

Museums as supportive workplaces: an empirical enquiry in the UK museum workforce

Abstract

Museums' vibrancy and viability are heavily dependent on supporting the development and well-being of talented and dedicated people. Although issues of organisational culture and good management have gained increasing importance for the sector, there is little empirical research on how leadership and day-to-day work conditions in museums shape workers' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Framed through organisation theory, this paper draws on survey data from UK museum staff and volunteers to examine the role of transformational leadership in driving workforce job satisfaction and organisational commitment outcomes, as mediated by key job resources and demands. Our findings show that where a transformational approach to leadership effectively communicates a shared organisational mission there is a positive impact on worker attitudes. Practical measures are suggested on how museum leaders can achieve such outcomes by inviting worker participation in decision-making, promoting a sense of task-significance, highlighting impact on museum beneficiaries and reducing role ambiguity.

Keywords: Museums, transformational leadership, job demands-resources, job satisfaction, organisational commitment

Introduction

Recent years have seen museums across Europe under increased pressure to transform into more entrepreneurial institutions to safeguard their financial resilience (Vicente, Camarero, and Garrido 2012; Morse and Munro 2018). In this shifting landscape, cultural organisations are increasingly required to adopt new managerial approaches aimed at fully utilising the expertise of their museum staff and volunteers, while also fulfilling their societal mission (Camarero et al. 2019). In the UK, where museum services comprise a particularly vibrant

sector, cultural policy is pushing for greater workforce inclusivity and enabling mechanisms for employee development (McCall and Gray 2014; Mendoza 2017). Museums need to attract, retain and foster talented and committed individuals, which necessitates organisational change across staffing, management practice and leadership. In this light, our paper aims to explore empirically how leadership approaches and resulting workplace conditions in museums shape employee work satisfaction and commitment to their institutions, with the view to inform the sector's organisation strategies and day-to-day practice.

We focus on museums and galleries in the UK, as one of the most popular and flourishing sectors internationally, formed of 2,500 organisations that employ around 44,000 people, as well as relying on a considerable number of volunteers (DCMS 2017; Mendoza 2017). The satisfaction, commitment, and general well-being of their workforce is of prominent importance for any organisation in fulfilling its mission and goals. However, the sector's specificities, such as little extrinsic incentives at work (e.g. low salaries, job insecurity and limited opportunities for career progression), coupled with reducing public support pose additional challenges to the recruitment, development and effective management of high-skilled personnel (Plaček, Půček, and Šilhánková 2017). Although scholarly work on the association of internal drivers, such as leadership styles, workplace conditions and positive employee attitudes in non-profit and public sector organisations is growing, relevant research on museums has been scarce.

As identified consistently over the past two decades, the museums sector is challenged by a paucity of formal managerial and appropriate leadership training and skills (see indicatively, Griffin & Abraham 2000; Holmes & Hatton 2008; BOP Consulting 2016; Mendoza Report 2017). This is partly because professional culture tends to prioritise curatorial expertise, scholarship and fundraising competence when promoting staff, offering little on-going support for tailored training on people management and related professional development opportunities. This often leads to poor performance in promoting staff development and to a managerialist approach that relies on top-down control, which results in an approach to management that is often seen as more transactional and less motivating, in pursuit of 'concrete results'.

In the UK particularly, the need for well-equipped leaders has been a particularly pressing issue documented in related policy documents. The 'Character Matters' report (BOP Consulting 2016) on museum workforce¹ highlights the growing significance of integrating management expertise with museum work, emphasising the role of better leadership as an important driver for organisational change. Similarly, an ACE commissioned report (Selwood et al. 2017) highlights leadership as an important factor for increasing the sector's resilience, whereas the 'Mendoza report' (Mendoza 2017) identifies the development of leaders with strong people management skills as a top priority for the future of British museums.

Despite these concerns, management and leadership within the museums sector have received little academic attention and there is a paucity of empirical research on both theory and practice on the subject. In response to this research gap, this paper draws on organisation theory and applies the concept of transformational leadership to UK museums with the view to explore for the first time its relationship to job satisfaction and organisational commitment outcomes, in line to the sector's current vision of developing a supportive organisational culture for the provision of museum services (UK Museums Workforce Steering Group 2018). Transformational leadership traits fit well with museum work, as they are grounded on creating and instilling a common organisation vision, drawing upon intrinsic needs and inspirational motivation (Bass and Avolio 1993; Judge and Piccolo 2004). In this light, the concept reflects Mendoza (2017: 18)'s articulation of museum leaders as instigators of 'compelling visions'.

More specifically, the model we use allows us to examine the potential for transformational leadership to enhance museum workers' job satisfaction and nurture organisational commitment, while also revealing the mediating role of key job resources and demands as tools for realising further positive results. Our analysis is based on a questionnaire survey of museum workers at national museums and galleries, local authority institutions and charitable trusts across the UK. Admittedly, the museum workforce is by no means a homogeneous collective of employees, as it includes people with professional and other roles (e.g. clerical), who perform diverse front-of-house and back-of-house tasks. In this study, we sought to collect survey data from all museum staff across divisions and different domains of activity,

such as conservation, curation, education, retail, public engagement and so on. We also considered that museums rely increasingly on fixed-term project-based staff and a widening pool of volunteers. We therefore invited freelance, non-permanent, intern and non-paid staff to participate in the survey for the sample to represent museum workforce heterogeneity in terms of employment status.

Exploring museum workforce outcomes in relation to leadership style and work conditions is highly important, as it can inform the ways by which museums can become more supportive of their talented labour; a major challenge and question for the sector (BOP Consulting 2016). Through an empirical investigation into this particularly under-studied area, this paper makes a valuable contribution to museum management research, particularly in relation to intra-organisational interactions between leadership style, workplace conditions and job outcomes that are fundamental to the thriving museums of the future. The study is expected to draw important implications for museums in the UK and beyond, extending to all related public and non-profit organisations that form an international sector with shared concerns. The findings can thus guide the management of human resources and volunteers in the sector and offer new insight into adapting organisational practice and leadership strategies to retain skilled and committed labour.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows; firstly, we elaborate on the concepts of transformational leadership and job resources and demands, which together form our model of analysis, building our testable hypotheses, as derived from the related literature. Next, we provide a detailed account of our methodological design and the data collected. After presenting a thorough description and analysis of our results, we move on to discuss the study's key findings and managerial implications.

Transformational leadership approach and worker attitudes

As Griffin and Abraham (2000) rightly stress, a museum is above all an organisation of people. As such, its direction and management call not only for museum expertise but also for strong people management skills. However, one of the greatest risks to museums' viability

today is a lack of effective leadership as 'too often museum leaders have been promoted without making the shift to thinking about the larger organisation' (BOP Consulting 2016: 18). Consequently, individuals that make-up museum workforce often feel that they receive little organisation support in exchange for their commitment to the job, which in turn jeopardises their retention and thriving in their organisations (ibid). In the context of the cultural and creative sector, leadership has been defined as the capacity to devise and communicate a common direction and purpose that can be realised collaboratively (Hewison and Holden 2002). Viewed as a process relevant to all levels of cultural organisations, such as museums, the concept of the 'leader' concerns multiple career levels from heads of small teams, to board members, senior managers and top-tier directors (TBR 2014). Museum leaders' traits and behaviour are of high interest since they shape organisational climate and performance (Griffin and Abraham 2000).

As conceptualised in organisation studies, there are two distinguished styles of leadership; transactional and transformational (Burns 1978). Transactional leaders emphasise the implementation of existing rules, procedures and norms, adopting a transactional approach to the exchange of resources with workers (Bass 1985; Judge and Piccolo 2004). In contrast, transformational leaders build a vision for the organisation, supported by an organisational culture that reflects shared values and norms (Bass and Avolio 1993). This vision goes beyond existing short-term goals and instead concentrates on higher order and intrinsic needs (Judge and Piccolo 2004). Transformational leadership assigns prominence to vision and mission, which are of particular importance for driving motivation in the public and not-for-profit sectors and the provision of public and community service (Wright and Pandey 2010). This leadership style attains additional relevance to the museum sector, where material rewards and career promotion opportunities are much fewer compared to for-profit industries (see indicatively, the Museum Association 'Salary Guidelines', 2017). Such an approach also accords with recent policy recommendations suggesting that 'museum leaders should set compelling visions' (Mendoza 2017, p.18) and more generally, with museums' socio-cultural purposes (see for instance, ICOM Statutes art.3 para.1).

Bono et al. (2007) identify three ways in which a transformational style of leadership can impact on organisational culture and employee attitudes. Firstly, transformational leaders can help workers to satisfy some of their basic intrinsically-held needs by laying out an appealing and shared vision for the future and by showing confidence in individual ability to realise it. This can induce workers' feeling that their work activities are self-congruent and consistent with their personal interests and values. Secondly, transformational leaders are more likely to provide employees with greater levels of job resources (e.g. work autonomy and participation in managerial decisions) that enable goal achievement and personal development (Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke 2004). Thirdly, transformational leadership can reduce levels of anxiety associated with job demands (e.g. workload), including negative feelings arising from performance evaluations, restrictions on autonomy and constraints on genuine emotional expression.

Through these mechanisms, transformational leadership can encourage workers to express themselves more authentically, derive more needs satisfaction from their activities and experience a greater sense of control and social support. Some earlier work in museum studies has linked leadership style with several positive outcomes in museums, including successful organisational change (Abraham et al., 1999), levels of worker innovation (Goutlaptsi et al, 2020; Kung et al., 2020) and museum effectiveness (Griffin & Abraham, 2000). Each of these studies point not only to the clarity of mission put forward by leaders, but also aspects of the work environment (e.g. worker participation in decision-making or task orientation) as key mediating variables in the relationship between leadership style and outcomes. Such studies on leadership in the museums sector are small in numbers and often lack strong empirical findings. Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no such studies have focused on the UK museums sector or taken account of job satisfaction or organisational commitment, which are consistently found to be key aspects of worker attitudes in determining outcomes such as performance and retention.

Thus, in this paper we examine the relationship between museum workers' perspective on leadership in their organisation and their resulting level of job satisfaction and

organisational commitment. Following Locke (1976: 1304), we define job satisfaction as the 'pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences', which can reduce workers' turnover and improve organisational citizenship behaviour (Eby et al. 1999; Organ and Ryan 1995). Organisational commitment is understood as an employee's affective attachment to their employing institution, a sentiment which according to Mowday and Porter (1979) fosters greater identification with the organisation's values, an increased desire to remain in the organisation and more willingness to exert effort in order to achieve its goals. As such, organisational commitment is often associated with improved worker performance, and reduced levels of absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu and Zajac 1990).

Based on these premises, our first set of research hypotheses focuses on the ability of transformational leadership to directly impact positively on employee attitudes towards their work and organisation:

H1: A perceived transformational leadership style has a positive relationship with workers' sense of job satisfaction.

H2: A perceived transformational leadership style has a positive relationship with workers' sense of organisational commitment.

Furthermore, the making available of specific job resources or reduction in job demands can be expected to indirectly impact on employee attitudes. In the next section, we explore a number of specific job resources and job demands that are both salient to the museum sector and under the influence of organisational leaders.

The mediating role of key job demands and job resources

To help formulate more practicable recommendations for leaders in the sector, we have sought to identify specific sectoral aspects of work that can both be influenced by organisational leaders and act to enhance employee needs satisfaction, and subsequent

workforce attitudes (McCarthy and Dragouni 2020). Towards this direction, we adapt the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model to the context of museums, under which work conditions can be categorised as either demands or resources (Demerouti et al. 2001). Although previous work examines the relationship both job resources and demands have with job satisfaction (Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke 2004; De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia 2017) and organisational commitment (Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli 2003; Hakanena, Schaufeli, and Aholaa 2008), no study thus far has explored said relationships in the museum sector. This is a critical gap as research set in other sectors evidences that workers experience disengagement and reduced job satisfaction and organisational commitment when their organisation and managers fail to provide them with the resources they need to respond to job demands effectively (Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli 2003; Demerouti et al. 2001).

In organisation theory, job resources are defined as those physical, psychological, social and organisational aspects of the job that are functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and associated physiological and psychological costs, or stimulate personal growth and development (Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke 2004). Through a motivational process, such resources can be expected to encourage greater work engagement and improved organisational outcomes (Airla et al. 2014). Job demands represent the antipode of job resources, defined as those physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of one's employment that require sustained physical, emotional and/or cognitive effort, and as such, they are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke 2004). Job demands can either be tackled, if employees are well-equipped with personal and job resources without particular strain (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004) or become overwhelming and stressful leading eventually to burnout and ill-health (Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli 2003; Airla et al. 2014).

For paper economy, we focus here on those job resources and demands that are most reported in the museum literature as relevant to the sector. Specifically, we consider management support for workers' participation in decision-making, their perceived task-significance and their contact with beneficiaries as museum job resources, whereas we

account for workers' workload and role ambiguity as museum job demands. We will now discuss each of these job resources and demands in turn. Our model is graphically illustrated by figure 1.

[FIGURE 1 SOMEWHERE HERE]

The psychological need to experience ownership over one's behaviour and perceived ability to act with a sense of volition (Ryan and Deci 2000) can be directly met by a transformative leader through granting greater autonomy over work tasks and through a participative management style that provides meaningful worker participation in organisational decision-making. Quite characteristically, McCall and Gray (2014), in their study of museums in the UK, report that top-down management structures function as a source of division between managers and staff, affecting negatively the latter's perceived control over the organisation's direction and work. In contrast, a greater sharing of decision-making power between senior management and museum professionals can appease such polarisation and lead to greater workforce satisfaction and commitment. When those in leadership positions embrace such diffusion of responsibility, they foster a more agile and innovative organisation culture (BOP Consulting 2016). Based on this, our third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: Management support for employee participation in decision-making will mediate the relationship between a transformational leadership style and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Competency is a desire to feel capable of mastering the work environment and thereby bring about desired outcomes and manage various challenges (Ryan and Deci 2000). A sense of competency can result from perceived task significance, skills-utilisation and the receipt of constructive and supportive feedback from a transformative approach to leadership. In this respect, it has been suggested that both paid staff and volunteers are driven by opportunities

to use and extend their knowledge and skills while working in a museum (Orr 2006). Museum workers at all levels need to feel enabled to pursue and develop the tasks for which they were hired in the first place (Griffin and Abraham 2000). This leads to our fourth hypothesis:

H4: The degree to which workers perceive their work tasks as significant will mediate the relationship between a transformational leadership style and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Belongingness is a psychological need that reflects human desire for close relationships and a sense of communion with others (Ryan and Deci 2000). The sense of belonging is associated with a transformative approach to leadership through improved relations with beneficiaries of services, co-workers and management, as well as by creating a sense that one's feelings and personal needs are considered by the organisation. This also holds for volunteers, where helping professionals to carry out their work, assigns them a 'status in the museum world' (Orr 2006: 195). As a specific form of belongingness that is of great importance in the museum sector, the work of Grant (2009) outlines how direct contact with and receipt of feedback from beneficiaries creates a sense of appreciation and stronger emotional attachment to audiences. Museum workers are generally considered highly motivated individuals, dedicated to the communities they serve (Abraham et al 1999). For individuals with direct contact with beneficiaries, the fact their work makes a difference is evident. However, for individuals who have no direct line of sight on how their work benefits users, transformative leaders play a significant role in laying out the organisation's mission and engendering a sense of individual contribution to achieving that mission amongst workers. Thus, the role of transformative leadership in motivating workers is particularly salient for 'back of house' staff and for integrating tasks and processes to create a sense of internal and external unity (Griffin and Abraham 2000). Hence, our fifth hypothesis is the following:

H5: The degree to which workers experience positive contact with beneficiaries will mediate the relationship between a transformational leadership style and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

JDR literature commonly cites issues around work pressure, emotional demands and role ambiguity as significant work demands (Bakker and Demerouti 2007). Workload is an important potential stressor amongst museum workers given that many duties (e.g. expert work coupled with administrative, income generation, marketing tasks) involve cognitive demands, emotional demands and potential work overload (Museums Association n.d.). As it is reported in the UK, a growing 'overlap' between duties in many roles is commonly observed (Mendoza 2017) whereas museum workers are being assigned with additional tasks and responsibilities (e.g. revenue-generating activities) without receiving any additional monetary compensation (BOP Consulting 2016). Transformational leadership can play an important role in reducing excessive workloads, or help employees cope with them and thereby prevent them becoming stressors. The latter may involve setting out a clear organisational mission and creating an organisational culture that emphasises peer support amongst workers and the alignment of organisational and worker values. Thus, we define our sixth hypothesis as follows:

H6: The degree to which workers feel their workload is excessive will mediate the relationship between a transformational leadership style and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Many museums, especially those that lack the scale to facilitate specialisation, require employees to engage with several duties, rendering role ambiguity another significant source of strain (McCall and Gray 2014). Apart from limited resources, role ambiguity also stems from external pressures for 'traditional' museum professionals to undertake more multi-functional duties and less collection-based tasks (ibid). Once again, a transformational leadership style

can play an important role in overcoming perceptions of role-ambiguity amongst workers through setting out a clear organisational strategy (based on vision-mission) and creating governance structures that facilitate communication and feedback between workers and management. Our final hypothesis is hence the following:

H7: Workers' perception of role ambiguity will mediate the relationship between a transformational leadership style and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Methodology

Data collection and sample

The analysis is based on survey responses from 289 individuals working in museums and galleries throughout the UK. A contact list of relevant organisations was constructed from various publicly available sources and a stratified sample was selected based on museum type (e.g. archaeological, contemporary art, history) and geographical location. Museums were contacted via email and asked to distribute a link to our online survey to all their staff and volunteers. As it was not possible to construct a random sample of individual workers, we gathered data on a wide range of individual and organisational characteristics (Table 1 provides descriptive statistics on respondents). These have been related to sectorial data collected or commissioned by the Arts Council England to establish representativeness.

[TABLE 1 SOMEWHERE HERE]

As shown on Table 1, the majority of our survey respondents were women (75%), held a graduate (28%) or postgraduate (62%) degree, classified their ethnicity as 'white' (91%) and were UK nationals (91%). This is in line with the findings of the 'Character Matters' report (BOP Consulting 2016), which surveyed 2,000 UK museum workers of whom 72% were women, 29% held a graduate and 54% a postgraduate degree, and 92% were ethnically white. Similarly, the Arts Council England 'Equality and Diversity and the Creative Case' study

(2020), reported 63% of women and 90% of ethnically white employees based on major partner museums' data. Consistent to our survey data, this report also found that 63% of management roles were filled by women (70% of department head and management roles in our sample) and 94% by ethnically white workers.

In relation to respondents' work characteristics, most survey participants had either a full-time or part-time paid job (77%), with a smaller number of volunteers (19%) and freelancers (4%). These numbers are analogous to BOP Consulting (2016), which found 71% of museum workers were on either long-term or short-term contracts, 20% were volunteers and 4.8% were freelance. That report also documented that 60% of volunteers worked over 10 hours per month and 8% over 50 hours per month. Our survey measured hours worked per week and is therefore not directly comparable, but found 73% of volunteers worked over 4 hours per week, 37% worked more than 11 hours per week and only 6% worked more than 21 hours per week. In line with this previous research, we also observed that numerous volunteers (50%) were involved in independent museums. Similar to BOP Consulting (2016), our sample also found that volunteers were less likely to have worked in the sector for an extended period (70% and 74% reported less than 10 years in the sector, respectively) when compared to paid employees (46% and 53% had less than 10 years in sector, respectively).

Regarding museum location, although most of our responses were received from museums in England (80%), some representation from Scotland (10%), Wales (8%) and Northern Ireland (2%) was achieved, although compared to BOP Consulting (2016) (84% England, 12% Scotland, 3% Wales, 1% Northern Ireland) our subsample of Welsh respondents was somewhat higher. Finally, in terms of governance status, our sample came from workers in independent (30%), local authority (27%) and national (11%) museums. Although this reflects the structure of the sector quite well (see Mendoza, 2017), it is somewhat different from BOP Consulting (2016) (29%, 19% and 23%, respectively), with lower representation from large national museums.

Measures and analysis

Measures of the variables were developed based on previous researches². *Transformational leadership* is measured using Jensen et al (2019)'s four-item measure (sample item: 'My leader puts forward a clear vision for the organisation's future'). The study considers three different types of job resources. *Perceived Participatory management style* is assessed through Kim (2005)'s five-item measure (sample item: 'I feel involved in important decisions in my work unit'). *Task significance* is measured using Morgeson and Humphrey (2006)'s four-item measure (sample item: 'The results of my work are likely to significantly affect the lives of other people'). *Contact with beneficiaries* is measured using Grant (2008)'s three-item measure of job opportunities for impact on beneficiaries (magnitude) (sample item: 'My job gives me the chance to make a significant positive difference in others' lives'). Parallel to these, the study considers two distinct types of job demands. *Role ambiguity* is measured by Pandey and Wright (2006)'s three-item measure (sample item: 'My job has clear, planned goals and objectives') whereas *workload* is evaluated using Karasek et al. (1998)'s five-item measure (sample item: 'My job requires working very hard').

Two main outcome variables are included in the analysis. *Organisational commitment* is assessed through Allen and Meyer (1996)'s affective commitment measure (sample item: 'I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation'). *Job satisfaction* is evaluated by Hirschfeld (2000)'s six-item measure for intrinsic job satisfaction (e.g. Level of satisfaction with: being able to do things that don't go against my conscience). A correlation matrix, descriptive statistics, and Cronbach's Alpha measures (ranging from .702 to .924) for each of the above measures is reported in Appendix 1. As various personal and job-related characteristics could influence reported job demands, resources and attitudinal outcomes, several control variables were included in the early stages of our analysis (see Appendix 2). Where such variables were found to be significant, they were retained in the models in later stages of analysis. None of the control variables that relate to respondents' personal characteristics (i.e. age, gender, marital status, children, educational level, household income) were found to significantly impact on either job satisfaction or organisational commitment. A second set of control variables related to job characteristics (i.e. tenure, hours worked,

managerial responsibilities) were found to have no significant relationship with organisational commitment. However, those who have been in their role for longer did report a lower level of job satisfaction, while those in managerial roles reported a higher level of satisfaction. The final set of control variables takes account of museum type (i.e. national, local authority or independent), with results for organisational commitment and job satisfaction being somewhat higher in independent museums.

The data were analysed using structural equation modelling, where several fit indices were considered [r-squared statistics, chi-squared per degrees of freedom (χ^2/DF), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)]. Separate models were constructed to examine the role of job demands and resources as mediating variables. A bootstrap (5,000 samples, 95% confidence intervals) was employed to estimate the standard error and parameter estimates more precisely along with their accompanying significance levels for each mediated relationship (Little, Bovaird, and Widaman 2006). In addition, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted, whereby all the scale items were found to have factor loadings in excess of .55. The goodness-of-fit indexes ($\chi^2/DF = 1.075$, CFI = .930, TLI = .940, RMSEA = .51) indicated that the measurement model provided a good fit to the data (Hair et al. 2010).

Empirical findings

The first set of findings examines the relationship between transformative leadership and the outcome variables as mediated by job resources (Figure 2 and Table 2). This structural model demonstrates a good level of data fit ($\chi^2/DF = 1.065$, CFI = .950, TLI = .960, RMSEA = .046). The total relationship between transformational leadership and both job satisfaction ($\beta = .628$) and organisational commitment ($\beta = .549$) are (significantly positive, supporting hypotheses H1 and H2). These findings highlight the important role of a transformative style of leadership in influencing employee attitudes towards both their job and organisation. This can result from creating a clear mission that is congruent with worker values or through the skillful management of workplace resources and stressors.

[Figure 2 somewhere here]

[Table 2 somewhere here]

We now examine the role of a transformative leadership style in influencing attitudes through the provision of the specified job resources. Findings in figure 2 show that transformational leadership is strongly associated with increased levels of employee sense of participation in decision-making, task significance and contact with beneficiaries. Each of these job resources is also found to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and the outcome variables (see estimates of indirect relationships in table 2), supporting hypotheses H3, H4 and H5. This leads to a conclusion that through the provision of these job resources, transformative leadership has a fully mediated relationship with job satisfaction and a partially mediated relationship with organisational commitment.

More specifically, the willingness of leaders to adopt a participatory approach to shared decision-making appears as a significantly positive mediating factor in improving workers' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Moreover, where employees are encouraged to feel they possess the competencies needed to carry out duties that align with their values, the resulting sense of task significance has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. Parallel to these, our results suggest that when museum leaders communicate a clear mission, which emphasises social service to affected communities and when they provide positive feedback to staff and volunteers on how their efforts benefit visitors and stakeholders, workers develop a stronger attachment to beneficiaries, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Focusing on the ability of transformative leaders to manage the stressors that can arise for job demands (Figure 3, Table 3), our results provide evidence of a significant relationship with both job satisfaction ($\beta=.615$) and organisational commitment ($\beta=.542$). This model

demonstrates a good level of fit with the data ($\chi^2/DF = 1.055$, CFI = .960, TLI = .965, RMSEA = .045).

[Figure 3 somewhere here]

[Table 3 somewhere here]

More specifically, transformational leadership is found to be crucial to helping workers cope with job demands, as shown by its significantly negative relationship with both perceived workload and role ambiguity (figure 3). As regards role ambiguity, findings demonstrate that through clear communication and the provision of feedback on activities, a transformative approach to leadership is critical for reducing the negative effect of workers' sense of role ambiguity, which according to museum research is increasingly a common source of pressure at work (McCall and Gray, 2014). Minimising the negative feelings that stem from role ambiguity has a considerable spillover effect on improved job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see indirect estimates in table 3).

While a transformative approach to leadership is also associated by workers with reduced workload, the effect size is small ($r\text{-squared} = .047$) and there are no significant consequences for job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see figure 3). This may reflect the limited workforce capacity faced by managers in the UK museum sector and the resulting high level of workload reported by the majority of workers in the sector, regardless of leadership approach adopted by management.

Conclusion

Museums are institutions with a centrally-positioned social and cultural role, which apart from fulfilling their mission, they also encounter increasing pressures to adopt good leadership and people management practices in order to remain resilient and thrive in an ever-challenging environment. As exemplified in the UK, museum policy and service providers have long been

seeking to improve leadership skills in the sector, acknowledging that museum success is heavily dependent on managing internal relationships effectively to develop and retain talented and dedicated people. Despite the criticality of the issues, there is limited research on the topic from a management and organisational studies perspective. This paper seeks to stimulate research interest into this area by exploring for the first time how a transformational approach to leadership, along with the influence it can have on work conditions, could affect employees' job satisfaction and commitment to their organisation. In doing so, it seeks to inform management strategies for creating and maintaining a positive and supportive work environment for museum staff and volunteers.

Our study provides evidence that a transformational style of leadership on behalf of top management and project or team supervisors can influence workers' attitudes towards their work and organisation significantly positively, especially when combined with democratic and empowering procedures for decision-making, appropriate task allocation that promotes perceptions of significance and equitability, and communication mechanisms that highlight impact on museum beneficiaries. Parallel to these, our findings suggest that transformational leaders can minimise the psychological weight of negative aspects of museum work on job satisfaction and organisational commitment, particularly the stress caused by role ambiguity, which is very common in the sector.

Our empirical findings have important implications for museums' management. Firstly, given that transformational leadership shows great potential for advancing workers' satisfaction and retention prospects, the sector needs to develop training programmes (e.g. in-house training, seminars, mentoring schemes, peer-learning opportunities) to enable and promote the adoption and development of related skills and attitudes across various management levels. Sector bodies also need to provide more funding opportunities to support the development of transformational leadership across multiple ranks and career levels. It is important for leadership training not to remain confined to top management but embrace all segments of the organisation's workforce, given the positive role of autonomy and participation in decisions, embracing and actively supporting a diffusion of responsibility.

Moreover, museums need to invest in those job resources that have the capacity for serving as vessels for the development of positive work outcomes. They could commit to dedicating specific activities for their employees to ensure that a certain level of these resources (as appropriate to the nature of each organisation) is available to support all members of staff. For instance, museum management could promote the proactive cultivation of communication and continuous exchange of experiences between 'front-of-house' and 'back-of-house' workers as good practice for reinforcing perceptions of meaningful impact on audiences and user communities. Social interaction with colleagues and beneficiaries can serve as a platform for expanding one's personal values that act as motivators and guide behaviour (Boyd and Nowell 2020). In addition, museums need to ensure that they use effective communication mechanisms for getting their objectives across to their employees, aiming ultimately for the alignment of organisation philosophy with staff members' values (Camarero et al. 2019). To further foster such identification with an organisation, those in leadership need to provide staff with recognition and a sense of shared control by encouraging collective decision-making and by being receptive to their comments and suggestions. In addition, as research on museum-based leadership and management can inform policy and practice, it will be critical to encourage and nurture a constructive and continuous dialogue between academic scholars and museum professionals to realise and multiply benefits through knowledge exchange.

Overall, this article contributes to a research niche in museum management studies by applying concepts from organisation studies literature to the sector and providing new empirical evidence to a topical question related to intra-organisation culture and work outcomes. There are certain limitations to the study which require further exploration and enquiry. One limitation of this work is its geographical and sectorial focus on UK museums. Future work on other countries or domains of culture-related activity (e.g. libraries, archives) would be valuable for drawing cross-country and cross-sectoral comparisons and gaining more insight into the association of transformational leadership and workplace conditions in nurturing positive work outcomes in the cultural and creative industries. To this end, additional

job-related factors, namely resources and demands, could be considered with the view to test their influence as mediators to satisfaction and commitment. A final limitation is that our study was cross-sectional and thus longitudinal studies would be important for shedding additional light into development processes and the historicity of workforce attitudes and behaviour as fostered by museum leaders with transformative skills.

Notes

1. The 'Character Matters' study was commissioned by Arts Council England, Museum Galleries Scotland, the Museums Association and the Association of Independent museums with the view to identify workforce characteristics and behaviour necessary to support the UK museum sector for the next decade.
2. A full list of items used in each measure and accompanying confirmatory factor analysis results are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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Declaration of interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Figure 1: The role of a transformational leadership style in enhancing employee work attitudes

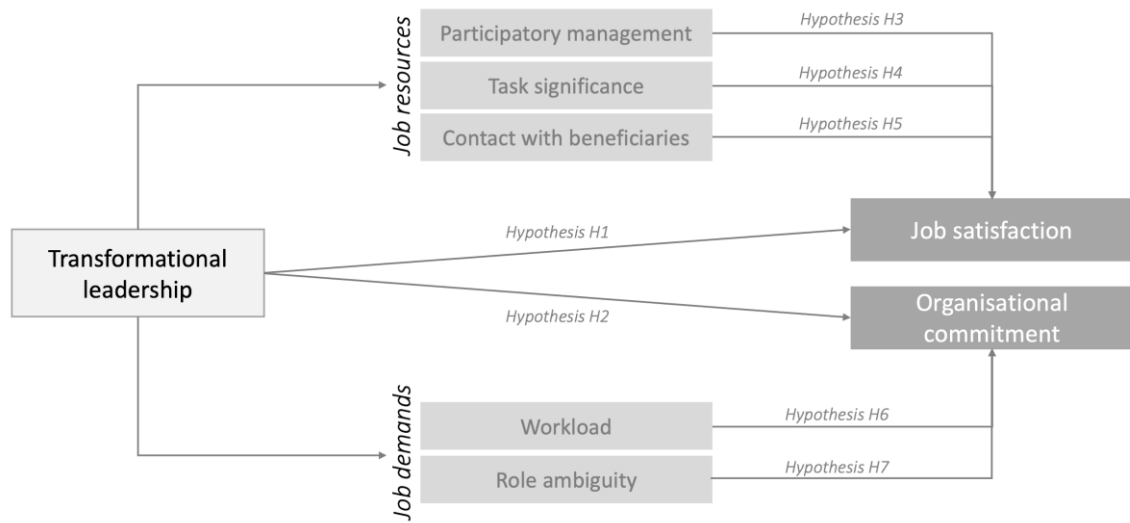
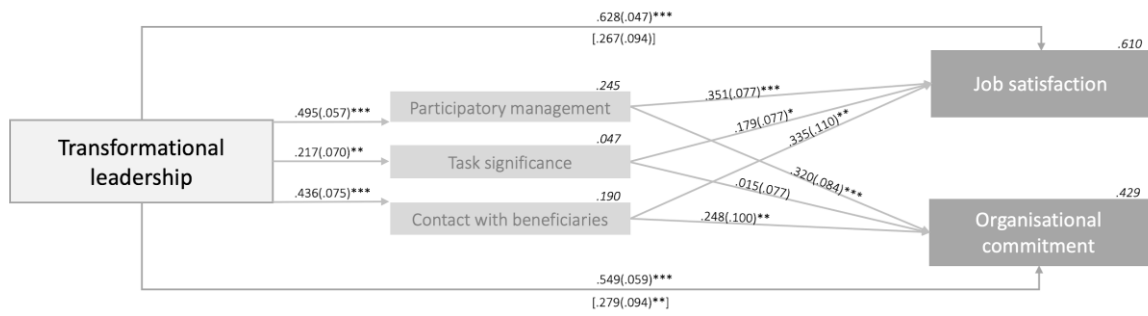
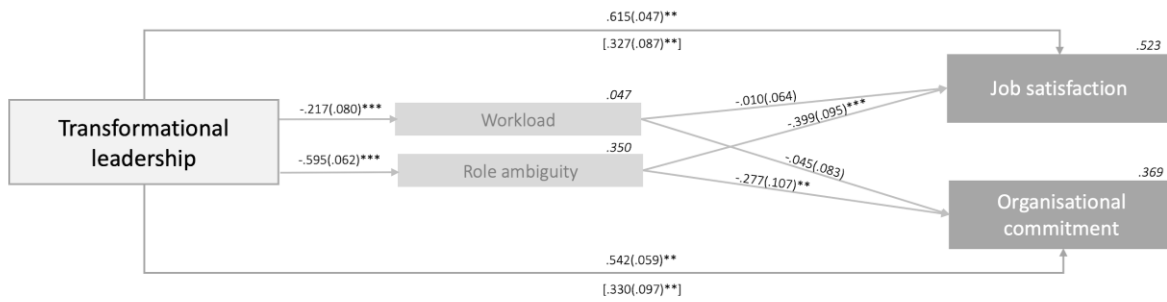


Figure 2: Impact of a transformational leadership style on worker attitudes through provision of job resources



Note: Standardised coefficients, standard errors in round parenthesis, direct effect in square parenthesis, r-square values in italic. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 3: Impact of a transformational leadership style on worker attitudes through managing job demands



Note: Standardised coefficients, standard errors in round parenthesis, direct effect in square parenthesis, r-square values in italic. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 1: Description of survey respondents

Variable	%	Variable	%	Variable	%
<u>Age</u>		<u>Nationality</u>		<u>Work duties (multiple possible)</u>	
18-24	7.0	UK national	92.5	Building/facilities mgt.	21.9
25-34	29.9	EU national	3.7	Collections mgt.	39.1
35-44	22.3	Non-EU national	3.8	Conservation	21.5
45-54	20.0	<u>Hours work per week</u>		Curating	33.6
55-64	15.0	<4	3.6	Education and learning	37.6
65+	5.8	4-10	7.3	Exhibitions	42.3
<u>Children under 18 years</u>		11-20	12.6	Fundraising/marketing	29.2
Yes	22.8	21-40	76.5	Outreach/public events	39.1
No	77.2	<u>Time in current role/sector</u>		Security	17.2
<u>Highest Education level</u>		<6 months	9.5/ 1.5	Technology and digital	19.0
No formal qualifications	0.4	6-12 months	16.4/ 4.0	Visitor/front of house	43.4
Secondary school education	5.3	12-24 months	15.7/ 7.3	Support/admin/finance	16.1
Undergraduate cert./dip.	2.6	2-4 years	24.9/15.3	<u>Museum location</u>	
Undergraduate degree	29.7	5-10 years	16.1/28.5	East Midlands, East of England	8.0
Postgraduate cert./dip.	14.6	10-15 years	9.1/14.6	London	10.2
Masters	40.8	15-20 years	3.6/10.6	North East, North West	8.4
Doctorate	6.6	>20 years	4.7/18.2	Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	20.0
<u>Ethnicity</u>		<u>Contract type</u>		Ireland	37.3
White	90.5	Full-time paid	53.2	South East, South West	14.3
Other	9.5	Part-time paid/paid intern	23.8	Yorkshire, West Midlands	1.8
<u>Gender</u>		Freelance	4.0	Other	
Male	23.9	Volunteer	19.0	<u>Museum type</u>	5.1
Female	74.6	<u>Museum collection type</u>		Gallery	10.6
Binary	1.5	Archaeology	5.8	Historic prop/ Heritage site	30.3
<u>Annual gross household income</u>		Art	16.4	Independent trust/charity	27.4
<£20,000	17.8	Historic house	7.3	Local authority	10.6
£20,000-£40,000	37.1	History	19.0	National	5.8
£40,000-£60,000	25.0	Industrial/Maritime/Military	17.9	Regimental	6.6
£60,000-£80,000	13.7	Transport, Science & technology	5.1	University	3.6
	3.2	Universal	17.5	Other	

£80,000-£100,000	3.2	Other	11.0
>£100,000			

Note: N = 27

Table 2: Indirect effect of a transformational leadership style on worker attitudes through provision of job resources

Dependent variable	Mediator	Indirect estimate (standard error)	Confidence intervals (95%)
Job satisfaction	Participatory management	.120 (.035)	.072, .187 (***)
	Task significance	.029 (.016)	.009, .064 (**)
	Contact with beneficiaries	.089 (.032)	.048, .158 (***)
Organisational commitment	Participatory management	.049 (.016)	.029, .083 (***)
	Task significance	.001 (.006)	-.006, .013
	Contact with beneficiaries	.029 (.015)	.009, .062 (***)

Note: Standardised coefficients, standard errors in round parenthesis. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3: Indirect effects of a transformational leadership style on worker attitudes through managing job demands

Dependent variable	Mediator	Indirect estimate (standard error)	Confidence intervals (95%)
Job satisfaction	Workload	.003 (.010)	-.010, .019
	Role ambiguity	.150 (.044)	.089, .237 (***)
Organisational commitment	Workload	.003 (.008)	-.003, .018
	Role ambiguity	.043 (.022)	.016, .090 (**)

Note: Standardized coefficients, standard errors in round parenthesis. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Appendix 1: Correlation matrix and measure reliability

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.Role ambiguity	3.841	1.184	(.780)							
3.Workload	3.989	1.235	.324	(.754)						
4.Task significance	4.674	1.126	-.241	.414	(.785)					
5. Contact with beneficiaries	5.597	0.948	-.345	-.196	.412	(.702)				
6.Participation	5.325	1.298	-.505	.091	.390	.296	(.879)			
7.Transformative leadership	4.677	1.725	-.590	-.217	.213	.427	.492	(.924)		
8.Job satisfaction	5.420	1.378	-.597	-.194	.449	.581	.608	.607	(.889)	
9.Organisational commitment	5.025	1.284	-.481	-.213	.264	.431	.519	.539	.600	(.741)

Note: M (mean), SD (standard deviation), Pearson correlation, Cronbach's Alpha in parentheses.

Appendix 2: Control variables

	Organisational Commitment	Job Satisfaction
Age	.090 (.088)	.122 (.079)
Children	-.104 (.265)	-.060 (.239)
Education level	-.088 (.081)	-.023 (.073)
Gender	.041 (.241)	.009 (.217)
Marriage status	-.079 (.237)	.063 (.213)
Household Income	-.066 (.105)	.026 (.094)
Tenure (role)	.036 (.073)	-.192 (.066)*
Hours per week worked	-.066 (.149)	-.052 (.134)
Management role	.077 (.218)	.120 (.197)*
National museum	-.057 (.353)	-.071 (.318)
Local Authority museum	.043 (.261)	.023 (.235)
Independent museum	.145 (.254)*	.140 (.229)*
<i>r</i> ²	.134	.115
<i>X</i> ² / <i>df</i>	1.290	1.429
CFI	.987	.984
RMSEA	.032	.040
TLI	.950	.941

Note: Standardized coefficients, standard errors in parenthesis. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.