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Vulnerability in Higher Education Leadership

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What is Vulnerability and Why is it Important?

Definition

- “The emotion we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure” (Brown, 2018, p.19).

Research Questions

- Does perceived level of vulnerability relate to a certain leadership style (authentic, ethical, or transformational)?
- Is there a relationship between age or gender and vulnerability level?

Literature Findings: Leadership Styles

Authentic Leadership

- “The process whereby leaders are aware of their thoughts and behaviors within the context in which they operate” (Maximo et al., 2019, p. 2).

Ethical Leadership

- “The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships” (Brown et al., 2005).

Transformational Leadership

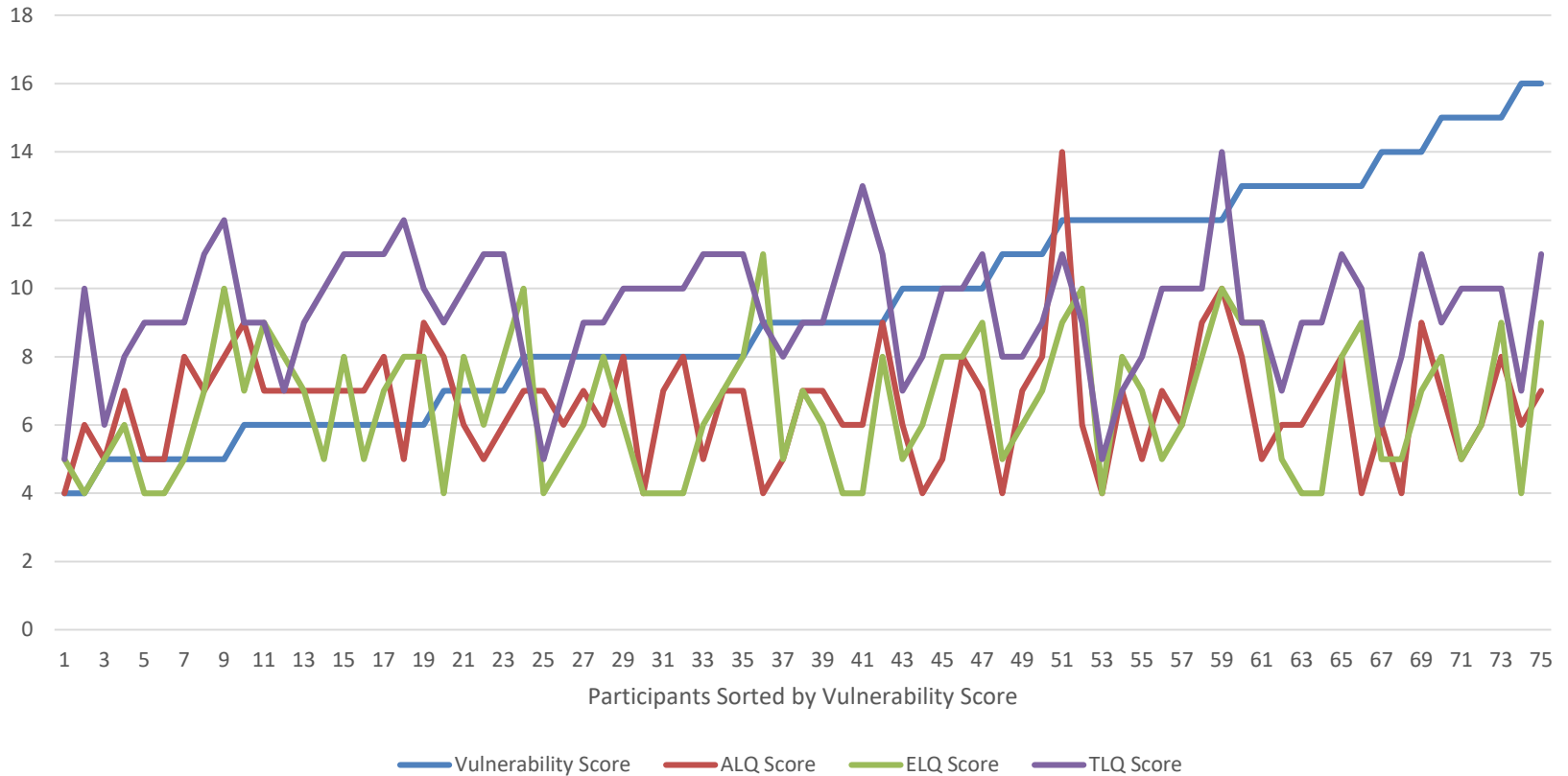
- Motivating others through a common mission or challenge that empowers followers and encourages them to develop as leaders (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3).

Current Research Study

- 75 participants in higher education
- 17 question survey
 - Demographics: Age Range and Gender
 - Vulnerability: 2 open-ended and 2 multiple-choice Likert Scale
 - Leadership Styles: 12 multiple-choice Likert scale, 4 for each style
- Conducted via Qualtrics online survey tool

Research Findings

Vulnerability and Leadership Style Scores



Limitations

- Open-ended questions coded by researcher
- Small sample size and short amount of time
- Title of survey/research project
- Self-reporting
- Did not use full leadership style surveys

Conclusion

- Vulnerability is not widely accepted
- Perception is overwhelmingly negative
- Transformational leadership was most identified with regardless of level of vulnerability
- Younger generations appear to be more willing to embrace vulnerability

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- Maximo, N., Stander, M. W., & Coxen, L. (2019). Authentic leadership and work engagement: The indirect effects of psychological safety and trust in supervisors. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 45.