Social Status, the variable humble leadership presented significant differences (p<0.01), where those who were not single had a higher mean (3,79) vs those who were (3,36). The dimensions of the variable were again tested, and significant differences were found in the variables Humbleness Accurate (P=0,01), where those who were not single had a higher mean (3,76) vs those who were (3,23) and Humbleness Teachability (p=0,01) where respondents that were not single have a higher mean (3,89) and those who were (3,38). Significant differences were also tested for the dimension of Humbleness Appreciation (p=0.08) but were not found.

The variable leader effectiveness did not present significant differences (p=0,05)

The variable engagement did present significant differences (p=0.01), where those who were not single had a higher mean (3,79) vs those who were (3,53). All the dimensions inside the variable engagement also presented significant differences. Engagement Vigour (p=0,01), where single respondents have a lower mean (3,45) than non-single ones (3,74), Engagement Dedication (P=0,03), where non-single respondents have a close to four mean (3,98) and single ones have a mean of 3,73, and Engagement Absorption (P=0,03), where non-single respondents have a mean of 3,69 and single ones have a mean of 3,44.

Regarding Children, the variable humble leadership presented significant differences (p=0.03), where those who have children have a higher mean (3,81) than those who do not (3,44). The dimensions of the variable were also tested, and there are significant differences in the dimensions of Humbleness Accurate (p=0,02), where those who have children have a higher mean (3,76) than those who do not (3,32) and Humbleness Teachability (p=0,03), where those who have children presented a mean of 3,89 vs those

who do not have a 3,48 mean. The dimension of Humbleness Appreciation was also tested for significant differences, but none were found (P=0,07).

The variable leader effectiveness (p=0,02) also presented significant differences, where those who have children present a 3,81 mean and those who do not have a 3,47 mean.

The variable engagement also presented significant differences (p<0,01), where those who have children have a higher mean (3,82) than those who do not (3,47). The dimensions of the variable were also tested, and significant differences were found in the dimensions of Engagement Vigour (p<0,01) where those who have children also have a higher mean (3,77) vs those who do not (3,39), Engagement Dedication (p<0,01), where those who have children have an above four mean (4,00) and those who do not have a mean of 3,68 and Engagement Absorption (p<0,01), where those who have children have a mean of 3,71 and those who do not have a mean of 3,39.

Regarding Hierarchy, the variable humble leadership did not present significant differences (p=0.55). For the dimensions inside the variable, Humbleness Accurate (p=0,64), Humbleness Appreciation (p=0,61) and Humbleness Teachability (p=0,54), significant differences were also tested but not found.

The variable leader effectiveness did not also present significant differences (p=0,87).

The variable engagement did present significant differences (p=0,04), with those with a Top Management Position having the highest and an above-four mean (4,08) and those who are qualified professionals having the lowest mean (3,58). The dimensions of the variable were also tested, and significant differences were found in the dimension Engagement Absorption (p=0,05), with those with a Top Management Position having the highest and an above-four mean (4,04) and those who are non-qualified professionals having the lowest mean (3,44). Significant differences were also tested for the dimensions of Engagement Vigour (p=0,08) and Engagement Dedication (p=0,18), but they were not found.

In the Contractual Situation, the variable humble leadership did not present significant differences (p=0.41). The dimensions of the variable were also tested and no significant

differences were found, Humbleness Accurate (p=0,49), Humbleness Appreciation (p=0,19) and Humbleness Teachability (p=0,41).

The variable leader effectiveness did present significant differences (p=0,04) with those with a non-fixed-term contract, who represent 64% of the sample, having a lower mean (3,61) than those who have a fixed-term contract (3,88).

The variable engagement did not present significant differences (p=0,36). For the dimensions inside the variable, Engagement Vigour (p=0,34), Engagement Dedication (p=0,47) and Engagement Absorption (p=0,33), significant differences were also tested but were not found.

Regarding Management Position, the variable humble leadership did not present significant differences (p=0,26). For the dimensions inside the variable Humbleness Accurate (p=0,29), Humbleness Appreciation (p=0,36) and Humbleness Teachability (p=0,22), significant differences were also tested but not found.

The variable leader effectiveness did not present significant differences (p=0,34).

The variable engagement did not present significant differences (p=0,05). For the dimensions inside the variable, significant differences were also tested and were found in the variable Engagement Absorption (p=0,03), with people who work in a Management Position having a higher mean (3,76) compared to those who do not (3,54). The dimensions of Engagement Vigour (p=0,07) and Engagement Dedication (p=0,15) did not present significant differences.

The variables Sector of Work, Academic Level, Tenure and Gender of the Leader did not present significant differences for any of their subgroups.

3.2.3 Analysis of Structural Equations

We chose Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) to test the hypothesis under study and conducted data analysis with PLS (Partial Least Squares). Items that presented poor reliability (loadings below .6) were excluded from the analyses. Appendix III shows the final items that will be used for each construct and their means, standard deviations and loadings.

3.2.3.1 Measurement Validity and Reliability

Regarding reliability, all Cronbach alphas and all composite reliabilities for latent variables are above the acceptable internal consistency level of .7 (Hair et al., 2017) (Appendix IV). The standardized loadings of indicators are all larger than .6 (Appendix IV), which confirms indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2017).

Subsequently, we analyzed convergent and discriminant validity. The average variance extracted (AVE) by each variable exceeds the threshold of .5 (Appendix IV), indicating a high convergent validity and that the constructs are unidimensional (Hair et al., 2017). To complement the convergent validity analysis, we calculated bootstrap tstatistics of the indicators' standardized loadings (Hair et al., 2017). They were significant at the 1 per cent significance level, suggesting a high convergent validity of the measurement model.

We checked for discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio (Henseler et al., 2015). As Appendix V shows, the upper bound of the 95 per cent confidence interval of HTMT is lower than the more conservative threshold of .85. Thus, we can conclude that there are no discriminant validity problems.

We also tested the possibility of standard method bias since it may affect the study's validity. We used Kock's complete collinearity assessment approach (Kock, 2015). All the variance inflation factor values (VIF) were lower than the 5.0 threshold, suggesting that the model is free from common method bias.

3.2.3.2 Model Estimation Results

We then proceeded with the examination of the structural model to be able to test the research hypotheses (Henseler et al., 2009). As some path coefficients presented a t value above 1.96 (p < .05), they were, thus, deleted. Figure 2 depicts the final structural model.

Can Humble Leadership Lead to Employee Engagement? The Mediating Role of
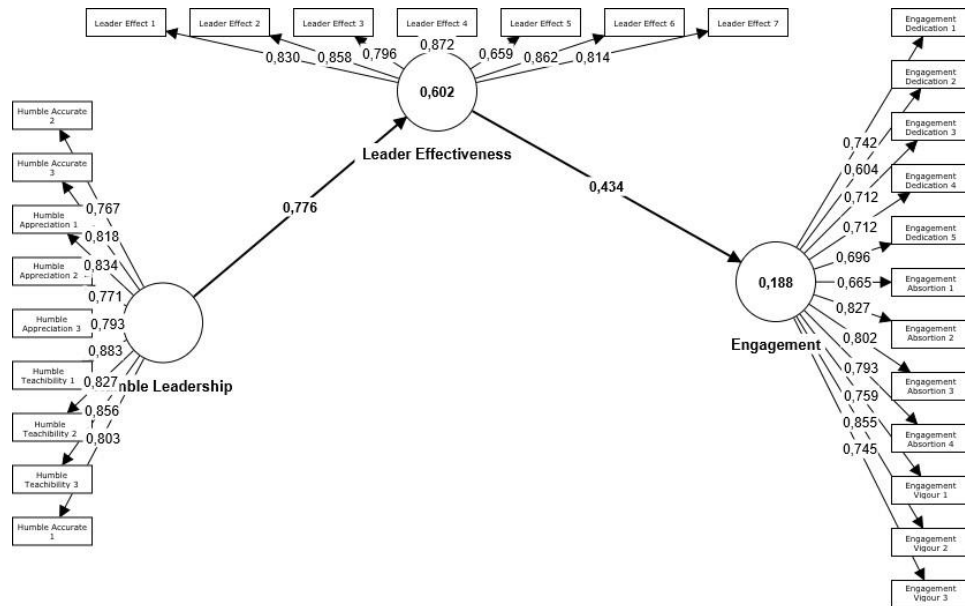Leader Effectiveness

Figure 2. Final Structural Model

Appendix VI shows all significant direct effects in the model and the effect sizes. According to Cohen (1988), effect sizes are weak for f2=0.02 or lower, moderate for f2=0.15 and strong for f2=0.35 or above. Humble Leadership has a positive significant effect on Leader Effectiveness (β =0.776; p<0.00; f2=1.511) as proposed (H2). Leader Effectiveness has a moderate effect on Employee Engagement (β = 0.434; p<0.00; f2=0.232), as hypothesized (H3). Hypothesis 1 was not verified since the relationship between humble leadership and engagement is not significant.

We analyzed the endogenous constructs' coefficient of determination (R2) to evaluate the model's explanatory power (Hair et al., 2017). The model explains 60,2% of the variance for Leader Effectiveness and 18,8% for Employee Engagement.

Further than the hypothesis, we also tested the indirect effects of the variables (Appendix VII) and concluded that the variable Leader Effectiveness has a mediator effect between the variable Humble Leadership and the variable Employee Engagement (β =0.337; p<0.00).

Finally, we analyzed predictive relevance, for which we used blindfolding to calculate Stone-Geiser's Q2. All the values of Q2 are above zero. Thus, we can consider the model to have predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017).

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Summary of results

The first objective of this study was to analyze the levels of perception of humble leadership, leader effectiveness, and employee engagement. For this, the need to group existing knowledge became evident. All study variables denoted a mean value in the total sample higher than the theoretical midpoint (3), with particular emphasis on the Engagement Dedication variable, which presented a mean response of 3.92 points, and the variable Humbleness Accurate, which had the lowest mean of all the questionnaires, with a mean response of 3.63 points.

Then, regarding study objective two, analyzing whether there are significant differences in the variables under study in different sample groups, we tried to gather workers' perceptions about their leaders through questionnaires. We concluded that after analyzing the variable humble leadership, significant differences were found in the variable age, with the lowest means being found in people between 51 and 60 years, in the variable social status, with those who were not single having the lowest means, and for the variable children, where those who did not have any children had the lowest means. Regarding the variable leader effectiveness, the lowest means were again found in people between 51 and 60 years of age, for those who did not have children, and for people who did not have a fixed-term contract. The variable engagement was the one where more significant differences were found. Regarding age, the lowest mean was found in people between 18 and 30 years of age; regarding gender, for women and social status, single people were the ones that presented the lowest mean. People who do not have children, who are not qualified professionals, and who do not work in management positions also presented the lowest means.

Lastly, considering study objective three, analyzing the relationships between humble leadership, leader effectiveness, and employee engagement, we concluded that, Humble Leadership has a positive significant effect on Leader Effectiveness as Hypothesis number 2 is verified, this is according to previous research (e.g., Chiu et al. 2016; Ou et al. 2014; Owens and Hekman 2016; Rego et al. 2016; Rego et al. 2017) Then, we verified that Leader Effectiveness has a moderate effect on Employee Engagement in Hypothesis

number 3, this is according to previous research (Gyensare et al., 2019; Moore and Hanson, 2021; Theriou et al., 2020). We were not able to verify the significance of the relationship between Humble Leadership and Engagement in Hypothesis Number 1, despite it having been researched before (e.g., Basford et al., 2014; Owens et al., 2013; Owens et al., 2015). Extending the hypothesis, we also examined the indirect effects of the variables and concluded that the variable Leader Effectiveness mediates the variables Humble Leadership and Employee Engagement.

To assess the model's explanatory power, we examined the endogenous constructs' coefficient of determination (R2) (Hair et al., 2017). The model explained 60,2% of the variance for Leader Effectiveness and 18,8% for Employee Engagement.

4.2. Study Contributions

Although previous research has shown that humble leadership contributes positively to employee engagement (Basford et al. 2014; Cheung et al., 2020; Chiu et al., 2016; Ding et al., 2020; Owens et al., 2013, 2015; Yang et al., 2019; Zhong et al., 2019) the mechanisms through which this impact occurs are still under-researched. Given the framework presented, this study was able to analyze, in the Portuguese organizational context, whether employees perceived their leader as humble and whether this impacted their engagement through their perceptions of leader effectiveness. Leader effectiveness was tested and validated as a positive mediator between the two variables.

In terms of future study contributions, this study provides essential guidance for Human Resources Managers, who will now have a clearer idea of the impact that humble leadership and leader effectiveness have on employee engagement. Some actions that companies can put in place based on the findings of the study are: develop management training programs, like seminars, workshops or coaching sessions, focused on humble leadership, implementing regular anonymous feedback systems on managers' leadership styles and effectiveness, incorporating measures of humble leadership and leader effectiveness into performance appraisal criteria for managers or organizing teambuilding activities that foster collaboration, trust and enjoyment among team members.

This study was also crucial in making a connection that had not been studied previously: how much employee engagement depends on leader effectiveness, leading to the credence of a humble leader.

Another contribution of the present study is that it contributes to future research. It enables the idea of incorporating humble leadership as an antecedent of employee engagement in the Job Demands-Resources Model, which was tested and validated in hypothesis number 3.

4.3. Study Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

The first limitation refers to the study context, where it is essential to consider that the findings were based on information collected from employees of organizations located in Portugal. Thus, results may not be generalized to other national or cultural contexts. It would be helpful for further investigators to study a more diverse, geographically speaking, sample. For this, we suggest that future research investigates the impact of humble leadership on interns and public sector workers, as those were the most miniature samples collected.

Additionally, the low representation of interns (2%), non-qualified professionals (4%), people who have PhDs (6%), and people who work in the public sector (22%) in the sample stand out. This was primarily because the sample was selected based on convenience, which creates restrictions regarding its representativeness. Regarding this aspect, we recommended that the model developed be analyzed considering different generations, namely generations Z, Y, and X, as well as to this study be applied to a specific sector of activity or organization in the future so that the sample obtained can be more representative and its results can be more conclusive.

Another limitation is that other studies have evaluated humble leadership using a humble leadership survey, and we have followed the same methodology. Because of this, almost all of the correlational field studies used multisource data to verify their theoretical relationships. Multisource data is preferred because it lessens the bias associated with conventional methods. Most research also employed temporal separation of their independent and dependent variables. By improving the ability to express the direction of

linkages, this temporal separation features a more robust research strategy than just gathering data at one moment. Studying other variables as mediators of the relationship between Humble Leadership and Employee Engagement could also be exciting and helpful in understanding the two concepts and how they are influenced. For this, we advise other investigators to go further inside the investigation of mediators between Humble Leadership and Employee Engagement variables.

Can Humble Leadership Lead to Employee Engagement? The Mediating Role of
Leader Effectiveness

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Can Humble Leadership Lead to Employee Engagement? The Mediating Role of Leader Effectiveness

Appendix I – STRUCTURAL EQUATIONS MODELLING

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Humbleness Accurate	3.6288	0.96561
Humbleness Appreciation	3.6818	0.89468
Humbleness Teachibility	3.7702	0.95633
Leader Effectiveness	3.7035	0.85726
Engagement Vigour	3.6692	0.65608
Engagement Dedication	3.9197	0.67172
Engagement Absortion	3.6301	0.67781

Appendix II – SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

	Group	Variable	Mean	F	Sig.
Age	Humbleness Appreciation	Total	3.6288	2.512	.045
		18-30 (N=16)	3.4792		
		31-40 (N=20)	3.6333		
		41-50 (N=32)	3.8229		
		51-60 (N=35)	3.3905		
		+60 (N=29)	4 0230		
	Leader Effectiveness	Total	3.7035	2.833	0.027
		18-30 (N=16)	3.6875		
		31-40 (N=20)	3.5857		
		41-50 (N=32)	3.6205		
		51-60 (N=35)	3.4857		
		+60 (N=29)	4.1478		
	Engagement Vigour	Total	3.6692	3.117	0.017
		18-30 (N=16)	3.3854		
		31-40 (N=20)	3.5833		
		41-50 (N=32)	3.6250		
		51-60 (N=35)	3.6048		
		+60 (N=29)	4.0115		

Gender	Engagement Vigour	Female (N=71)	3.5446	2.258	0.009
		Male (N=59)	3.8192		

	Engagement Dedication	Female (N=71)	3.8197	0.471	0.028
		Male (N=59)	4.0475		
Social Status	Humbleness Accurate	Single (N=32)	3.2292	7.871	0.013
		Other (N=100)	3.7567		
	Humbleness Teachibility	Single (N=32)	3.3854	5.695	0.010
		Other (N=100)	3.8933		
	Engagement Vigour	Single (N=32)	3.4479	0.247	0.014
		Other (N=100)	3.7400		
	Engagement Dedication	Single (N=32)	3.7250	0.177	0.030
		Other (N=100)	3.9820		
	Engagement Absortion	Single (N=32)	3.4375	0.067	0.032
		Other (N=100)	3.6917		
Children	Humbleness Accurate	Yes (N=97)	3.7629	4.795	0.021
		No (N=34)	3.3235		
	Humbleness Teachibility	Yes (N=97)	3.8900	5.218	0.027
		No (N=34)	3.4804		
	Leader Effectiveness	Yes (N=97)	3.8056	0.016	0.023
		No (N=34)	3.4706		
	Engagement Vigour	Yes (N=97)	3.7663	1.019	0.002
		No (N=34)	3.3873		
	Engagement Dedidcation	Yes (N=97)	4.0041	0.066	0.007
		No (N=34)	3.6765		
	Engagement Absortion	Yes (N=97)	3.7131	0.000	0.008
		No (N=34)	3.3873		

Hierarchy	Engagement Absortion	Top Manager (N=14)	4.0357	2.216	0.046
		Middle Manager (N=20)	3.6083		
		Team Leader (N=21)	3.8889	2.216	0.046
		Highly Qualified (N=25)	3.5933		
		Qualified (N=45)	3.4519		
		Non-Qualified (N=6)	3.4444		
Contractual Situation	Leader Effectiveness	Non fixed- term (N=85)	3.6084	3.571	0.043
		Other (N=47)	3.8754		
Management Position	Engagement Absortion	Yes (N=56)	3.7589	0.269	0.030
		No (N=76)	3.5351		

Appendix III - MEANS. STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND STANDARDIZED LOADINGS OF

INDICATORS

	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Loading	*t-test*	*p-value*
Humble Leadership	Accurate1	3.56	1.107	0,803	19,291	0.000
	Accurate2	3.72	1.128	0,767	16,158	0.000
	Accurate3	3.61	1.151	0,818	23,807	0.000
	Appreciat1	3.98	0.895	0,834	26,773	0.000
	Appreciat2	3.45	1.114	0,771	18,355	0.000
	Appreciat3	3.62	1.060	0,793	15,522	0.000
	Teachibility1	3.71	1.109	0,883	42,599	0.000
	Teachibility2	3.88	0.981	0,827	22,682	0.000
	Teachibility3	3.72	1.021	0,856	36,062	0.000
Leader Effectiveness	Effect1	3.72	0.975	0,830	26,064	0.000
	Effect2	3.76	1.020	0,858	30,392	0.000
	Effect3	3.84	1.054	0,796	20,131	0.000
	Effect4	3.68	1.141	0,872	36,230	0.000
	Effect5	3.67	0.962	0,659	8,264	0.000
	Effect6	3.55	1.108	0,862	36,630	0.000
	Effect7	3.71	1.095	0,814	27,365	0.000
Employee Engagement	Absor1	3.89	0.986	0,742	13,857	0.000
	Absor2	3.40	0.980	0,604	8,880	0.000
	Absor3	3.71	0.929	0,712	11,599	0.000

Absor4	3.62	0.825	0,712	10,170	0.000
Absor5	3.75	0.868	0,696	12,171	0.000
Dedic1	4.14	0.769	0,665	9,235	0.000
Dedic2	3.73	1.033	0,827	28,651	0.000
Dedic3	3.67	0.835	0,802	21,724	0.000
Dedic4	4.07	0.783	0,793	19,282	0.000
Vigor1	3.62	0.969	0,759	17,461	0.000
Vigor2	3.76	0.926	0,855	22,562	0.000
Vigor3	327	1.049	0,745	14,525	0.000

Appendix IV - RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY MEASURES

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Humble Leadership	0.938	0.948	0.669
Leader Effectiveness	0,915	0.933	0.666
Employee engagement	0,927	0.937	0.556

Appendix V - HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATIO

	Humble Leadership	Leader Effectiveness	Employee Engagement
Humble Leadership			
Leader Effectiveness	0.826 0.418		
Employee engagement		0.460	

Appendix VI - SIGNIFICANT DIRECT EFFECTS AND EFFECT SIZES

Hypotheses	Relationships	B	f^2	t-test	P-value
H1	Humble Leadership -> Leader Effectiveness	0.776	**1.511**	18.691	0.000
H2	Leader Effectiveness -> Employee Engagement	0.434	**0.232**	5.700	0.000

Appendix VII - SIGNIFICANT INDIRECT EFFECTS

Relationships	B	t-test	P-value
Humble Leadership -> Leader Effectiveness -> Employee Engagement	0.337	5,149	0.000

Appendix VIII - Questionnaire

O presente estudo faz parte de uma dissertação de Mestrado que estou a realizar no ISEG – Lisbon School of Economics & Management, Universidade de Lisboa. Agradeço a sua colaboração, essencial para a realização deste trabalho.

Objetivo do estudo: O principal objetivo é analisar estilos de liderança e as suas consequências para os membros dos grupos de trabalho.

Procedimentos: O questionário é composto por diversas afirmações, em relação às quais terá de indicar a sua concordância consoante a escala apresentada. No final, solicita-se que responda a alguns dados sociodemográficos, tais como idade e nível de escolaridade.

Duração prevista: O preenchimento do questionário tem uma duração aproximada de 5 minutos.

Confidencialidade: As informações que prestar, no decurso do presente estudo, serão tratadas com confidencialidade. O estudo não divulga nenhum dado que possa identificar o participante. Não haverá perguntas que peçam para se identificar ou qualquer elemento que comprometa o anonimato.

Participação voluntária: A sua participação neste estudo é completamente voluntária. Note que é livre para não participar ou parar de participar a qualquer momento antes de enviar as suas respostas.

Direito de se retirar do estudo: Tem o direito de se retirar do estudo a qualquer momento, sem penalidades.

Como desistir do estudo: Se quiser desistir do estudo, basta clicar no botão "Fechar" do Qualtrics.
Por razões metodológicas, este questionário destina-se a pessoas de idade igual ou superior a 18 anos. Por favor não prossiga se tiver menos de 18 anos ou se não tiver experiência profissional superior a 6 meses.

Se tiver dúvidas sobre o estudo ou precisar de relatar um problema relacionado com o mesmo, entre em contacto com: Teresa Canotilho dos Santos, l58436@aln.iseg.ulisboa.pt.

ISEC Lisbon School of Economics & Management
Universidade de Lisboa

As seguintes afirmações referem-se a comportamentos de pessoas em cargos de chefia. Para cada um deles, **indique até que ponto se verificam no caso concreto da sua chefia direta**.

A minha chefia direta:

	Discordo Totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo Totalmente
Procura obter feedback (isto é, opiniões e comentários) acerca das suas ações, mesmo que seja crítico para ele/a	O	O	O	O	O
Quando não sabe fazer algo, admite que não sabe	O	O	O	O	O
É capaz de reconhecer quando os outros têm mais capacidades ou conhecimentos do que ele/a	O	O	O	O	O
É capaz de reconhecer as forças dos outros	O	O	O	O	O
Elogia frequentemente os outros pelas suas forças	O	O	O	O	O
Mostra que valoriza as contribuições únicas dos outros	O	O	O	O	O
Mostra que está disposto/a a aprender com as outras pessoas	O	O	O	O	O

	Discordo Totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo Totalmente
Mostra abertura às ideias dos outros	O	O	O	O	O
Mostra abertura aos conselhos dos outros	O	O	O	O	O
Dirige com sucesso as atividades do grupo	O	O	O	O	O
Contribui para a eficácia do grupo	O	O	O	O	O
Tem uma postura que faz com que tenha respeito por ele	O	O	O	O	O
Preocupa-se em ensinar	O	O	O	O	O
Faz com que os elementos da equipa façam mais do que é esperado	O	O	O	O	O
Auxilia no desenvolvimento dos pontos fortes dos membros do grupo de trabalho	O	O	O	O	O
Promove a partilha de informação entre membros do grupo de trabalho	O	O	O	O	O

0%   100%

→

Nesta questão deverá **pensar no seu emprego atual e assinalar o seu grau de concordância com cada afirmação**. Todas as respostas são corretas desde que correspondam ao que pensa e sente.

	Discordo Totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo Totalmente
No meu trabalho sinto-me cheio/a de energia	○	○	○	○	○
Acho que o meu trabalho tem muito significado e utilidade	○	○	○	○	○
O tempo passa a voar quando estou a trabalhar	○	○	○	○	○
No meu trabalho sinto-me com força e dinamismo	○	○	○	○	○
Estou entusiasmado/a com o meu trabalho	○	○	○	○	○
Quando estou a trabalhar esqueço tudo o que se passa à minha "volta"	○	○	○	○	○
O meu trabalho inspira-me	○	○	○	○	○
Quando me levanto de manhã apetece-me ir trabalhar	○	○	○	○	○
Sinto-me feliz quando estou a trabalhar intensamente	○	○	○	○	○

	Discordo Totalmente	Discordo	Não concordo nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo Totalmente
Estou orgulhoso/a do que faço neste trabalho	○	○	○	○	○
Estou imerso/a no meu trabalho	○	○	○	○	○
Sou capaz de ficar a trabalhar por períodos de tempo muito longos	○	○	○	○	○
O meu trabalho é desafiante para mim	○	○	○	○	○
"Deixo-me ir" quando estou a trabalhar	○	○	○	○	○
Sou uma pessoa com muita resistência mental no meu trabalho	○	○	○	○	○
É-me difícil desligar do meu trabalho	○	○	○	○	○
No meu trabalho sou sempre perseverante (não desisto), mesmo quando as coisas não estão a correr bem	○	○	○	○	○

40%   100%

→

Neste bloco irá encontrar algumas questões relativas aos seus dados sociodemográficos.

Idade:

- ○ 18 a 25 anos
- ○ 26 a 30 anos
- ○ 31 a 40 anos
- ○ 41 a 50 anos
- ○ 51 a 60 anos
- ○ Mais de 60 anos

Género:

- ○ Feminino
- ○ Masculino
- ○ Outro
- ○ Prefiro não mencionar

Estado civil:

- ○ Solteiro(a)
- ○ Casada(a) / União de facto
- ○ Divorciado(a)
- ○ Viuvo(a)
- ○ Outro

Tem filhos?

- ○ Sim
- ○ Não

Setor de atividade:

- ○ Setor público
- ○ Setor privado com fins lucrativos
- ○ Setor privado sem fins lucrativos

Situação contratual:

- ○ Contrato de trabalho sem termo (efetivo)
- ○ Contrato de trabalho a termo (não efetivo)
- ○ Trabalhador independente
- ○ Estagiário(a)
- ○ Outro

Número de anos na organização:

- ○ Menos de 1 ano
- ○ 1 a 5 anos
- ○ 6 a 10 anos
- ○ 11 a 15 anos
- ○ 16 a 20 anos
- ○ Mais de 20 anos

Que cargo ocupa na sua organização?

- ○ Gestor de topo
- ○ Gestor intermédio
- ○ Coordenador / Responsável de equipa
- ○ Profissional altamente qualificado
- ○ Profissional qualificado
- ○ Profissional não qualificado

90%   100%

→