Check for updates

Received: 17 December 2019 | Revised: 19 April 2022 | Accepted: 1 June 2022

DOI: 10.1002/job.2649

RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY Journal of Organizational Behavior

Start with why: The transfer of work meaningfulness from leaders to followers and the role of dyadic tenure

Petra Kipfelsberger[1] | Anneloes Raes[2] | Dennis Herhausen[3] | Ronit Kark[4] | Heike Bruch[1]

[1]Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management, University of St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland

[2]Department Managing People in Organizations, IESE Business School, University of Navarra, Barcelona, Spain

[3]School of Business and Economics, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

[4]Department Psychology, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel

Correspondence
Petra Kipfelsberger, Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management, University of St. Gallen, Dufourstrasse 40a, 9000 St. Gallen, Switzerland.
Email: petra.kipfelsberger@unisg.ch

Funding information
Basic Research Fund of the University of St. Gallen, Grant/Award Number: 1031527

Summary

Leaders are expected to enhance the work meaningfulness of followers, but little insight exists on the role of leaders' own experience of meaningfulness in that process. We propose a leader–follower transfer model of work meaningfulness through visionary leadership, grounded in self-concept-based theory, in which leader–follower dyadic tenure shapes the effects of visionary leadership on followers. Moreover, we suggest that work meaningfulness can enhance followers' goal achievement and reduce turnover intentions. We tested and confirmed our moderated-mediation model in two independent, multisource, multilevel field data sets of 79 mid-level leaders and 871 employees in Study 1 and 68 CEOs and 596 mid-level leaders in Study 2. We also empirically ruled out a series of alternative transfer mechanisms, including transformational and transactional leadership, leader–member exchange, and all subdimensions of transformational leadership. This research contributes to the scholarly discussions on work meaningfulness and visionary leadership and offers novel insights for practitioners to enhance work meaningfulness in their organizations.

KEYWORDS
dyadic tenure, multilevel structural equation modeling, self-concept-based theory, visionary leadership, work meaningfulness

1 | INTRODUCTION

People cherish and actively seek meaning in their work and life (Baily & Madden, 2016; Frankl, 1963; Heine et al., 2006), but ongoing global disruptions make it increasingly challenging for many employees to experience their work as positive and significant, that is, meaningful[1] (Gast et al., 2020; Knowles et al., 2021; Van Dierendonck & Sousa, 2016). Work meaningfulness is enhanced when people experience a connection between themselves and "something bigger" to which they contribute with their work (Both-Nwabuwe et al., 2017; Rosso et al., 2010). In organizations, leaders often act as meaning makers who connect followers' selves at work to the collective self of the organization (Carton, 2018; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Stam et al., 2014). In the face of widespread disruption and uncertainty, leaders may thus help followers in the ongoing process of meaningfulness construction and thereby contribute to increased levels of well-being, talent retention, and goal accomplishment among their workforce (Allan et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010).

In both research and society, there is increasing interest in understanding how leaders bring part of themselves to their leadership behavior (e.g., DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Howe et al., 2021; Porter, 2019). While research traditionally has focused on leadership as the execution of a specific function or role, scholars increasingly are interested in the person behind the leader (Shamir, 1991; Zhu et al., 2019).

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes.
© 2022 The Authors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

This interest has materialized in a widespread societal imperative for leaders to be authentic role models (Eldor, 2021) and a surge of research into how leaders' personal experiences and characteristics feed into the way they lead followers. Examples include investigation into the transfer of leader passion (Ho & Astakhova, 2020; Jachimowicz et al., 2021), leader regulatory focus (Johnson et al., 2017), and leader citizenship behaviors (Yaffe & Kark, 2011). This research suggests that an essential prerequisite for leaders to stimulate (positive) work experiences in their followers is to have that same experience themselves. It emphasizes that characteristics of the leader–follower relationship may critically shape such transfer processes (cf. Martin et al., 2019; Wo et al., 2019). In light of the increased need for work meaningfulness in organizations and society, we propose a leader–follower transfer model to help people and organizations achieve meaningfulness as a core human need.

Self-concept-based theory suggests that when leaders express key aspects of their inner experiences in their leadership behavior, it can critically connect to followers' self-related work experiences by contributing to fulfilling their needs for a defined and stable self-concept (Shamir, 1991; Shamir et al., 1993; Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998). To further detail the process of connecting leader and followers' work meaningfulness, we build on the research on visionary leadership—those behaviors through which leaders develop, articulate, and inspire others via an idealized future-oriented image of a collective (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 1990; van Knippenberg et al., 2014). Visionary leadership contains relevant information on the organization's collective possible self (Carton, 2018; Stam et al., 2014, 2010). It may thereby help followers see how their work contributes to "something bigger," the core aspect of the experience of meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010). Moreover, based on the self-concept theory's argument on self-concept stability and the notion that experiences at work are stabilized over time by repeated exposure to the same leader (cf. Carton, 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Tommasi et al., 2020), we propose leader–follower dyadic tenure as a key moderator in the transfer of work meaningfulness through visionary leadership.

We contribute to the literature on work meaningfulness and leadership in three main ways. First, we develop and test a model on how leaders can draw on their inner experience of meaningfulness to shape their employees' experience of meaningfulness, even when both entities have inherently different work activities and thus may draw from different meaning sources. In this way, our theoretical framework integrates the seemingly contradictory notions that work meaningfulness can be individually constructed *and also* be shaped by others' points of view, thereby advancing recent calls to use paradoxical thinking in answering open questions on the nature and process of meaningfulness (Bailey et al., 2019; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017). Our empirical tests in two field studies at different levels of management that ruled out a set of theoretically relevant alternative leadership behaviors provide confidence in our conclusions. This can help meaningfulness scholars achieve more precise insight into the antecedents and mechanisms of this important employee experience.

Second, we contribute to the visionary leadership literature by addressing work meaningfulness as both a determinant and an outcome of visionary leadership. Prior research has related visionary leadership to perceived leader effectiveness (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Tichy & Devanna, 1990), perceived organizational effectiveness (e.g., Taylor et al., 2014), and customer and employee satisfaction (Dumdum et al., 2002; Lowe et al., 1996), but we know of no research that has assessed work meaningfulness as either an antecedent or a consequence of visionary leadership. We further contribute by assessing visionary leadership as a key leadership style (i.e., rather than as one facet of the broad style of transformational leadership; cf. van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013) by empirically ruling out seven alternative leadership styles (i.e., all other dimensions of transformational leadership, leader–member exchange [LMX], and transactional leadership). This offers relevant new insights into the specific dimensions that evoke leadership effects in the context of work meaningfulness (Carton et al., 2014; van Knippenberg et al., 2014; van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Additionally, our empirical results include both upper and middle management; we emphasize the relevance of visionary leadership across different managerial levels, not just at the higher echelons of management (cf. Lewis & Clark, 2019).

Third, we provide additional insight into the boundary conditions for how visionary leadership shapes the work meaningfulness of followers. Applying the self-concept-based theory and understanding that "time" is a significant and under-researched topic in leader–follower relationships (Kark & Van Dijk, 2019; Shamir, 2011; Vantilborgh et al., 2018), we demonstrate that leader–follower relationship tenure shapes how visionary leadership relates to follower work meaningfulness. While scholars have pointed to leader–follower relationship tenure as a key contingency for leadership effects (Shamir, 2011; see also Dvir et al., 2002), there are few empirical insights on its role in ongoing leadership processes (Kark & Van Dijk, 2019; Shamir, 2011). By theorizing and confirming the relevance of leader–follower dyadic tenure to visionary leadership and work meaningfulness, we hope to inspire scholars to advance further insight on the role of this contingency factor using the lens of self-concept theory (Kark & Van Dijk, 2019; Shamir, 2011). For practitioners, our research suggests that leaders should first consider their own work meaningfulness when trying to enhance the work meaningfulness of others. They also should consider the duration of the leader–follower relationship as a key contingency of leadership influence. Figure 1 depicts this conceptual research model.

2 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Researchers have described the experience of meaningfulness as inherently paradoxical, as it is "a subjective assessment, yet also grounded in an external, objective context that shapes and legitimizes what may be considered meaningful by the individual" (i.e., Paradox 3, Bailey et al., 2019, p. 49; see also De Boeck

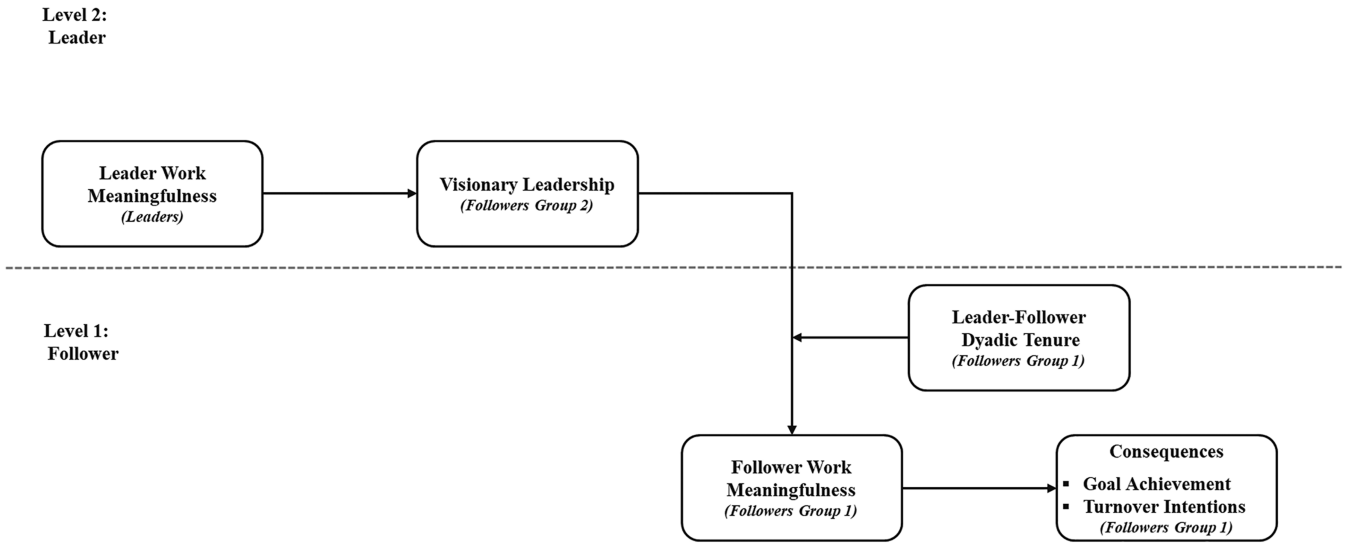


FIGURE 1 Research model

et al., 2019; Michaelson et al., 2014). Research emphasizing the subjective aspect of meaningfulness has outlined that "perceptions of meaningfulness must necessarily travel through the self" (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 115), implying that that the same job or work activity may be perceived as meaningful by one person, but not by another person (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Rosso et al., 2010). At the same time, scholars have emphasized that meaningfulness is contingent on an external, objective context that both shapes and legitimizes the subjective perspective, since contributing to something "beyond the self" is a key source of meaningfulness (Bailey et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010). As such, a theory on the transfer of meaningfulness should simultaneously address the self-based and social aspects of meaningfulness (cf. Bailey et al., 2019; Mitra & Buzzanell, 2017).

The meaningfulness experience is desirable, and prior research has demonstrated that employees tend to pick up on cues that indicate whether their activities at work are meaningful (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Rosso et al., 2010). The self-based nature of meaningfulness implies that employees are not passive recipients of these cues, but rather are "actively compos[ing] work meaning by what they notice and how they interpret the actions of others at work" (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003, p. 97), thereby implying an ongoing process of realization and justification (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). Employees are also likely to pay special attention to leaders' cues because they see leaders, who usually hold positions of authority and power, as organization representatives and sources of relevant information for how their own work is contributing to something beyond the self (e.g., Carton, 2018; Shamir & Lapidot, 2003; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). In line with Rosso et al. (2010), we therefore see the role of leaders as relevant and significant sources of information on how the external context "shapes and legitimizes what may be considered meaningful," and we specify this in terms of visionary leadership to conceptualize the "accounts" that shape how people internalize sources of external information (Bailey et al., 2019; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017).

2.1 | Leader work meaningfulness and visionary leadership

To develop our model for the transfer of meaningfulness from leaders to followers, we draw on self-concept-based theory, as proposed by Shamir et al. (1993) and others (Bono & Judge, 2003; Kark & van Dijk, 2007; Sosik & Dinger, 2007; Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998; van Knippenberg et al., 2004). According to this theory, leaders are motivated to enact part of their selves in the way they lead others because doing so establishes and affirms their own self-concept (Shamir et al., 1993). As such, leaders express who they are, what they find important, and what they would like to achieve in the organization via their daily communication and the use of deliberate rethoric toward their followers (Sosik & Dinger, 2007). This reasoning suggests that leaders who experience their work as highly meaningful will tend to communicate in a way that establishes and affirms the positive and significant aspects of the collective work of the organization. While leader work meaningfulness can be expected to transfer into multiple aspects of their leadership style, we are particularly interested in how this aspect manifests into visionary leadership, as such leadership behavior explicitly connects the individual selves of leaders to those of followers through the organization's collective possible and desired self (Stam et al., 2014, 2010), and since future selves are particularly relevant for meaningfulness (De Boeck et al., 2019).[2]

According to visionary leadership theory, leaders can differ in the extent and frequency that they refer to their organization's long-term vision, that is, the collective self of what the organization should be in the future (Stam et al., 2014, 2010). Visionary leadership research indicates that leaders who demonstrate visionary leadership more frequently, compared to those leaders who demonstrate visionary leadership less frequently, tend to refer more often to an inspiring future for the collective, refer more often to opportunities to achieve that vision, and are more easily able to get others to commit to that vision (Nanus, 1992; Sashkin, 1988; van Knippenberg et al., 2014). Prior

studies have established the positive consequences of visionary leadership for both individuals and organizations (e.g., DuBrin, 1998; Lee et al., 2013; Waldman et al., 2001), but less is still known on what drives leaders to show their visionary leadership (see Thoms & Greenberger, 1998). No research has directly assessed visionary leadership as it relates to work meaningfulness, but self-concept-based theory provides relevant insights for how leaders' work meaningfulness might relate to visionary leadership and followers' work meaningfulness.

Self-concept-based theory suggests that leaders behave in accordance with their inner convictions, values, and identities so as to fulfill their intrinsic needs for self-expression and self-consistency (Shamir et al., 1993). With high meaningfulness, leaders experience their work as contributing to something significant and positive, and should thus be more likely to engage in activities that express their perceived contribution, and do so more frequently, as compared to leaders who experience less work meaningfulness in order to maintain their own self-consistency (cf. Bono & Judge, 2003). Additionally, self-concept-based theory proposes that leaders are generally self-guided and rely on their own beliefs and ideas to guide their actions (Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998). As such, a high level of work meaningfulness may also inspire leaders to actively seek opportunities to express their conviction about doing something positive and significant for the organization and thereby think creatively about opportunities for their followers to connect to the same vision. With a lower level of meaningfulness, leaders have less sensation of doing something positive and significant, and hence, they may refer to a positive vision for the collective less frequently and enthusiastically.

Related empirical work has established that people with high meaningfulness tend to cognitively encode and retrieve information from the environment in a more abstract and broad way ("higher-level construal"), instead of a more detailed and concrete manner ("lower-level construal"; Carton, 2018; Davis et al., 2016; Trope & Liberman, 2010), perhaps because the higher-level construal makes it easier to make the connection between the self and something "bigger than the self" (cf. Rosso et al., 2010). Scholars in this line of work have also shown that people reflect and express their construal levels through their language (Reyt & Wiesenfeld, 2015; Semin & Fiedler, 1991) and that higher-level construal relates to the communication of a vision (Berson et al., 2015; Venus et al., 2019; Wiesenfeld et al., 2017), while lower-level construal relates to leadership behavior that emphasizes concrete goals and detailed plans. Based on the self-concept-based and visionary leadership theories and relevant empirical insights, we propose that leaders who experience a stronger sense of work meaningfulness will demonstrate visionary leadership more frequently, whereas leaders experiencing less work meaningfulness will demonstrate visionary leadership less frequently. Accordingly, we propose Hypothesis 1:

Hypothesis 1. Leaders' work meaningfulness positively relates to visionary leadership.

2.2 | Visionary leadership and followers' work meaningfulness

The self-concept-based and visionary leadership theories also suggest that visionary leadership may relate positively to followers' work meaningfulness. Previous research on work meaningfulness has shown that people in general tend to be alert during interpersonal interactions for precise cues related to the significance of their work (Carton, 2018; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Visionary leadership theory describes how leaders' vision communication affects followers' cognition and behavior through the elaboration of a collective possible self (Carton, 2018; Stam et al., 2014), which can provide useful input for people's intrinsic need for meaningfulness (cf. De Boeck et al., 2019; Frankl, 1963; Heine et al., 2006). A collective possible self represents an idealized, future-oriented image for an organization and thereby contains information for followers in terms of who they might become as part of the collective and how their activities can contribute to a shared purpose (Carton, 2018; Stam et al., 2014). Based on this prior work, we propose that visionary leadership provides relevant input for followers' work meaningfulness for three reasons.

First, leaders exert influence on followers' self-concept through frame alignment (Shamir et al., 1993). A prominent frame of meaning within an organization is its vision (Larwood et al., 1995). When leaders engage in visionary communication, they can influence employees' views of their current work and also their self-concept by linking them to an idealized, collective possible self (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). We know from the research on work meaningfulness that the experience of having a connection to a collective goal, indeed something bigger than the self, is a key aspect of the experience of meaningfulness, especially when this experience of connection provides an attractive version of the future self (De Boeck et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010). Since leaders are salient members of an employee's work environment (Farmer & Aguinis, 2005; Podolny et al., 2005), it is likely that their employees' meaningfulness is enhanced, when they provide positive cues and a meaningful rationale for followers regarding the importance and purpose of their work through visionary leadership.

Second, visionary leadership may also influence followers' attention processes. For instance, a leader may stress the routine aspects of the employees' work or emphasize that the organization changes the lives of customers. While the former example might turn followers' attention to how they are doing the same tasks again and again, the latter might draw followers' attention to the significance of that work and their jobs (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Because visions are likely to catch followers' attention and direct it to an idealistic future image, employees will gain more awareness about the significance of their work and hence be more likely to perceive their work as meaningful. This rationale is also in line with the dual conceptualization of meaningful work as both self-realization and justification (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), as visionary leadership provides relevant accounts to employees regarding the

worth of their work. Hence, an organizational vision is likely to become a mental anchor for followers to use to justify the value of their own work.

Third, employees' social identity is substantially influenced by what they do and the entities to which they belong (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Hence, the sensation of belonging to an organization in and of itself can be a source of work meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010). Through collective identity building (Brewer & Gardner, 1996), employees will see the organization as a community to which they feel either more or less committed, thereby become more or less willing to contribute to realizing its future, and from which they gain more or less personal meaningfulness. As a vision fosters the collective identity and defines who "we" want to become, that is, our possible collective self (Stam et al., 2014), more frequent references to this vision, and the ways to achieve it should emphasize how membership within this particular organization is special, enriching, and meaningful, as compared to less frequent references to that vision (Shamir et al., 1993). Visionary leadership can also provide followers with concrete inspirations and suggestions for an appealing identity and sense of belonging in the future, an aspect that scholars have empirically shown to be a key source of work meaningfulness (De Boeck et al., 2019). All in all, by using frame alignment, a focused direction of attention processes, and the positive expression of an appealing future social identity, we suggest that visionary leadership relates to the experience of work meaningfulness. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2. Visionary leadership positively relates to followers' work meaningfulness.

2.3 | The mediating role of visionary leadership

Based on self-concept-based theory and visionary leadership research, we propose that leaders' higher work meaningfulness relates to a higher level of visionary leadership (i.e., Hypothesis 1), which will subsequently relate to higher follower work meaningfulness (i.e., Hypothesis 2). As such, we argue that leaders can become carriers of meaningfulness in organizations by providing purpose and direction to followers through their own visionary behavior, while their aspirations and visions can serve as mental anchors for their followers to justify the worth of their work (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). Taken together, Hypotheses 1 and 2, therefore, imply a transfer model in which leaders' work meaningfulness indirectly enhances followers' work meaningfulness through the use of visionary leadership.[3] We therefore posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Leaders' work meaningfulness transfers to followers' work meaningfulness through the use of visionary leadership.

2.4 | The moderating role of leader–follower dyadic tenure

Self-concept-based theory also suggests contingencies for how leaders can shape followers' self-related experiences, such as meaningfulness. According to this perspective and other theories for how the self is shaped (Epitropaki et al., 2017; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007), it is likely that leaders will have greater influence on followers when the followers' self in terms of their work is less clearly defined and less stable. These followers will then rely more on external cues, such as those coming from leaders, to fulfill their needs for self-consistency and significance (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Many different work situations can shape whether the self-concept is more or less clearly defined and malleable, but we are particularly interested in the tenure of the leader-follower dyad (cf. Shamir, 2011; see also Dvir et al., 2002). We expect this dyadic tenure to be a relevant contingency for the visionary leadership-follower work meaningfulness relationship, because it can critically shape how receptive followers are to their leader's cues and information.

We have argued that visionary leadership shapes followers' work meaningfulness through frame alignment (Shamir et al., 1993), through directing more attention to the vision as a relevant justification of the significance of the work (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), and through enhancing the overall sense of organizational belonging (Rosso et al., 2010). While we know of no research that has directly assessed the role of leader–follower dyadic tenure in the precise context of visionary leadership and/or meaningfulness, there is related research that can inform these proposed relationships. Hoffman et al. (2011) found that the influence of transformational leaders on person–organization value congruence is partially contingent on followers' tenure with those leader, while the influence of transformational leaders on person–supervisor value congruence is not contingent on followers' tenure with the leader. Given the weak effect of dyadic tenure, these particular authors indicated that transformational leaders might be able to foster high levels of value congruence among their followers in a relatively short time. They suggest that the followers might quickly identify with their leader due to these leaders' high referent power, while they align more slowly to organizational values.

Building on the self-concept-based theory proposition that followers' more malleable self-concept implies an enhanced opportunity for leadership influence, we argue that the visionary leadership–work meaningfulness relationship is stronger early on in the leader–follower relationship than it is later. When a leader and followers have just started working together, the followers have more uncertainty about who they are in this specific setting, as the leaders have yet to enact their expectations and values (cf. Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Followers look up to their leaders in terms of understanding the situation and the future directions of the organization and for making sense of what the organization is working toward overall. Therefore, it is likely that followers are more open to their leader's sensemaking efforts and messages related to the common goal and direction in the earlier

rather than in the later stages of the relationship. Visionary leadership offers a key element of these expectations, as it communicates a positive image of the future of the organization that shapes job expectations and references the collective self and the common goal (Carton, 2018). Therefore, we expect that in the earlier stages of leader–follower dyadic tenure, visionary leadership with information for the common future is more likely to affect the ability of followers positively and let them translate that vision into their own sense of meaningfulness. In contrast, with longer leader–follower relationship tenure, followers' self-concepts regarding their work are likely to become more stable. Hence, with longer tenure, we would expect that followers are less likely to use visionary messages as a source for shaping their understanding of who they are regarding their work and the organization and visionary leadership behaviors are less likely to affect their overall sense of work meaningfulness. While there naturally may be other aspects that shape employees' self-concepts over time, including organizational tenure (see also Fischer et al., 2017), based on the self-concept-based theory's emphasis on the role of leaders and their relationships with followers, we expect leader–follower dyadic tenure to be a critical contingency in the process.

> **Hypothesis 4a.** Leader–follower dyadic tenure moderates the relationship between visionary leadership and followers' work meaningfulness, such that visionary leadership is more positively related to followers' work meaningfulness when dyadic tenure is low.

Assuming that dyadic tenure moderates the association between visionary leadership and followers' work meaningfulness, it is also likely that dyadic tenure will conditionally influence the strength of the indirect relationship between leaders' work meaningfulness and followers' work meaningfulness. Thus, we offer the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 4b.** Leader–follower dyadic tenure moderates the positive and indirect effects of leaders' work meaningfulness on followers' work meaningfulness (through visionary leadership). Specifically, this indirect effect is higher when dyadic tenure is low.

2.5 | Goal achievement of followers and turnover intentions

Overall, self-concept-based theory explains the process for how leaders' self-concepts and their behavior may shape followers' attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, we considered it relevant to assess the follow-up effects of our suggested meaningfulness–transfer mechanism for two key employee outcomes, namely, goal achievement and turnover intention. A recent meta-analysis established the relationships of work meaningfulness to key employee outcomes (Allan et al., 2019), but little is known about the role of visionary leadership for this process. In general, a vision is intended to achieve two main purposes, namely, contribute to realizing organizational outcomes and connect followers to the organization and each other. For that reason, we chose one outcome that focuses on organizational goals, while turnover intention focuses on followers' attachment to the organization. We propose that the relationship of visionary leadership to these outcomes works via meaningfulness for the following reasons.

First, we argue that visionary leadership should not only enhance the level of setting and perceiving one's goals in a more self-consistent way but also achieve these self-consistent goals to a greater extent because employees whose goals are consistent with their self-concepts are more capable and willing to fully engage with their work. Accordingly, working toward a goal that is personally meaningful let them put more energy and effort into their work, so they are more likely to accomplish their goals and fulfill them better. Prior empirical research on self-concept-based theory confirms this general expectation, at least in part, as it found that transformational leadership enhances the followers' self-concordance by increasing their level of self-consistent short-term goals (Bono & Judge, 2003).

Second, organizations need an engaged workforce that not only performs well but is also committed to the organization and wants to stay with it. Thus, it may be problematic that the absence of meaningfulness has been identified as a key reason for turnover among young workers (Lancaster & Stillman, 2010). At the same time, while the majority of studies on visionary leadership suggest positive consequences for followers' attitudes and behaviors (van Knippenberg et al., 2014), research on negative consequences in terms of commitment, attachment, and turnover is also growing (e.g., Ateş et al., 2020; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; Shamir et al., 1998). To add to this debate, we test the hypothesis that when followers have made sense of their work in terms of the overall vision of the organization (i.e., experience high work meaningfulness), we would expect followers of visionary leaders to show less intention to leave the organization, because the organization's future provides attractive options for employees to maintain their work meaningfulness. Their overall positive work experiences due to an increased level of work meaningfulness, induced by leaders' work meaningfulness, then decrease turnover intentions. Thus, we posit the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 5.** Leaders' work meaningfulness (a) positively and indirectly relates to followers' goal achievement and (b) negatively and indirectly relates to followers' turnover intentions, mediated by visionary leadership and the followers' work meaningfulness and moderated by leader–follower dyadic tenure.

3 | STUDY 1

3.1 | Data collection and sampling

We gathered our data in cooperation with a German service provider that specializes in employee surveys. The study was part of a larger

benchmarking study. Accordingly, to enhance the comparability of our sample, the firms had to match the following criteria in order to participate: located in Germany, employing fewer than 5000 employees, and classified as a for-profit firm. Out of the 126 contacted firms, 59 firms met these inclusion criteria and agreed to participate. Each firm identified a certain department or several departments for study participation. This sample included 127 departments with a mid-level manager as the head of that department. Surveys were distributed electronically to these departments.

We measured the focal variables for three different groups of respondents to reduce common source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Leaders provided data on their meaningfulness. An algorithm randomly assigned followers to one of two groups. One group evaluated the visionary leadership behavior of their leaders, and the other group reported their meaningfulness and their tenure with the leader. We thus collected leader meaningfulness on the leader level and visionary leadership with a collective referent and then aggregated these variables with a direct-consensus composition model to the leader level (Level 2). Follower meaningfulness, leader–follower dyadic tenure, and goal achievement and turnover intention were collected at the follower level (Level 1).[4] We thus have a 2–2–1–1 moderated mediation model with a cross-level interaction effect between visionary leadership and dyadic tenure.

Our multilevel design required that we have information on all focal variables from the three different groups of organizational members. Since 48 cases failed to meet these inclusion criteria, our final sample was composed of 79 leaders in 59 firms (a 62% response rate), with 446 followers from the first group and 425 followers from the second group (an overall response rate of 76%). On average, 5.65 followers responded to the first questionnaire, and 5.38 followers responded to the second questionnaire. In addition, each firm's head of human resources (HR) provided information about that firm's industry, firm size, and prior firm performance.

3.2 | Measures

3.2.1 | Focal variables

All questionnaires were administered in German, as this was the working language in all the organizations. We used a double-blind back-translation procedure to ensure content similarity with the original English scales. We measured both the leaders' and followers' work meaningfulness using Spreitzer's (1995) three-item unidimensional scale ($\alpha = .81$ and .80) that focuses on the subjective, global judgment of one's work in general as positive and significant.[5] Visionary leadership was captured by the 5-item scale "articulating a vision" from Podsakoff et al. (1990; $\alpha = .88$) that asked participants about the frequency of such leadership behavior. We averaged followers' ratings from the same leader to obtain an aggregate rating of visionary leadership using intraclass correlation (ICC[1]) and the reliability of group mean (ICC[2]) to justify data aggregation (ICC[1] = .18; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .54). We assessed leader–follower dyadic tenure with an open-ended question that asked both leaders and followers to indicate the number of years they have been working in their current position so that the smaller value indicates dyadic tenure.[6] In line with the extant research on goal achievement (e.g., Kunze et al., 2015; van Dyck et al., 2005), we asked followers to indicate the percentage of goals they had achieved since the first half of the given year, as agreed upon with their direct supervisor so as to assess the number of goals accomplished (from 0% = *no goals achieved* to 100% = *all goals achieved*). Turnover intentions were assessed using Spector et al. (1988) measure. Single-item measures have the advantage of shortening the response time to answer the questionnaire (as requested by the cooperating agency) and have been found to possess adequate validity, reliability, and comparability to multi-item scales (Chen et al., 2011; Nagy, 2002; Wanous & Hudy, 2001). A multilevel confirmatory factor analysis with robust standard errors revealed that our measurement model fit the data well ($\chi 2(41) = 78.90$, $p < .01$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05).

3.2.2 | Control variables

We controlled for the industry affiliation of the firms because employees in the service industry might show a higher level of perceived impact due to closeness with beneficiaries (Grant, 2012). We also controlled for firm size (i.e., number of employees) because larger firms might have a more successful past, thereby increasing employees' meaningfulness perception due to an increased sense of pride and belongingness (Rosso et al., 2010). For similar reasons, we controlled for prior firm performance as captured by annual sales per employee. We also controlled for follower age (assessed in absolute years) and gender (0 = male, 1 = female), because age and gender might influence the importance, experience, or the perception of meaningful work (Carstensen, 1995; Hofmeister, 2019; Michaelson et al., 2014), as well as individual performance (Sturman, 2003) and turnover intention (Ng & Feldman, 2009). Finally, we also controlled for organizational tenure to avoid a confounding effect of this variable with the effect of leader–follower dyadic tenure.

3.2.3 | A series of alternative mechanisms

We collected data on potential alternative mechanisms that could provide alternative explanations for the relationship between leader and follower meaningfulness. First, we gathered data on the five additional dimensions of transformational leadership (Podsakoff et al., 1990) and then combined all six dimensions to an overall transformational leadership measure ($\alpha = .85$; ICC[1] = .17; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .52), since transformational leadership has been a key factor in explaining employee outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).[7] Second, based on prior research that showed a positive relationship between LMX and meaningfulness, as well as related employee outcomes (Ng, 2017; Tummers & Knies, 2013), we included LMX as a control variable. We collected data on LMX quality using Tangirala et al. (2007) eight-item

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations in Study 1

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Level 2											
1. Leader work meaningfulness											
2. Visionary leadership	.32**										
3. Leader–member exchange quality	.25*	.60**									
4. Providing an appropriate model	.11	.75**	.62**								
5. High performance expectations	.27*	.39**	.17	.26*							
6. Individualized support	.00	.40**	.52**	.53**	.07						
7. Fostering group goals	.13	.70**	.55**	.86**	.29**	.55**					
8. Intellectual stimulation	.11	.63**	.52**	.74**	.30**	.63**	.70**				
9. Transformational leadership	.17	.80**	.61**	.88**	.51**	.69**	.87**	.86**			
10. Transactional leadership	−.04	.35**	.56**	.00	.53**	.46**	.52**	.43**	.48**		
11. Prior firm performance	.05	−.12	.01	.05	.11	.17	.15	.01	.09	.14**	
12. Organizational size	−.03	.05	−.10	.00	.06	−.01	.03	.07	.05	−.03	−.07
13. Service industry	.01	.01	−.01	−.10	.00	−.13	−.04	−.05	−.08	.20**	−.16
Level 1											
14. Follower work meaningfulness	.08	.18**	.04	.14**	.09	−.05	.10*	.02	.10*	.03	−.06
15. Dyadic tenure	.02	−.15**	−.07	−.09	−.07	−.16**	−.14**	−.23**	−.17**	−.11*	−.07
16. Organizational tenure	−.10*	−.10*	−.10	−.04	−.04	−.06	−.06	−.14**	−.08	−.11*	.00
17. Gender	−.07	−.14**	−.03	−.11*	−.08	.12*	−.09	−.05	−.06	.01	.07
18. Age	−.16**	−.10*	−.11*	−.08	−.12*	−.02	−.06	−.15**	−.11*	−.06	−.02
19. Goal achievement	.00	−.06	−.06	−.04	−.08	−.08	−.02	−.09	−.07	−.01	.06
20. Turnover intentions	−.02	−.06	.02	−.04	.04	.07	−.04	.02	.00	.01	.07
Mean	6.43	3.58	5.05	4.11	3.99	3.84	4.04	3.33	3.80	5.28	73,988
SD	0.56	0.53	0.66	0.73	0.61	0.54	0.66	0.55	0.49	1.00	282,570

Notes: For correlations between leader data and follower data, leader values were disaggregated to each follower. Leader work meaningfulness, employee work meaningfulness, and leader–member exchange quality were measured on 7-point scales; visionary leadership, all transformational leadership dimensions, and turnover intentions were measured on 5-point scales; organizational tenure and age were measured in years; service industry and gender were dummy-coded (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*); and goal achievement was measured in percent.

*$p < .05$, two-tailed tests.

**$p < .01$, two-tailed tests.

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Variables	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Level 2									
1. Leader work meaningfulness									
2. Visionary leadership									
3. Leader–member exchange quality									
4. Providing an appropriate model									
5. High performance expectations									
6. Individualized support									
7. Fostering group goals									
8. Intellectual stimulation									
9. Transformational leadership									
10. Transactional leadership									
11. Prior firm performance									
12. Organizational size									
13. Service industry	.06								
Level 1									
14. Follower work meaningfulness	−.01	−.03							
15. Dyadic tenure	.15**	−.11*	.08						
16. Organizational tenure	.09	−.25**	.07	.40**					
17. Gender	.10*	−.17**	.05	.10*	.10				
18. Age	.02	−.02	.12*	.23**	.66**	.06			
19. Goal achievement	−.02	−.02	.16**	.05	.00	.05	.03		
20. Turnover intentions	−01	.04	−.45**	−.12*	−.01	−.07	−.06	−.33**	
Mean	372	.48	5.96	3.60	9.55	0.45	38.26	88.81	1.91
SD	615	.50	0.88	3.86	8.55	0.50	10.30	13.86	1.16

Notes: For correlations between leader data and follower data, leader values were disaggregated to each follower. Leader work meaningfulness, employee work meaningfulness, and leader–member exchange quality were measured on 7-point scales; visionary leadership, all transformational leadership dimensions, and turnover intentions were measured on 5-point scales; organizational tenure and age were measured in years; service industry and gender were dummy-coded (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*); and goal achievement was measured in percent.
*$p < .05$, two-tailed tests. **$p < .01$, two-tailed tests.

TABLE 2 Results of Study 1

	Model 1: Main effects								Model 2: Full model							
	VL		FWM		GA		TI		VL		FWM		GA		TI	
	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)
Level 2																
Prior firm performance	−.11	(.11)	−.07	(.06)	−.09	(.05)	.07	(.05)	−.11	(.11)	−.07	(.06)	−.08	(.05)	.07	(.05)
Organizational size	−.05	(.12)	−.09	(.06)	−.03	(.05)	.05	(.05)	−.05	(.12)	−.07	(.06)	−.03	(.05)	.05	(.05)
Service industry	.03	(.25)	−.03	(.12)	−.05	(.12)	.06	(.11)	.03	(.25)	−.01	(.12)	−.04	(.12)	.06	(.11)
Leader work meaningfulness	.30	(.11)**	.04	(.07)	.02	(.06)	−.02	(.05)	.30	(.11)**	.03	(.07)	.02	(.06)	−.02	(.05)
LWM error term	−.02	(.07)	.00	(.05)	.03	(.04)	−.05	(.04)	−.02	(.07)	.00	(.05)	.03	(.04)	−.05	(.04)
Visionary leadership			.26	(.07)**	−.02	(.08)	−.13	(.06)*			.24	(.07)**	−.03	(.08)	−.13*	(.06)
LMX			−.12	(.07)	−.07	(.09)	.10	(.07)			−.11	(.07)	−.07	(.09)	.10	(.07)
Transactional leadership			.01	(.07)	.05	(.06)	−.01	(.10)			.01	(.07)	.05	(.06)	−.01	(.10)
Level 1																
Gender			.07	(.05)	.03	(.05)	−.05	(.04)			.07	(.05)	.03	(.05)	−.05	(.04)
Age			.09	(.06)	.03	(.05)	−.05	(.05)			.10	(.06)	.03	(.05)	−.05	(.05)
Organizational tenure			.01	(.05)	−.05	(.06)	.10	(.05)			.01	(.05)	−.05	(.06)	.10	(.05)
Dyadic tenure			.09	(.07)	.04	(.05)	−.11	(.05)*			.01	(.06)	.03	(.05)	−.13	(.06)*
Follower work meaningfulness					.18	(.06)**	−.44	(.05)**					.18	(.06)**	−.45	(.05)**
Cross-level interaction																
Visionary leadership × dyadic tenure											−.15	(.05)**	−.02	(.04)	−.05	(.04)
R^2	.09		.40		.30		.48		.09		.42		.30		.48	

Note: Significance is based on two-tailed tests and standardized results.

Abbreviations: FWM, follower work meaningfulness; GA, goal achievement; LMX, leader–member exchange quality; LWM, leader work meaningfulness; TI, turnover intentions; VL, visionary leadership.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

scale ($\alpha = 94$, ICC[1] = .17; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .54) and investigated this as an alternative transfer mechanism. Third, we also tested for the role of transactional leadership, as transactional and transformational leadership (including visionary leadership) may build upon each other in their effects on follower work outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). We collected data on transactional leadership using the five-item scale for contingent reward behavior of Podsakoff et al. (1990; $\alpha = 94$, ICC[1] = .14; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .45). Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of all variables.

3.3 | Analytical procedures

We used multilevel modeling to analyze our data because leader meaningfulness and visionary leadership both relate to the leader level (Level 2), while follower meaningfulness, dyadic tenure, goal achievement, and turnover intentions relate to the follower level (Level 1). Moreover, responses from employees' working for the same mid-level leader might be interdependent. A multilevel structure is appropriate, since the proportion of total variance accounted for by between-cluster variation of our focal variable follower work meaningfulness is significant (ICC[1] = .07; $p < .01$). We used the software package Mplus 7.2 to estimate our model with robust standard errors and standardized all explanatory variables unless they are dummies. The variance inflation factors ruled out any multicollinearity concerns (all variance inflation factors [VIF] < 1.84). To examine the proposed moderating effects of leader–follower dyadic tenure further, we used the Johnson–Neyman technique to identify regions of moderator values where predictor–outcome relations are significantly different from zero.

Notably, our research design alleviated the risk for common-method bias by relying on different data sources, omitted variables bias by considering a wide range of control variables, and inconsistent inference by using robust standard errors. Nevertheless, our model may raise endogeneity concerns because of reverse causality in the leader work meaningfulness–visionary leadership relationship. One potential way to correct for endogeneity would be using the instrumental variable approach (Wooldridge, 2015). However, in organizational behavior research, it is often not feasible to find valid instruments, as was the case in our study as well. In such cases, the latent instrumental variable (LIV) approach introduced by Ebbes et al. (2005) can correct for endogeneity. Specifically, this approach corrects for an endogenous regressor by introducing a discrete unobserved LIV with m categories that partition the variance into an endogenous component that is possibly correlated with the error term and an exogenous component that is uncorrelated with the error term:

$$X_f = \theta_1 \widehat{Z}_f + \zeta_f, \quad (1)$$

where f is the subscript for the firm; X_f denotes the endogenous regressor (in our case leader work meaningfulness); θ_1 represents the $(m \times 1)$ vector of category means; $\widehat{Z}_f$ is the unobserved discrete instrument that partitions the sample into m groups (where $m > 1$), such that $\widehat{Z}_f$ is uncorrelated with ε_f^j and ζ_f; and ζ_f refers to the error residual that may correlate with the error terms ε_f^j. We determine the appropriate number of latent classes in the LIV correction for leader work meaningfulness with the Akaike information criterion with a penalty factor of three (AIC3), which suggested a three-support point solution. We include both the LIV corrections and the LIV error terms in our analyses.

3.4 | Results

Table 2 depicts the results from Study 1. As Hypothesis 1 proposes, leader work meaningfulness was positively related to visionary leadership ($\gamma = .30$, $p < .01$). Visionary leadership positively related to follower work meaningfulness ($\gamma = .26$, $p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Moreover, leader work meaningfulness had a positive and a significant indirect relationship with follower work meaningfulness through visionary leadership ($\gamma = .08$, $p < .05$, 95% confidence interval [CI] = .01; .15), supporting Hypothesis 3. A direct path from leader to follower work meaningfulness was not significant ($\gamma = .04$, $p = .63$).

We also found support for the moderating effect of dyadic tenure on the visionary leadership–follower work meaningfulness relationship ($\gamma = -.15$, $p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 4a. The floodlight analysis in Figure 2a further refines the moderating effect. The relationship between visionary leadership and follower work meaningfulness is positive and significant for dyadic tenure less than 6.33 years (85% of our sample). This relationship becomes nonsignificant for a longer tenure with the specific leader. In support of Hypothesis 4b, the indirect effect of leader work meaningfulness on follower work meaningfulness is also qualified by dyadic tenure, as depicted in Figure 3a. The indirect relationship is positive and significant for dyadic tenure below 5.00 years (75% of our sample) and becomes nonsignificant for a longer tenure with the leader. Finally, in support of Hypotheses 5a and 5b, leaders' work meaningfulness positively and indirectly related to followers' goal achievement and negatively and indirectly related to followers' turnover intentions, mediated by visionary leadership and followers' work meaningfulness and moderated by dyadic tenure. Figure 4a,b displays these conditional indirect effects. The indirect relationship with goal achievement (turnover intentions) becomes nonsignificant for tenure with the leader above 4.43 (4.49) years.

3.5 | Robustness tests

3.5.1 | Tests of the alternative models

We tested whether any other dimension of transformational leadership, the overall transformational leadership measure (which included visionary leadership), LMX quality, or transactional leadership mediated the relationship between leaders' and followers' meaningfulness

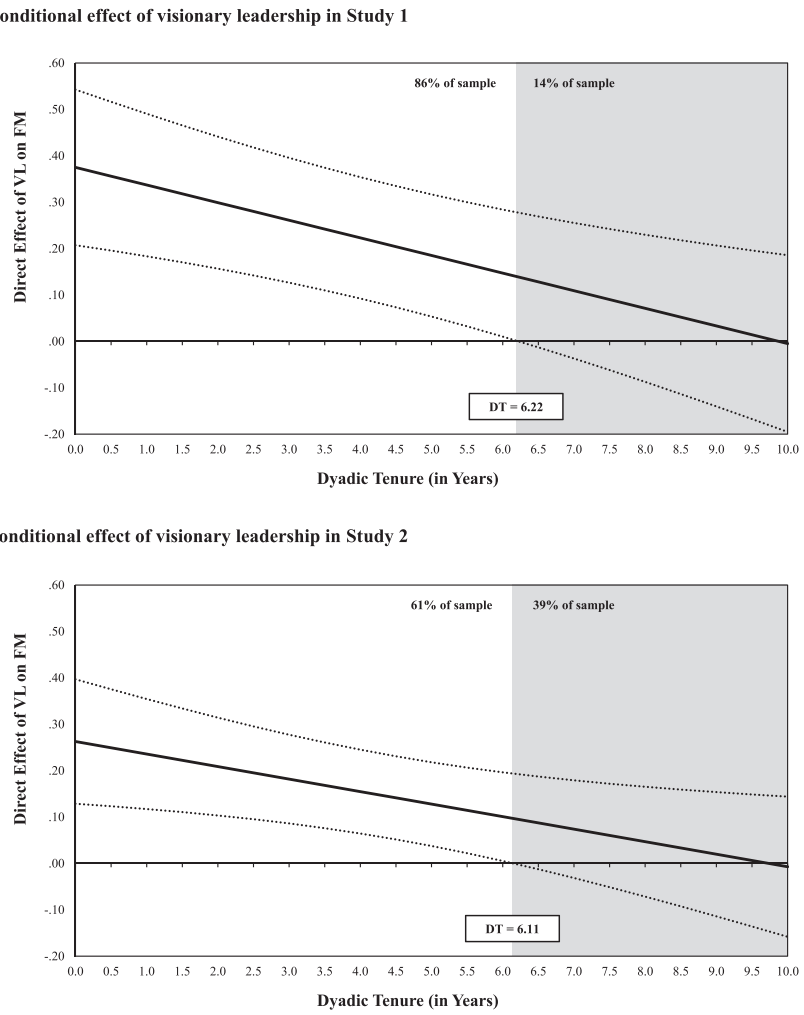


FIGURE 2 Conditional effects of visionary leadership on follower work meaningfulness. Note: We display 95% confidence intervals. The observed values for dyadic tenure with leader range from 0 to 34 years in Study 1 (mean = 3.60, SD = 3.86) and from 0 to 21 years in Study 2 (mean = 5.27, SD = 3.89). Values between 0 and 10 include 96% of followers in Study 1 and 93% of followers in Study 2. DT, dyadic tenure with leader; FWM, follower work meaningfulness; LWM, leader work meaningfulness; VL, visionary leadership

in separate models. Our results revealed that neither any subdimension other than visionary leadership, nor the overall transformational leadership measure, nor LMX quality, nor transactional leadership transmitted meaningfulness from leaders to followers (all $\gamma < .06$, $p > .17$).

3.6 | Discussion of Study 1

Study 1 showed that mid-level leaders' work meaningfulness transfers to followers through visionary leadership while also ruling out the alternative routes via the other five subdimensions of transformational leadership, the overall transformational leadership itself, LMX quality, and transactional leadership. Our results supported both the moderating and the conditional indirect effect of leader–follower dyadic tenure. Employees who have lower tenure with the leader seemed to be more prone to the influence of their leaders' work meaningfulness through visionary leadership for the generation and evaluation of their own work meaningfulness than were those with longer tenure. Mid-level leaders' work meaningfulness and their visionary leadership, however, had no effect on employees' working for the same leader over a longer time period; thus, our research revealed dyadic tenure as a contingency factor for the relationship between visionary leadership and work meaningfulness. For the proposed follower outcomes of leaders' work meaningfulness, we found empirical support for the expected indirect relationships to followers' goal achievement and turnover intentions.

4 | STUDY 2

To demonstrate the robustness of our findings, and expand the generalizability of our theoretical model at a different hierarchical level, we sought to replicate the findings of Study 1 with CEOs and mid-level leaders using a different sample of firms. Since leaders at all organizational levels can express visionary leadership, we expected similar results for the two samples (Ateş et al., 2020; Carton, 2018).

4.1 | Data collection and the sample

We gathered data from 111 different German firms in cooperation with a benchmarking agency and relied on a multisource strategy to avoid common methods bias. We asked the CEOs to evaluate their

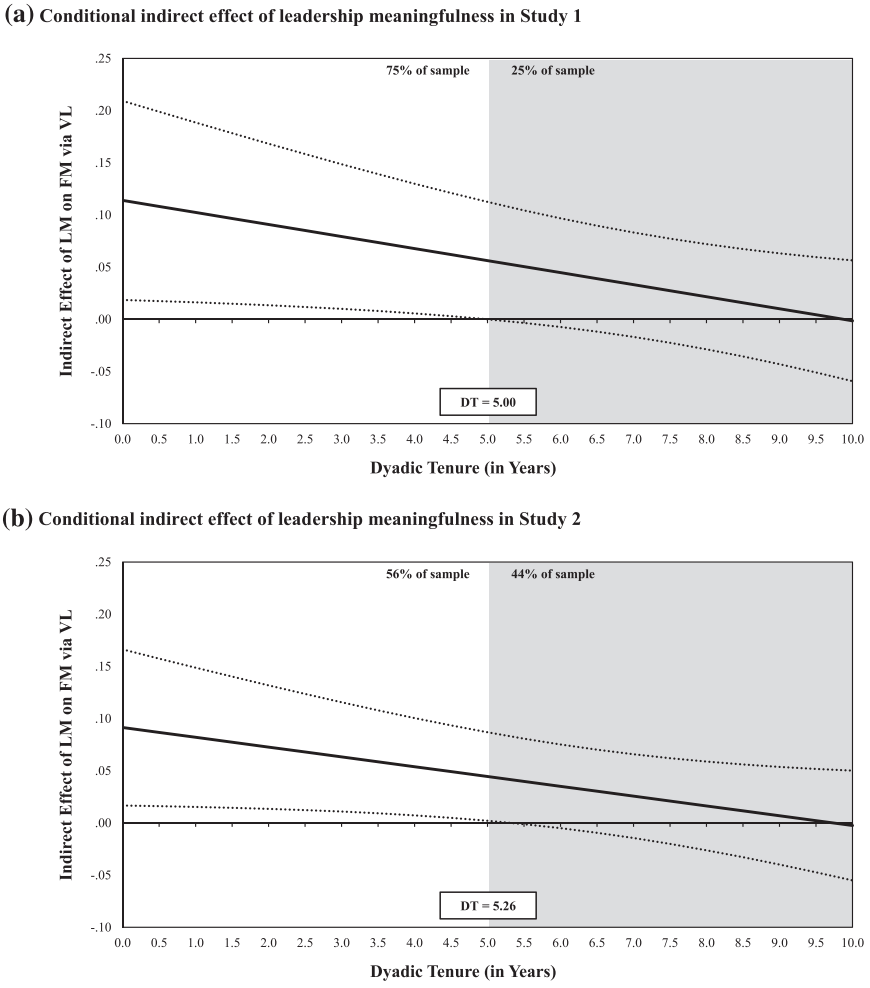


FIGURE 3 Conditional indirect effects of leader work meaningfulness on follower work meaningfulness via visionary leadership. Note: We display 95% confidence intervals. The observed values for dyadic tenure with leader range from 0 to 34 years in Study 1 (mean = 3.60, SD = 3.86) and from 0 to 21 years in Study 2 (mean = 5.27, SD = 3.89). Values between 0 and 10 include 96% of followers in Study 1 and 93% of followers in Study 2. DT, dyadic tenure with leader; FWM, follower work meaningfulness; LWM, leader work meaningfulness; VL, visionary leadership

work meaningfulness. A first group of mid-level leaders, who directly report to the CEO, evaluated their work meaningfulness and provided data on dyadic tenure, goal achievement, and turnover intentions. A second group of mid-level leaders, who also directly reported to the CEO, evaluated the level of the CEO's visionary leadership. The head of HR provided information on organizational size, prior firm performance, and industry affiliation.

We received 68 CEO responses (a 61% response rate), and 307 mid-level leaders evaluated the CEOs' visionary leadership, and 289 mid-level leaders assessed their own meaningfulness. Our final sample was composed of 596 mid-level leaders (a 59% average response rate) working for 68 CEOs. Of the 68 organizations, 51% were service firms, and 49% were manufacturing firms. We further controlled for the firms' profit versus nonprofit affiliation because some participating firms were nonprofit firms, and working there may provide a specific source of meaningfulness at work (Dur & Zoutenbier, 2014).

4.2 | Measures

We used the same measures for our key variables as in Study 1. Cronbach's alpha for CEOs' work meaningfulness was .85, follower work meaningfulness was .82, and CEOs' visionary leadership was .91. We averaged the ratings of followers within the same organization to obtain an aggregate rating of visionary leadership for each CEO (ICC [1] = .25; $p < .001$; ICC[2] = .62). A multilevel confirmatory factor analysis with robust standard errors revealed that our measurement model fit the data well ($\chi 2(32) = 54.59$, $p < .01$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05). Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all the study variables.

4.3 | Analytical procedures

Similar to Study 1, we addressed a potential endogeneity-related bias that may arise from reverse causality in the leader meaningfulness–visionary leadership relationship with LIV. The AIC3 suggested a four-support point solution, so we included both the LIV corrections and the LIV error terms in our analyses. We used multilevel modeling to analyze our data since the proportion of total variance of follower work meaningfulness that was accounted for by the between-cluster variation was significant (ICC[1] = .07; $p < .01$). We standardized all explanatory variables except for the dummies, and the variance inflation factors ruled out any multicollinearity concerns (all VIF < 2.51).

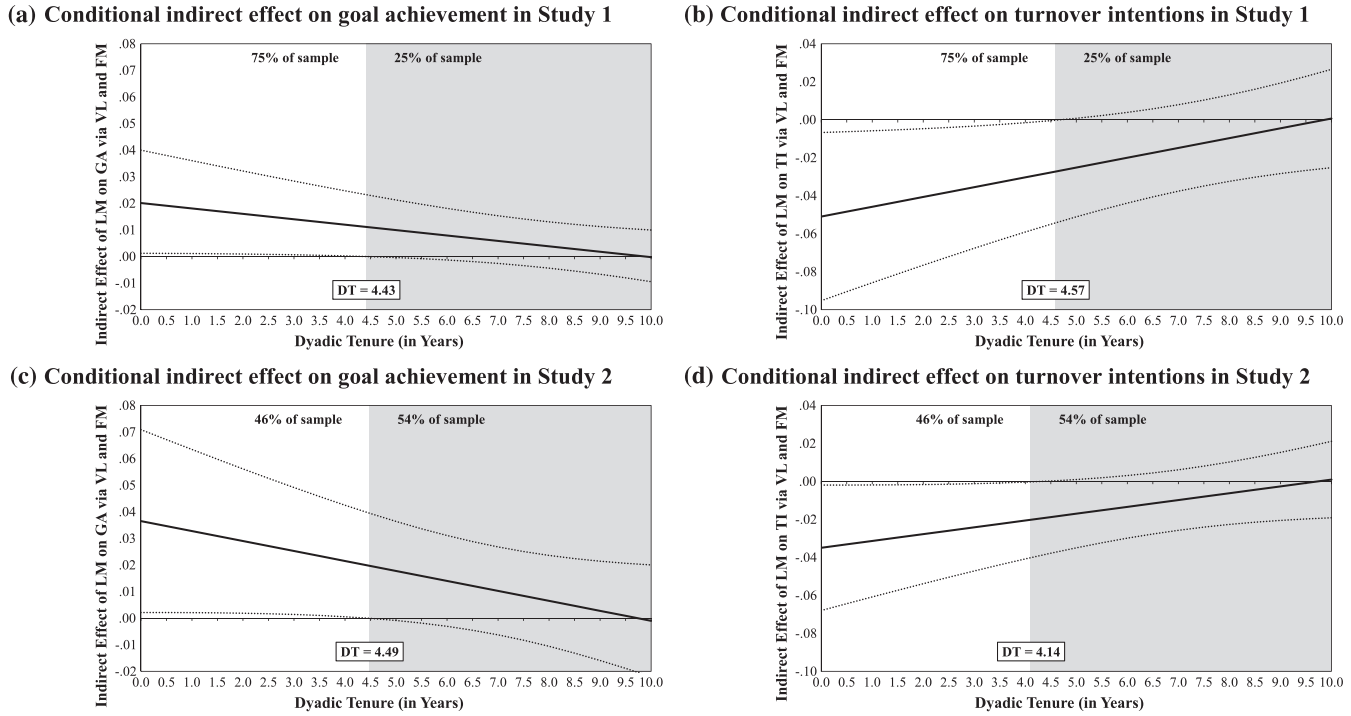


FIGURE 4 Conditional indirect effects of leader work meaningfulness on follower goal achievement and follower turnover intentions via visionary leadership and follower work meaningfulness. Note: We display 95% confidence intervals. The observed values for dyadic tenure with leader range from 0 to 34 years in Study 1 (mean = 3.60, SD = 3.86) and from 0 to 21 years in Study 2 (mean = 5.27, SD = 3.89). Values between 0 and 10 include 96% of followers in Study 1 and 93% of followers in Study 2. DT, dyadic tenure with leader; FWM, follower work meaningfulness; GA, goal achievement; LWM, leader work meaningfulness; TI, turnover intentions; VL, visionary leadership

4.4 | Results

Table 4 depicts the results of Study 2. CEO work meaningfulness was positively associated with visionary leadership ($\gamma = .35$, $p < .01$), visionary leadership was positively related to follower work meaningfulness ($\gamma = .14$, $p < .01$), and CEO work meaningfulness had a positive and significant indirect relationship with follower work meaningfulness through visionary leadership ($\gamma = .05$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = .004; .09), supporting Hypotheses 1–3. A direct path from CEO to follower work meaningfulness was not significant ($\gamma = .04$, $p = .37$). The moderating effect of leader–follower dyadic tenure on the visionary leadership–follower work meaningfulness relationship was significant ($\gamma = -.11$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypotheses 4a and 4b (see Figures 2b and 3b). The relationship between visionary leadership and follower work meaningfulness was positive and significant for dyadic tenure values below 6.11 years (61% of our sample), and the indirect relationship between leader and follower work meaningfulness was positive and significant for dyadic tenure values below 5.26 years (56% of our sample).

Leaders' work meaningfulness positively and indirectly related to followers' goal achievement and negatively and indirectly related to followers' turnover intentions, mediated by visionary leadership and followers' work meaningfulness and moderated by dyadic tenure (see Figure 4c,d). The indirect relationship with goal achievement (turnover intentions) was nonsignificant for dyadic tenure above 4.49 (4.14) years, supporting Hypotheses 5a and 5b.

4.5 | Discussion of Study 2

In Study 2, we empirically validated that our proposed model also holds at the highest organizational echelon, as we found that CEO work meaningfulness transfers to mid-level leaders through visionary leadership. In addition, in line with the results of Study 1, given a longer dyadic tenure between CEO and mid-level leader, the effect of CEO visionary leadership on mid-level leaders' work meaningfulness became insignificant. We also found empirical support for the two expected behavioral outcomes of mid-level leaders' work meaningfulness: goal achievement and turnover intentions.

5 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this research, we provide theoretical and empirical evidence for the transfer of work meaningfulness from leaders to their followers and demonstrate the role of leader–follower dyadic tenure in this process (Bailey et al., 2019; Michaelson et al., 2014; Vantilborgh et al., 2018). Based on the self-concept-based and visionary leadership theories (Shamir, 1991; Shamir et al., 1993), we argued that leaders' experience of work meaningfulness transfers to employees through visionary leadership for both mid-level leaders and nonmanagerial employees (Study 1), as well as for CEOs and mid-level leaders (Study 2). Moreover, we could empirically rule out seven alternative leadership styles for this transfer process, and thereby raise scholars' interest in considering specific facets of the widely

TABLE 3 Descriptive statistics and correlations in Study 2

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Level 2													
1. CEO work meaningfulness													
2. Visionary leadership	.40**												
3. Prior firm performance	−.10	−.07											
4. Organizational size	−.05	−.03	−.06										
5. Service industry	−.02	−.12	−.08	.03									
6. Nonprofit firm	.05	.22	−.08	.03	−.21								
Level 1													
7. Follower work meaningfulness	.20**	.28**	.01	.16*	−.11	.26							
8. Dyadic tenure	−.09	.06	−.09	.01	−.08	−.15**	−.08						
9. Organizational tenure	−.06	.00	−.06	.21**	−.19	−.02	.03	.44**					
10. Gender	.06	.12*	.06	.19*	.06	.02	.43**	−.02	.06				
11. Age	−.04	−.06	−.12	.07	.01	.05	.00	.28**	.51**	−.17*			
12. Goal achievement	−.12*	−.11	−.01	.05	.04	−.09	.21**	.13*	.01	.00	.09		
13. Turnover intentions	−.01	−.12*	.02	−.09	.00	.07	−.26**	−.02	−.03	.00	−.15**	−.34**	
Mean	6.39	4.00	45 363	334	.51	.04	5.58	5.27	8.86	0.27	40.23	82.06	1.78
SD	0.72	0.59	50 427	399	.50	.21	1.45	3.89	8.00	0.58	10.20	20.24	1.12

Notes: For correlations between leader data and follower data, leader values were disaggregated to each follower. CEO work meaningfulness and follower work meaningfulness were measured on 7-point scales; visionary leadership and turnover intentions were measured on 5-point scales; organizational tenure and age were measured in years; service industry, nonprofit firm, and gender were dummy-coded (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*); and goal achievement was measured in percent.
*$p < .05$, two-tailed tests. **$p < .01$, two-tailed tests.

studied "broad" transformational leadership (van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Additionally, we found empirical support for the notion that work meaningfulness positively relates to goal achievement and negatively relates to the turnover intentions of employees, thereby illustrating the key importance of work meaningfulness for talent retention and the general well-being of employees (cf. Allan et al., 2019).

5.1 | Research contributions and theoretical implications

The present research has several important implications for the literature on work meaningfulness and visionary leadership. First, we confirmed that leaders can draw on their own experience of meaningfulness to shape their employees' meaningfulness, even when that experience of meaningfulness is inherently subjective and self-based (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Rosso et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Meaningfulness scholars have framed the individual versus social nature of meaningfulness as a "paradox" and advocated for more insight on the role of other people, including leaders, in the actual meaningfulness process (Bailey et al., 2019; Michaelson et al., 2014). By building on the self-concept-based theory and visionary leadership literature, we postulate and empirically confirm that visionary leadership is the conduit that connects leader and follower inner experiences through their common connection to organizational vision, which we conceptualize as a source that can provide relevant content for what makes work meaningful. These findings suggest that visionary leadership may help in providing followers with a relevant account on what makes work meaningful (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), while the process by which followers come to conclude that this account is, or is not, personally meaningful, can still be entirely individual and self-based (Rosso et al., 2010). As such, our framework provides one way of addressing this paradox, as it explicitly includes leaders as a social source in the personal process of enhancing work meaningfulness.

Our model provides, to the best of our knowledge, for the first time a theory and empirical test of a leader–follower transfer mechanism for work meaningfulness. Leader–follower transfer mechanisms have been established for other work experiences, including regulatory focus (Johnson et al., 2017), work passion (Ho & Astakhova, 2020), citizenship behaviors (Yaffe & Kark, 2011), and scholars and practitioners have understood the relevance of such transfer processes in terms of societal interest and the organizational relevance of leaders as exemplars of organizational behavior. Despite the established relevance of work meaningfulness and its associated positive outcomes (Allan et al., 2019), such a transfer mechanism had not yet been theorized or tested before. We show that the transfer process for work meaningfulness evolves indirectly, through visionary leadership, rather than directly, as the direct effects were not

TABLE 4 Results of Study 2

	Model 1: Main effects								Model 2: Full model							
	VL		FWM		GA		TI		VL		FWM		GA		TI	
	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)	γ	(se)
Level 2																
Prior firm performance	−.11	(.18)	.05	(.05)	−.11	(.08)	.07	(.07)	−.11	(.18)	.05	(.05)	−.11	(.08)	.07	(.07)
Organizational size	−.25	(.14)	.02	(.05)	−.08	(.08)	−.04	(.07)	−.25	(.14)	.02	(.05)	−.08	(.08)	−.04	(.07)
Service industry	−.16	(.25)	.01	(.09)	.05	(.15)	−.11	(.14)	−.16	(.25)	−.02	(.09)	.03	(.15)	−.10	(.14)
Nonprofit firm	−.50	(.61)	−.24	(.31)	−.23	(.47)	.26	(.45)	−.50	(.61)	−.11	(.31)	−.14	(.47)	.22	(.46)
Leader work meaningfulness	.35	(.11)**	.04	(.04)	−.10	(.07)	.05	(.07)	.35	(.11)**	.05	(.04)	−.09	(.07)	.05	(.07)
LWM error term	−.15	(.12)	−.11	(.04)*	−.04	(.07)	.05	(.07)	−.15	(.12)	−.10	(.04)*	−.03	(.07)	.05	(.07)
Visionary leadership			.14	(.05)**	−.10	(.07)	−.15	(.07)*	−.44	(.27)	.12	(.05)**	−.12	(.07)	−.15	(.07)*
Level 1																
Gender			.07	(.04)	−.02	(.06)	.03	(.06)			.07	(.04)	−.02	(.06)	.03	(.06)
Age			.09	(.04)*	.04	(.06)	−.15	(.06)*			.09	(.04)*	.04	(.06)	−.15	(.06)
Organizational tenure			.02	(.05)	−.09	(.07)	.04	(.07)			.03	(.05)	−.08	(.07)	.04	(.07)
Dyadic tenure			−.04	(.05)	.18	(.07)**	.01	(.07)			−.02	(.05)	.19	(.07)**	.01	(.07)
Follower work meaningfulness					.40	(.09)**	−.38	(.09)**					.40	(.09)**	−.38	(.09)**
Cross-level interaction																
Visionary leadership × dyadic tenure											−.11	(.04)*	−.03	(.06)	.00	(.06)
R^2									.28		.52		.27		.41	

Note: Significance is based on two-tailed tests and standardized results.

Abbreviations: FWM, follower work meaningfulness; GA, goal achievement; LWM, leader work meaningfulness; TI, turnover intentions; VL, visionary leadership.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

significant in either study. The conceptualization of an indirect transfer process is also supported by our empirical finding that role modeling was *not* an alternative mechanism of transfer, which indicates that employees cannot simply observe and copy their leader's work meaningfulness. Taken together, we advance the conceptualization of work meaningfulness as an inherently subjective experience that cannot be directly "managed or mandated" by a leader (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009), but can be inspired by reference to the common vision.

Second, we contribute to the emerging research interest on visionary leadership (e.g., Carton et al., 2014; Stam et al., 2014; van Knippenberg et al., 2014) by outlining work meaningfulness as both a determinant and a consequence of visionary leadership. Although leadership researchers would not generally disagree that visionary leadership should enhance the work meaningfulness of followers, our work rigorously examined this taken-for-granted assumption for the first time and confirmed this relationship empirically. We demonstrated that visionary leadership, and *not* any other facet of transformational leadership, nor the overall transformational and transactional leadership repertoire, nor LMX quality, transmits work meaningfulness from leaders to their followers. This finding helps scholars who are interested in a more fine-grained understanding of leadership in organizations beyond the prior research on broad leadership styles (Grant, 2012; van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Moreover, we also establish work meaningfulness as an antecedent of visionary leadership, which adds refinement to researchers' more general interest in understanding how leaders' inner experiences translate into their leadership behavior (e.g., DeRue et al., 2011; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007) and answers the calls from scholars to explore antecedents of visionary leadership (e.g., van Knippenberg et al., 2014). Therefore, we broaden the focus of visionary leadership research and hopefully may inspire future research on how and when leaders come to demonstrate visionary leadership.

Third, our theorizing on the moderating role of leader–follower dyadic tenure illustrates a temporal lens to understand leadership effects with the intriguing empirical result that the effects of visionary leadership on work meaningfulness diminish over time (e.g., Shamir, 2011; Shamir & Howell, 1999; Stam et al., 2010). This finding adds an important temporal contingency to the extant literature on visionary leadership and meaningfulness, as it challenges the (implicit) assumption that the way in which leaders affect followers remains stable over time (cf. Fischer et al., 2017; Vantilborgh et al., 2018). Based on the notion that the work-related self-concept is dynamic and, at least in part, evolves through the leader–follower relationship, we provide a specific theoretical angle for these temporal effects. Our results show that an "expiration date" of leadership influence for the visionary leadership–follower meaningfulness relationship may be expected after about 6 years of leader–follower dyadic tenure. While future research should confirm, refine, and contextualize this specific number of years, our findings provide a valid foundation for researchers who are interested in considering time effects of leadership.

5.2 | Limitations and future research

As with all studies, ours has limitations that should be considered whenever interpreting our results, and that can point to further implications for future work. First, since we used a cross-sectional design, we cannot interpret our results as indicating causality. We focused on the top-down transmission of work meaningfulness because leaders are generally expected to provide direction to their followers in organizations and serve as salient representatives of their organization's purpose (Shamir & Lapidot, 2003). Still, followers may also inspire and articulate a possible self for the organization (a "visionary followership"), which then can transfer to higher work meaningfulness among the leaders. This is not unlikely, since employees are often closer to the ultimate recipients of an organization's purpose (e.g., customers and patients), and seeing the impact of one's work can enhance work meaningfulness (Grant, 2012; Rosso et al., 2010). Hence, we would welcome future work that examines more complex models, including the possibility of reverse directionality to complement our insights, especially in light of the current trends toward more agile and decentralized organizations that may diminish the role of leaders (Grant & Parker, 2018).

Second, since our field studies relied on the willingness from our study participants (i.e., upper managers, middle managers, and working professionals taking time out of their work), there was a limitation to the survey length, so we had to make choices on the number of alternative leadership styles to include as controls for our proposed transfer mechanism. Based on self-concept-based theory, and the paradigm of transformational/transactional leadership theory, we selected and included a series of theoretically relevant alternative leadership mechanisms. Yet, future research may explore possible additional pathways for the transfer of work meaningfulness to advance the field now that an initial model has been established (cf. Wo et al., 2015). Future research may be particularly interested in exploring the role of servant and empowering leadership (Eva et al., 2019; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015), as recent research has indicated that these leadership styles may also help employees to interpret their work in connection to "something bigger than the self" (Van Dierendonck & Sousa, 2016). Future research may be able to tease apart how leaders' expression of work meaningfulness, and followers' reception thereof, may be shaped by different ways (i.e., through a vision, through servant leadership, or otherwise) in which people connect their individual selves to the external context. Understanding these processes in even more detail will also benefit the research on meaningfulness more broadly, as it addresses the subjective–objective paradox that is inherent in the generation of work meaningfulness (Bailey et al., 2019).

Additionally, future research may explore the role of leader–follower congruence in meaningfulness, in the context of our transfer model. Since meaningfulness scholars have recently started exploring the idea of fit, or congruence, in shaping meaningfulness (Vogel et al., 2020), we tested the post hoc hypothesis that visionary leadership may be more impactful for those followers with whom the leader is more similar in meaningfulness. We find nonsignificant effects for this moderation in both samples (Study 1: −.002, n.s. and Study 2: −.043 n.s.). Thus, while we do not expect that value congruence provides an alternative mechanism of meaningfulness transfer, we consider that testing congruence-related arguments may advance meaningfulness research (Vogel et al., 2020).

Third, future research can explore the possibility of more complex and nonlinear effects by using time-sensitive and longitudinal research designs, ideally with a high-intensity measurement frequency to capture fine-grained changes, and then compare these to the results of studies that have focused on generalized experiences over time, like ours (cf. Tommasi et al., 2020; see also Jiang, 2021; Vogel et al., 2020). Beyond examining reverse causality, such models may also explore how the overall generalized sense of meaningfulness, which was the focus of our study, relates to fine-grained, daily fluctuations to gain more insight into the temporal nature of meaningfulness. It would be interesting, though methodologically challenging, to also explore how an accumulation of daily changes and fluctuations may ultimately result in a fundamental shift in what people consider meaningful (cf. Jiang, 2021) and how leaders play a role in that process. Our findings on the role of leader–follower dyadic tenure indicate that longitudinal research designs may want to capture a relatively long timeframe, such as with measurement intervals distributed 6–12 months apart and covering multiple years in order to tease out even further how the transfer of meaningfulness evolves over time.

Fourth, additional limitations have occurred from the perceptual survey data that we used, as it might have imposed the risk of spurious relations through common-method biases (cf. Podsakoff et al., 2012), as well as our specific measure of work meaningfulness. We minimized the risk of common-method biases by gathering our focal variables from three different groups of organizational members and by performing a series of tests to address any remaining concerns about endogeneity. Nevertheless, future studies might consider alternative research methods, including qualitative methods, high-frequency diary methods, or laboratory research to triangulate our insights into the transmission of work meaningfulness. Such mixed methods could also capture the content and delivery of visionary leadership (e.g., Awamleh & Gardner, 1999), since it might influence the degree to which followers' work meaningfulness is affected by leaders.

Additionally, future research may also want to explore additional measures of work meaningfulness. While our measure follows the dominant approach in the literature (Allan et al., 2019; Spreitzer, 1995), one could argue that a standardized scale inherently provides limited insight into the specific aspects of people's work that they consider when assessing meaningfulness, including work activities, roles, colleagues, or impact on customers (cf. Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). We therefore echo Lepisto and Pratt's recommendation to explore these different sources to gain greater insight into the exact sources of people's meaningfulness. Based on our results, we would expect that the references to organizational vision to be an important source that allows workers to connect themselves to an appealing collective self. This then works in concert with other potentially more specific sources that appeal to other aspects of the self, and thus, the resulting assessment of what is both positive and significant. Ultimately, an accumulation of such research would help further establish the interactions between the "work" and "worker" sources of meaningfulness (De Boeck et al., 2019).

Fifth, although the samples for both studies were drawn from diverse industries, all organizations were based in Germany and employed fewer than 5000 people, which may limit the generalizability of our findings to larger organizations and other cultural contexts. Recent research has pointed to the role of organizational structure in the process of vision communication (Lewis & Clark, 2019), which, when combined with the insights of this current research, would suggest that the management of meaning in large organizations might be even more complex due to the heterogeneity introduced by horizontal distance. Future research might also consider replicating our work in different cultural settings, because cultural norms and leadership stereotypes may influence followers' expectations of leaders (Boova et al., 2019).

5.3 | Practical implications

From a practical perspective, our findings imply a focus on organizational practices that ensure high leader work meaningfulness across hierarchical levels, which will also likely transfer to followers' meaningfulness. Given the beneficial effects of work meaningfulness for both individuals and organizations (Allan et al., 2019; Rosso et al., 2010), organizations may put forward initiatives to help their employees clearly see the meaning of their work. As a practical example, consulting agency KPMG launched a project in which more than 42 000 individuals shared their personal stories about how they experienced their work at KPMG as meaningful (for more details, see Pfau, 2015). In this process, these individuals (including leaders, employees, and clients) made the connection between KPMG's overall vision and purpose to what they considered positive and significant (i.e., meaningful) in their personal daily job activities. Even when people and organizations may not necessarily be as explicit about this process as those participating in the KPMG project, we consider that this project illustrates how work meaningfulness can be both inspired by a common organizational vision and be subjectively constructed.

For these initiatives to be successful in the long run, our research provides an additional consideration, as organizations may assume that the ultimate responsibility of what is meaningful rests with the focal employee, an assumption that is validated by the dominant conceptualization of meaningfulness as self-realization (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Rosso et al., 2010). Based on our current results, we can emphasize that meaningful accounts can also come from others (cf. Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), such as followers' exposure to visionary leadership. Moreover, we specify that a key factor to the success of visionary leadership includes that it is grounded in leaders' own sense of meaningfulness. As such, our results also signal to leaders—and those involved in managing, training, and coaching them—the importance of being self-guided, coherent, and consistent in their behavior (cf. Cable, 2019). Hence, we would encourage practitioners who are interested in enhancing work meaningfulness across the organization to invest in initiatives that enhance work meaningfulness at all levels, starting at the top.

Additionally, we demonstrated visionary leadership as the mechanism through which both CEO's and mid-level leaders' work

meaningfulness transfers to followers. This finding indicates that having high work meaningfulness in and of itself might not yet guarantee a smooth transfer process. Based on our findings and on research that shows that visionary leadership can be learned and developed (Frese et al., 2003), we would suggest that practitioners invest in such learning initiatives. In this way, what is felt as meaningful for a leader has the greatest chance of being expressed in visionary leadership, as leaders would be more competent in showing these behaviors. Finally, we found that the effect of visionary leadership on employees' work meaningfulness is strongest in the early stages of the leader–follower relationship, so leaders may want to pay specific attention to vision communication during the first few years of working together. Doing so can contribute to followers' enhanced goal achievement and may also reduce turnover intentions due to achieving high levels of work meaningfulness. More generally, while emphasizing that we did not test our hypotheses in a longitudinal, within-person setting, our findings can still be interpreted as a suggestion that within a leader–follower relationship people's assessment of work meaningfulness may indeed form during an early stage and stabilize over time, so we encourage practitioners to pay particular attention to this period.

All in all, we hope our results contribute to the broader academic and societal conversation about meaningful and purposeful organizations (e.g., Duhigg, 2019; Graeber, 2018; Hollensbe et al., 2014) by highlighting that the first prerequisite is that leaders themselves experience a strong sense of meaningfulness. Then, leaders do not only enjoy the positive consequences associated with high meaningfulness but also critically provide input for employee work meaningfulness in the organization as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the helpful feedback of Mike Pratt, the Work, Identity and Meaning Group, and Phu Nguyen Thien on earlier versions of the manuscript. Open access funding provided by Universitat St Gallen.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data available on request due to privacy/ethical restrictions.

ORCID

Petra Kipfelsberger https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8396-3387
Anneloes Raes https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1920-4452
Dennis Herhausen https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4335-1703
Ronit Kark https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0506-9683

ENDNOTES

[1] Work meaningfulness is the subjective experience of one's work as both positive and significant (Both-Nwabuwe et al., 2017; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Rosso et al., 2010). While scholars generally agree that work meaningfulness entails the aspects of positivity and significance, multiple definitions and conceptualizations still exist, including discussions on the inclusion of eudaimonic and self-actualization factors (e.g., Bailey et al., 2019; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Rosso et al., 2010). Additionally, scholars debate the temporal nature of work meaningfulness (e.g., Tommasi et al., 2020; Vogel et al., 2020), indicating that while meaningfulness is generally seen as a stable and generalized experience, it may also fluctuate (e.g., daily; cf. Vogel et al., 2020). In line with the dominant perspective in the literature, we focus on work meaningfulness as a perceived positivity and significance of work in terms of the overall judgment of that effort based on the (daily) experiences at work and stabilized over time by repeated exposure to the same leader (cf. Carton, 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Tommasi et al., 2020).

[2] Visionary leadership may not be the only way that leaders can transfer meaningfulness, but we propose it here as a key transfer mechanism over and above other leadership behaviors. We consider that the leader–follower common connection to the "collective self" is a key mechanism for understanding how the experience of meaningfulness needs to be self-constructed and yet may still be influenced by leaders, which researchers refer to as a key aspect of meaningfulness (Bailey et al., 2019). We include a series of additional leadership behaviors in our analyses to empirically validate our expectation vis-à-vis these other behaviors. They include all other dimensions of transformational leadership theory, the overall transformational leadership dimension (including visionary leadership), LMX quality, and transactional leadership. This list is not exhaustive, and we address concrete suggestions for future research in the discussion section.

[3] Although we focus on the transfer of work meaningfulness from leaders to followers, we do acknowledge that the transfer from followers to leaders may also happen (cf. Howell & Shamir, 2005). As far as we know, this is the first paper on the transfer of work meaningfulness between individuals; therefore, we decided to develop the mechanism in detail in only direction first. In addition, because one leader may influence the work meaningfulness of multiple followers simultaneously, we believe that studying the leader–follower direction first might generate a potentially large scope of practical impact.

[4] Please note that we reason that visionary leadership entails the same or at least similar messages for all followers of a particular leader. This is what allowed us to assess visionary leadership at the collective level, as followers are similarly exposed to the same signals from their leader (i.e., what researchers have called a "collective-focused aspect of transformational leadership"; Bormann & Diebig, 2021). At the same time, even with exposure to the same or very similar visionary information from their leader, employees interpret and absorb this through a subjective and self-based process of meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010).

[5] A recent meta-analysis discusses the advantages and disadvantages of unidimensional versus multidimensional scales to measure meaningful work (Allan et al., 2019). Measures based on a unidimensional definition of meaningful work, such as the measure of Spreitzer (1995), capture the construct directly and let participants define the processes that cause their work to be meaningful. "Unidimensional models capture people's global judgment of whether their work is meaningful, perhaps summating some or all of the experiences reflected in multidimensional models" (Allan et al., 2019, p. 502). Allan et al. (2019) advised researchers that understanding the antecedents of meaningful work and how it relates to outcomes may require the use of a unidimensional scale.

[6] Please note that due to the split-sample strategy of our research design, that was chosen to minimize common source bias, we could not directly collect leader–follower dyadic tenure and had to use this more indirect way.

[7] We used confirmatory factor analysis on the data from employee Group 2 ($n = 425$) to establish discriminant validity of visionary leadership and the other dimensions of transformational leadership: Role modeling (three items; $\alpha = .91$; ICC[1] = .12; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .43), high performance expectations (three items; $\alpha = .62$; ICC[1] = .17; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .53), individualized support (four items; $\alpha = .87$; ICC[1] = .10; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .36), fostering the acceptance of group goals (four items;

α = .88; ICC[1] = .14; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .46), and intellectual stimulation (three items; α = .81; ICC[1] = .21; $p < .01$; ICC[2] = .59). The proposed six-dimensional measurement model with six latent constructs fit the data well ($\chi 2 = 412.03$, df = 194, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .06). A model that combined all items under a single factor showed lower fit to the data ($\chi 2 = 992.69$, df = 209, CFI = .79, RMSEA = .11). The highest correlation between visionary leadership and any other dimensions of transformational leadership was .57 on the individual level (role modeling), and all models that constrained the correlation between visionary leadership and any other dimensions of transformational leadership to unity showed a lower fit compared to the model with free correlation (all $\Delta\chi^2 > 68.54$, Δdf = 1, $p < .01$). In sum, these tests indicated that visionary leadership is indeed a distinct leadership style.

REFERENCES

Allan, B., Batz-Barbarich, C., Sterling, H., & Tay, L. (2019). Outcomes of meaningful work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, *56*(3), 500–528. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12406

Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(1), 20–39. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4278999

Ateş, N. Y., Tarakci, M., Porck, J. P., van Knippenberg, D., & Groenen, P. J. (2020). The dark side of visionary leadership in strategy implementation: Strategic alignment, strategic consensus, and commitment. *Journal of Management*, *46*(5), 637–665. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318811567

Awamleh, R., & Gardner, W. L. (1999). Perceptions of leader charisma and effectiveness: The effects of vision content, delivery, and organizational performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *10*(3), 345–373. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00022-3

Bailey, C., Lips-Wiersma, M., Madden, A., Yeoman, R., Thompson, M., & Chalofsky, N. (2019). The five paradoxes of meaningful work: Introduction to the special issue 'meaningful work: Prospects for the 21st century'. *Journal of Management Studies*, *56*(3), 481–499. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12422

Baily, C., & Madden, A. (2016). What makes work meaningful — Or meaningless. *Sloan Management Review*, *57*(4), 53–61.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Berson, Y., Halevy, N., Shamir, B., & Erez, M. (2015). Leading from different psychological distances: A construal-level perspective on vision communication, goal setting, and follower motivation. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *26*(2), 143–155. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.07.011

Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2003). Self-concordance at work: Toward understanding the motivational effects of transformational leaders. *Academy of Management Journal*, *46*(5), 554–571.

Boova, L., Pratt, M., & Lepisto, D. (2019). Exploring work orientations and cultural accounts of work: Toward a Research Agenda for Examining the Role of Culture in Meaningful Work. In R. Yeoman, C. Bailey, A. Madden, & M. Thompson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Meaningful Work*. University Press.

Bormann, K. C., & Diebig, M. (2021). Following an uneven lead: Trickle-down effects of differentiated transformational leadership. *Journal of Management*, *47*(8), 2105–2134. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320931584

Both-Nwabuwe, J. M. C., Dijkstra, M. T. M., & Beersma, B. (2017). Sweeping the floor or putting a man on the moon: How to define and measure meaningful work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*(1658), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01658

Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. (1996). Who is this "we"? Levels of collective identity and self representations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*(1), 83–93. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.1.83

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Cable, D. M. (2019). *Alive at work: The neuroscience of helping your people love what they do*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Carstensen, L. L. (1995). Evidence for a life-span theory of socioemotional selectivity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *4*(5), 151–156. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.ep11512261

Carton, A. M. (2018). Im not mopping the floors, Im putting a man on the moon: How NASA leaders enhanced the meaningfulness of work by changing the meaning of work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *63*(2), 323–369. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839217713748

Carton, A. M., Murphy, C., & Clark, J. R. (2014). A (blurry) vision of the future: How leader rhetoric about ultimate goals influences performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, *57*(6), 1544–1570. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2012.0101

Chen, M.-F., Lin, C.-P., & G-Y, L. (2011). Modelling job stress as a mediating role in predicting turnover intention. *The Service Industries Journal*, *31*(8), 1327–1345. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642060903437543

Davis, W. E., Kelley, N. J., Kim, J., Tang, D., & Hicks, J. A. (2016). Motivating the academic mind: High-level construal of academic goals enhances goal meaningfulness, motivation, and self-concordance. *Motivation and Emotion*, *40*(2), 193–202. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-015-9522-x

De Boeck, G., Dries, N., & Tierens, H. (2019). The experience of untapped potential: Towards a subjective temporal understanding of work meaningfulness. *Journal of Management Studies*, *56*(3), 529–557. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12417

DeRue, D. S., & Ashford, S. J. (2010). Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership identity construction in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *35*(4), 627–647.

DeRue, D. S., Nahrgang, J. D., Wellman, N., & Humphrey, S. E. (2011). Trait and behavioral theories of leadership: An integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Personnel Psychology*, *64*(1), 7–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2010.01201.x

DuBrin, A. J. (1998). *Leadership: Research findings, practice, and skills*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Duhigg, C. (2019). Americas professional elite: Wealthy, successful and miserable. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/21/magazine/elite-professionals-jobs-happiness.html

Dumdum, R. U., Lowe, K. B., & Avolio, B. J. (2002). A meta-analysis of transformational and transactional leadership correlates of effectiveness and satisfaction: An update and extension. In B. J. Avolio & F. J. Yammarino (Eds.), *Transformational and charismatic leadership: The road ahead* (pp. 35–66). Erlbaum.

Dur, R., & Zoutenbier, R. (2014). Working for a good cause. *Public Administration Review*, *74*(2), 144–155. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12183

Dvir, T., Eden, D., Avolio, B. J., & Shamir, B. (2002). Impact of transformational leadership on follower development and performance: A field experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, *45*(4), 735–744. https://doi.org/10.5465/3069307

Ebbes, P., Wedel, M., Böckenholt, U., & Steerneman, T. (2005). Solving and testing for regressor-error (in) dependence when no instrumental variables are available: With new evidence for the effect of education on income. *Quantitative Marketing and Economics*, *3*(4), 365–392. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11129-005-1177-6

Eldor, L. (2021). Leading by Doing: Does Leading by Example Impact Productivity and Service Quality? *Academy of Management Journal*, *64*(2), 458–481. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2018.0706

Epitropaki, O., Kark, R., Mainemelis, C., & Lord, R. G. (2017). Leadership and followership identity processes: A multilevel review. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *28*(1), 104–129. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.10.003

Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *30*(1), 111–132. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.07.004

Farmer, S. M., & Aguinis, H. (2005). Accounting for subordinate perceptions of supervisor power: An identity-dependence model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*(6), 1069–1083. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1069

Fischer, T., Dietz, J., & Antonakis, J. (2017). Leadership process models: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, *43*(6), 1726–1753. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316682830

Frankl, V. E. (1963). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. Washington Square Press.

Frese, M., Beimel, S., & Schoenborn, S. (2003). Action training for charismatic leadership: Two evaluations of studies of a commercial training module on inspirational communication of a vision. *Personnel Psychology*, *56*(3), 671–698. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2003.tb00754.x

Gast, A., Illanes, P., Probst, N., Schaninger, B., & Simpson, B. (2020). Purpose: Shifting from why to how. McKinsey Quarterly. McKinsey & Co.

Graeber, D. (2018). *Bullshit jobs: A theory*. Allen Lane.

Grant, A. M. (2012). Leading with meaning: Beneficiary contact, prosocial impact, and the performance effects of transformational leadership. *Academy of Management Journal*, *55*(2), 458–476. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0588

Grant, A. M., & Parker, S. K. (2018). Redesigning work design theories: The rise of relational and proactive perspectives. *Academy of Management Annals*, *3*(1), 317–375. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520903047327

Heine, S., Proulx, T., & Vohs, K. D. (2006). The meaning maintenance model: On the coherence of social motivations. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *10*(2), 88–11. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1002_1

Ho, V. T., & Astakhova, M. N. (2020). The passion bug: How and when do leaders inspire work passion? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *41*(5), 424–444. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2443

Hoffman, B. J., Bynum, B. H., Piccolo, R. F., & Sutton, A. W. (2011). Person-organization value congruence: How transformational leaders influence work group effectiveness. *Academy of Management Journal*, *54*(4), 779–796. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.64870139

Hofmeister, H. (2019). Work through a gender lens: More work and more sources of meaningfulness. In R. Yeoman, C. Bailey, A. Madden, & M. Thompson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of meaningful work* (pp. 302–326). Oxford University Press.

Hollensbe, E., Wookey, C., Hickey, L., & George, G. (2014). Organizations with purpose. *Academy of Management Journal*, *57*(5), 1227–1234. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.4005

Howe, L., Menges, J., & Monks, J. (2021). Leaders, Don't be Afraid to Talk about your Fears and Anxieties. Harvard Business Review, online.

Howell, J. M., & Shamir, B. (2005). The role of followers in the charismatic leadership process: Relationships and their consequences. *Academy of Management Review*, *30*(1), 96–112. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.15281435

Ibarra, H., & Barbulescu, R. (2010). Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, *35*(1), 135–154. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.35.1.zok135

Jachimowicz, J. M., Wihler, A., & Galinsky, A. D. (2021). My boss' passion matters as much as my own: The interpersonal dynamics of passion are a critical driver of performance evaluations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2554

Jiang, W. Y. (2021). Sustaining meaningful work in a crisis: Adopting and conveying a situational purpose. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *66*, 1–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839221994049

Johnson, R. E., King, D. D., Lin, S., Scott, B. A., Jackson Walker, E. M., & Wang, M. (2017). Regulatory focus trickle-down: How leader regulatory focus shapes follower regulatory focus and behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *140*, 29–45. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2017.03.002

Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*(5), 755–768. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.755

Kark, R., & Van Dijk, D. (2007). Motivation to lead, motivation to follow: The role of the self-regulatory focus in leadership processes. *Academy of Management Review*, *32*(2), 500–528. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.24351846

Kark, R., & Van Dijk, D. (2019). Keep your head in the clouds and your feet on the ground: A multifocal review of leadership-followership self-regulatory focus. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*, 509–546. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2017.013

Knowles, C., Shannon, S., Prentice, G., & Breslin, G. (2021). Comparing mental health of athletes and non-athletes as they emerge from a COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, *3*, 612532.

Kunze, F., Raes, A. M. L., & Bruch, H. (2015). It matters how old you feel: Antecedents and performance consequences of average relative subjective age in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *100*, 1511–1526. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038909

Lancaster, L. C., & Stillman, D. (2010). *The M factor: How the millennial generation is rocking the workplace*. Harper Business.

Larwood, L., Falbe, C. M., Kriger, M. P., & Miesing, P. (1995). Structure and meaning of organizational vision. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(3), 740–769.

Lee, U. H., Kim, H. K., & Kim, Y. H. (2013). Determinant of organizational citizenship behavior and its outcomes. *Global Business and Management Research: An International Journal*, *5*(1), 54–65.

Lepisto, D., & Pratt, M. (2017). Meaningful work as realization and justification: Toward a dual conceptualization. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *7*(2), 99–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386616630039

Lewis, A., & Clark, J. (2019). Dreams within a dream: Multiple visions and organizational structure. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *41*(1), 50–76. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2419

Lips-Wiersma, M., & Morris, L. (2009). Discriminating between 'meaningful work' and the 'management of meaning'. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *88*(3), 491–511. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0118-9

Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the MLQ literature. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *7*(3), 385–425. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(96)90027-2

Martin, R., Epitropaki, O., Erdogan, B., & Thomas, G. (2019). Relationship-based leadership: Current trends and future prospects. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *92*, 465–474. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12286

Michaelson, C., Pratt, M., Grant, A., & Dunn, C. (2014). Meaningful work: Connecting business ethics and organization studies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *121*(1), 77–90. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1675-5

Mitra, R., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2017). Communicative tensions of meaningful work: The case of sustainability practitioners. *Human Relations*, *70*, 594–596. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726716663288

Nagy, M. S. (2002). Using a single-item approach to measure facet job satisfaction. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *75*, 77–86. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317902167658

Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership: Creating a compelling sense of direction for your organisation*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Ng, T. W., & Feldman, D. C. (2009). Age, work experience, and the psychological contract. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *30*(8), 1053–1075. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.599

Ng, T. W. H. (2017). Transformational leadership and performance outcomes: Analyses of multiple mediation pathways. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *28*(3), 385–417. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2016.11.008

Pfau, B. (2015). How an accounting firm convinced its employees they could change the world. Harvard Business Review (Online). https://hbr.org/2015/10/how-an-accounting-firm-convinced-its-employees-they-could-change-the-world

Podolny, J. M., Khurana, R., & Hill-Popper, M. (2005). Revisiting the meaning of leadership. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *26*, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(04)26001-4

Podsakoff, N. P., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *1*(2), 107–142. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(90)90009-7

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2012). Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *63*, 539–569. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100452

Porter, J. (2019). To Improve Your Team, First Work on Yourself. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2019/01/to-improve-your-team-first-work-on-yourself

Pratt, M. G., & Ashforth, B. E. (2003). Fostering meaningfulness in working and at work. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 309–327). Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Rafferty, A. E., & Griffin, M. A. (2004). Dimensions of transformational leadership: Conceptual and empirical extensions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *15*(3), 329–354. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.02.009

Reyt, J.-N., & Wiesenfeld, B. M. (2015). Seeing the forest for the trees: Exploratory learning, mobile technology, and knowledge workers role integration behaviors. *Academy of Management Journal*, *58*(3), 739–762. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.0991

Rosso, B. D., Dekas, K. H., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *30*, 91–127. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2010.09.001

Salancik, G. R., & Pfeffer, J. (1978). A social information processing approach to job attitudes and task design. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *23*(2), 224–253. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392563

Sashkin, M. (1988). The visionary leader: A new theory of organizational leadership. In J. A. Conger & R. N. Kanungo (Eds.), *Charismatic leadership: The elusive factor in organizational effectiveness* (pp. 122–160). Jossey-Bass.

Semin, G. R., & Fiedler, K. (1991). The linguistic category model, its bases, applications and range. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *2*(1), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/14792779143000006

Shamir, B. (1991). Meaning, self and motivation in organizations. *Organization Studies*, *12*(3), 405–424. https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069101200304

Shamir, B. (2011). Leadership takes time: Some implications of (not) taking time seriously in leadership research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *22*(2), 307–315. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.02.006

Shamir, B., House, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1993). The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organization Science*, *4*(4), 577–594. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.4.4.577

Shamir, B., & Howell, J. M. (1999). Organizational and contextual influences on the emergence and effectiveness of charismatic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *10*(2), 257–283. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00014-4

Shamir, B., & Lapidot, Y. (2003). Trust in organizational superiors: Systemic and collective considerations. *Organization Studies*, *24*(3), 463–491. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840603024003912

Shamir, B., Zakay, E., Breinin, E., & Popper, M. (1998). Correlates of charismatic leader behavior in military units: Subordinates attitudes, unit characteristics, and superiors appraisals of leader performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, *41*(4), 387–409.

Sosik, J. J., & Dinger, S. L. (2007). Relationships between leadership style and vision content: The moderating role of need for social approval, self-monitoring, and need for social power. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *18*(2), 134–153. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.01.004

Sosik, J. J., & Dworakivsky, A. C. (1998). Self-concept based aspects of the charismatic leader: More than meets the eye. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *9*(4), 503–526. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(98)90013-3

Spector, P. E., Dwyer, S. J., & Jex, S. M. (1988). Relation of job stressors to affective, health, and performance outcomes: A comparison of multiple data sources. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *73*(1), 11–19. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.73.1.11

Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(5), 1442–1465.

Stam, D., Lord, R. G., van Knippenberg, D., & Wisse, B. (2014). An image of who we might become: Vision communication, possible selves, and vision pursuit. *Organization Science*, *25*(4), 1172–1194. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2013.0891

Stam, D., van Knippenberg, D., & Wisse, B. (2010). Focusing on followers: The role of regulatory focus and possible selves in visionary leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *21*(3), 457–468. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.03.009

Sturman, M. C. (2003). Searching for the inverted U-shaped relationship between time and performance: Meta-analyses of the experience/performance, tenure/performance, and age/performance relationships. *Journal of Management*, *29*(5), 609–640. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(03)00028-X

Tangirala, S., Green, S. G., & Ramanujam, R. (2007). In the shadow of the bosss boss: Effects of supervisors upward exchange relationships on employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *92*(2), 309–320. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.2.309

Taylor, C. M., Cornelius, C. J., & Colvin, K. (2014). Visionary leadership and its relationship to organizational effectiveness. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, *35*(6), 566–583. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-10-2012-0130

Thoms, P., & Greenberger, D. B. (1998). A test of vision training and potential antecedents to leaders' visioning ability. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *9*(1), 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.3920090102

Tichy, N. M., & DeVanna, M. A. (1990). *The transformational leader* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Tommasi, F., Ceschi, A., & Sartori, R. (2020). Viewing meaningful work through the lens of time. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.585274

Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2010). Construal-level theory of psychological distance. *Psychological Review*, *117*(2), 440–463. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018963

Tummers, L. G., & Knies, E. (2013). Leadership and meaningful work in the public sector. *Public Administration Review*, *73*(6), 859–868. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12138

van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2015). Compassionate love as a cornerstone of servant leadership: An integration of previous theorizing and research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *128*(1), 119–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2085-z

van Dierendonck, D., & Sousa, M. (2016). Finding meaning in highly uncertain situations: Servant leadership during change. *Monographs in Leadership and Management*, *8*, 403–424. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-357120160000008015

van Dyck, C., Frese, M., Baer, M., & Sonnentag, S. (2005). Organizational error management culture and its impact on performance: A two-study replication. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*, 1228–1240. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1228

van Knippenberg, D., & Sitkin, S. B. (2013). A critical assessment of charismatic—Transformational leadership research: Back to the drawing board? *Academy of Management Annals*, *7*(1), 1–60. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2013.759433

van Knippenberg, D., Stam, D., & Day, D. V. (2014). Visionary leadership. In D. Day (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of leadership and organizations* (pp. 241–259). Oxford University Press.

van Knippenberg, D., van Knippenberg, B., de Cremer, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2004). Leadership, self, and identity: A review and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *15*(6), 825–856. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.09.002

Vantilborgh, T., Hofmans, J., & Judge, T. A. (2018). The time has come to study dynamics at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *39*(9), 1045–1049. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2327

Venus, M., Johnson, R. E., Zhang, S., Wang, X.-H., & Lanaj, K. (2019). Seeing the big picture: A within-person examination of leader construal level and vision communication. *Journal of Management*, *45*(7), 2666–2684. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318761576

Vogel, R. M., Rodell, J. B., & Sabey, T. (2020). Meaningfulness misfit: Consequences of daily meaningful work needs-supplies incongruence for daily engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(7), 760–770. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000464

Waldman, D. A., Ramirez, G. G., House, R. J., & Puranam, P. (2001). Does leadership matter? CEO leadership attributes and profitability under conditions of perceived environmental uncertainty. *Academy of Management Journal*, *44*, 134–143. https://doi.org/10.5465/3069341

Wanous, J. P., & Hudy, M. J. (2001). Single-item reliability: A replication and extension. *Organizational Research Methods*, *4*, 361–375. https://doi.org/10.1177/109442810144003

Wiesenfeld, B. M., Reyt, J.-N., Brockner, J., & Trope, Y. (2017). Construal level theory in organizational research. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *4*(1), 367–400. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113115

Wo, D. X. H., Ambrose, M. L., & Schminke, M. (2015). What drives trickle-down effects? A test of multiple mediation processes. *Academy of Management Journal*, *58*(6), 1848–1868. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.0670

Wo, D. X. H., Schminke, M., & Ambrose, M. L. (2019). Trickle-down, trickle-out, trickle-up, trickle-in, and trickle-around effects: An integrative perspective on indirect social influence phenomena. *Journal of Management*, *45*(6), 2263–2292. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318812951

Wooldridge, J. (2015). *Economic analysis of cross section and panel data* (2nd ed.). MIT Press.

Wrzesniewski, A. C., Dutton, J. E., & Debebe, G. (2003). Interpersonal sensemaking and the meaning of work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *25*, 93–135. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(03)25003-6

Yaffe, T., & Kark, R. (2011). Leading by example: The case of leader OCB. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*(4), 806–826. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022464

Zhu, J., Song, L. J., Zhu, L., & Johnson, R. E. (2019). Visualizing the landscape and evolution of leadership research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *30*(2), 215–232. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.06.003

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Petra Kipfelsberger is an assistant professor for leadership and organizational behavior at the School of Management of the University of St. Gallen. Her research, teaching, and executive education revolve around the themes of meaningful work, leadership, health, and coaching. Her research has been published in leading academic journals and has received several awards.

Anneloes Raes is associate professor in the Department of Managing People in Organizations and holder of the Puig Chair of Global Leadership Development at IESE Business School. Her research focuses on top management teams, leadership, and work meaningfulness and has been published in leading academic journals.

Dennis Herhausen is associate professor of marketing at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His research, teaching, and executive education revolve around the themes of (digital) communication, customer journeys and experience, and social media management. His work has been funded by national and international research grants, has received several awards, and is published in leading academic and managerial-oriented journals.

Ronit Kark is a full professor of leadership and organizational psychology in the Department of Psychology at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and was the founder and former director of the "Gender in the Field Graduate Program." She is also a Distinguished Research Professor at the School of Business at Exeter University, UK. Her research, which has appeared in leading scholarly journals, focuses on leadership and followership, positive relationships and relatedness in organizations, identity and identification processes, gender and leadership, and leading for creativity.

Heike Bruch is a professor and director of the Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management at the University of St. Gallen. Her research, which has appeared in leading scholarly journals, focuses in particular on organizational energy, leadership, management of demographic change, and new forms of working.

How to cite this article: Kipfelsberger, P., Raes, A., Herhausen, D., Kark, R., & Bruch, H. (2022). Start with why: The transfer of work meaningfulness from leaders to followers and the role of dyadic tenure. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *43*(8), 1287–1309. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2649