Does Transformational Leadership Effect Employees' Commitment? A Mediation Analysis of Perceived Organizational Support Using VB-SEM

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ABSTRACT
Considering the objective to measure employees' commitment, current study has hypothesized the effect of transformational leadership through intervening role of perceived organizational support. For achieving study purpose, doctors in healthcare sector of Sindh, Pakistan were targeted and sample of 380 were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected through self-administrated questionnaire. Data screening was done through SPSS25, model was assessed through PLS structural equation modeling under algorithm and hypotheses were assessed under structural modeling through bootstrapping technique by using Smart PLS. The study outcomes show a positive significant effect of transformational leadership on employees' commitment. Current study also found a significant mediating effect of perceived organizational support between transformational leadership and employees' commitment. The results also theoretically contributed in literature under organizational support theory and social identity theory.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership, Perceived organizational support, Employees' commitment, and Healthcare sector.*

1.0 Introduction

Globally both public and private organizations have established predetermined objectives and goals. For achievement of such objectives and goals role of human resources cannot neglected (Mokgolo. Mokgolo, &Modiba 2012; Mottoh 2015; Gberevbie 2017). Simply regardless of other resources such as technological, land, and financial resources, it become hard to achieve the objectives by organizations without human resource (Jain, & Duggal 2015; Gberevbie, Joshua, Excellence-Oluye& Oyeyemi, 2017). Additionally, literature such as Trottier, Van Wart, and

Wang (2008); Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, (2009); Yasir, Imran, Muhamad and Khan, (2016) have shown that, among factors related to employees' commitment, style of leadership is on the top which has remarkable effect on commitment of workforce pertaining to their performance. According to Akindode and Fagbohunde (2012) that now a days leaders are accounted for a style of leadership that is favoring top down approach and using techniques for leading employees, which most often than not a reason of negative response from employees and hindrance between both employees and leaders. Such leadership styles become a reason of demotivation among staff, and reduce employees' commitment. Literature by Lok and Crawford (2004); Nasurdin, Ahmed, and Razali, (2014) also evident that when employees have no any immediate chance to switch from one organization to another organization they emotionally detach themselves from organization.Stated earlier shows the importance of leadership and employees' commitment towards achievement of individual as well as organizational objectives become critical and important.According toOjokuku, Odetayo, and Sajuiybe (2012); Keskes (2014); Abasilim, Gberevbie, and Osibanjo (2018) stated that leaders are key element in any organization as a management function and are helpful in employee dedication and helping hand in achievement of organizational objectives. Leadership is gaining importance and attention in increasing employees' commitment. Yukl, (2013); Sudha, Shahnawaz, and Farhat (2016); Kelly, and Macdonald, (2019) identified different leadership styles those leaders adopt for managing organization. Current study adapted the transformational leadership style role in employees' commitment.

Beside leadership styles, organizational support is also consider main stream for bringing up the employees commitment. In view of Beheshtifar, and Herat (2013) that, employees perceive those organizations are better which consider the wellbeing of their employees, due to such organizational structure employees not only make them engaged with that organization in different pro-social activities pertaining to the organization. Such environmental structure are better for bringing up the employees' commitment. Organizational support theory also support this concept of making organizational environment in such a way that create commitment in employees (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and organizations value their employees and is serious about employees' wellbeing (Krishhan& Mary, 2012).From the above, what is not clear about these findings isthe fact that these studies were performed outside Pakistan. In Pakistan context influence of transformational leadership on employees' commitment through perceived organizational support among doctors is unclear and bring motivation for investigation. Hence current study tried to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on employees' commitment, furthermore current study also added intervening variable organizational support between relationships of transformational leadership with employees' commitment.

2.0 Literature review

2.1, Employees' commitment

Employee commitment is degree of engagement through which an employee is attached with organization and participate continuously in it (Newstrom& Davies 2002). Long term employees are more committed with vast experience and recognize their success among committed group of employees. Committed staff (employees) work actively and carefully, and promote the products and services introduced by the organization and pursue improvement

(Madigan, Norton, & Testa 1999). Additionally they like such environment which boost their empowerment and growth, work and personal life balance, having required resources for customer need satisfaction along with training and education.

2.2 Transformational leadership, perceived organizational support and employees' commitment.

Under transformational leadership, relationship of leaders and subordinate reached to greater satisfaction level bringing up the common identity on collective ideal base. Leaders under transformational leadership on behalf of organizational goals increase the motivation among employees in excess of their own interest. This happen with loyalty, trust, and admiration assumed by employees from boss (leader). According to Burns (1978) that transformational leaders bring higher level of commitment, morality and higher performance. Beside this, according to Nielsen, and Munir (2009) transformational leaders have vision, and creative leadership style which helps in motivating subordinates in making decisions independently and developing their work environment. In nutshell transformational leaders bring commitment among employees. Popper, Ori, and Ury(1992) also supported the idea that transformational leaders bring more commitment and success in employees. Bass (1985) also argued that transformational leaders focus on needs and development of their subordinates and motivate them to do more as expected, Stone, Robert, Russell and Pstterson (2004) also stress out on the valuing and appreciating followers.As a result, transformational leaders increase subordinates' commitment, motivate them, and empower them to achieve goals of the organizations (Yukl, 2010).For better organizational and employees benefits it become essential for the organization to value their human resource personnel. Perceived organizational support is kind of employee perception regarding organization that it will recognize work contribution of employee and care about their wellbeing, which bring combined benefits for both organization and employees. Likewise, perceived organizational support reduce stress level and more work output even after injury (Shaw et al., 2013) and increase the performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002;Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Buffardi, Stewart, &Adis2015). Perceived organizational support can be achieved through effective leadership, proper job conditions, fair treatment, and human resource practices. During assessment of perceived organizational support of employees, staff pay more attention towards practices of organization on which organization has discretion, in comparison towards practices imposed by regulatory government and or competition of the market for employees. With supportive policies top management increase the perceived organizational support through supportive help and conditions. There is lack of research about management, human resource professional and supervisors who can increase perceived organizational support (Eisenberger &Stinglhamber 2011), and very little has been discovered about influence of transformational leadership on perceived organizational support. To fill this shortfall, current study has investigated the role of transformational leadership with perceived organizational support. Brown and Leigh (1996) focused on organizational environment which has effect on employees' performance, motivation, and well-being. Similarly, employees perceive that how organization value them is very important for identifying the attitude of employees which can be beneficial for the organization. Based on the social identity theory, organizations respect their employees by considering their importance, as perceived by the employees (Tyler, 1999) this shows organizational support. Hence commitment can be predicted significantly by perceived organizational support (Currie, &Dollery 2006). Literature shows significant relationship

between perceived organizational support and normative, affective commitment, but negative association with continuance commitment (Ucar&Otken 2010). Conclusively it can be narrated that more the perceived organizational support, more will be the employees' commitment.Literature shows that perceived organizational support can be a good mediator between independent and dependent variable. Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) tested perceived organizational support as a mediator between human resource practices, affective commitment, OCB and intent to quit. Additionally, perceived organizational support also mediated association among commitment and job security, decision making and fairness of reward (Allen, Shore, &Griffeth 1998). Influence of perceived organizational support was found among commitment and procedural justice, organizational rewards and supervisor support (Rhoades, Eisenberger, &Armeli2001). According to Masterson, Lewis, Goldman and Taylor (2000) found mediated influence of perceived organizational support between relationship of procedural justice perception and work outcomes (like as intent quit, satisfaction, and commitment). Based on these studies, it appears that POS possesses great potential to influence many work relationships.Beside the direct relationships stated earlier, and evidences regarding mediating role of perceived organizational support current study proposed perceived organizational support as mediating variable between the relationships of transformational leadership and employees' commitment.Based on above evidences, below hypotheses have been formulated and assessed by using PLS-SEM.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** *Transformational leadership (TFL)significantly affect employees' commitment***(EC)**

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Transformational leadership has relationship with perceived organizational support (POS).*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *POS significantly affects employees' commitment.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Perceived organizational support will mediate the relationship of transformationalleadership with employees' outcomes.*

2.3 Frameworkof the Study

Figure 01
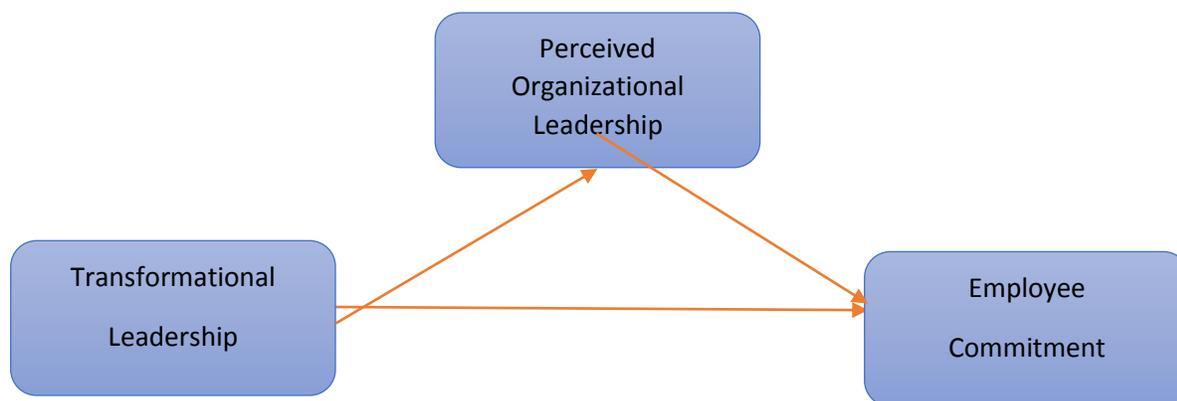
3.0 Methodology

This section discusses about complete methodology, methodology contents were followed from Ibrahim and Arshad (2017).

3.1 Research Instrument

Employee commitment: employee commitment denote to employees' attachment with organization. Employee commitment 15 item questionnaire developed by Porter, Stears, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), Allen and Meyer (1990) structured 24 item questionnaire on commitment types. Later on questionnaire was modified by Allen and Meyer (1996) and limited to 18 items each commitment level was measured with 6 items. So current study used 6 items to measure employees' commitment.

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership was measured through 7 items used in (Buil, Martinez, &Matute, 2019) originally developed by Bass and Avolio (1996).

Perceived organizational support:perceived organizational support was supposed to be measured with 8 items developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) but later on 3 items were deleted due to low loading factor.

3.2 Data collection

For the purpose of the study data were collected from the doctors working in different hospitals operating in Sindh, Pakistan. Sample of current study was 380 respondents were selected through simple random sampling technique. However to get desirable response rate 410 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 250 were collected back showing the response rate of 62.5%. Respondents of study were doctors working in healthcare units operating in Sindh Pakistan majority of respondents were male (55%) and female (45%). Respondents were having work experience in current organization more than one year. Further detail is appended in Table 1

Table-1: *Respondents' Profile*

Category	Demographic Factors	Count	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	123	55
	Female	100	45
Age			
	23 to 30 years	40	18
	31 to 40 years	60	27
	41 to 50 years	70	31
	51 to 60 years	53	24
Marital Status			
	Single	170	76
	Married	53	24
Work Experience			
	2 to 10 years	85	38
	11 to 20 years	75	34
	21 to 30 years	63	28

3.3 Data analyses method

After data screening through SPSS 23 final number of usable instruments were 223. Based on 223 responses measurement model was assessed through PLS algorithm through Smart PLS, and hypothesis were tested through bootstrapping. The techniques like measurement model assessment and bootstrapping were recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). In measurement model validity and reliability of the instrument was checked. After ensuring adequate results regarding reliability and validity structural model was used to test the hypothesis.

4.0 Findings.

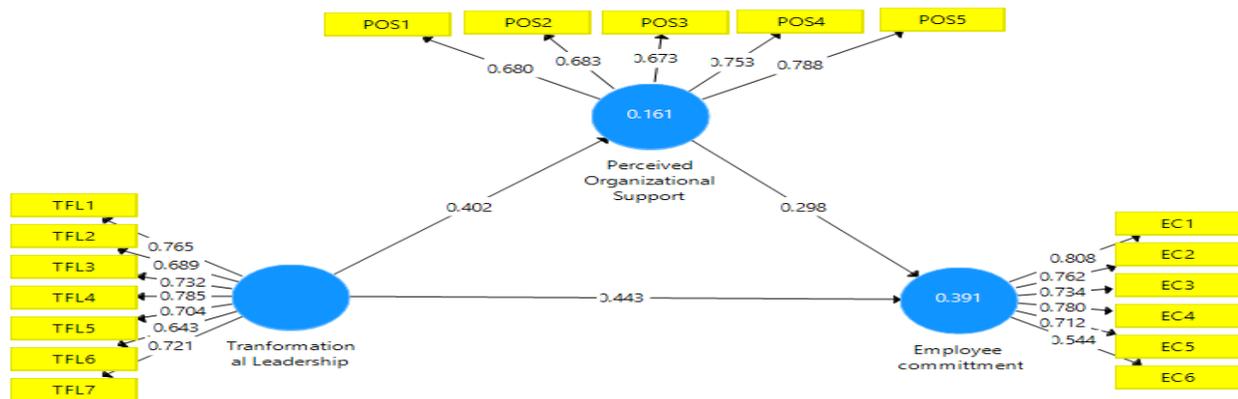This section talks about finding of current study

4.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

Conceptualized model was examined through evaluating item loadings of each item, AVE scores and composite reliability. Loading of each item was well above the threshold of 0.50 (Fornell&Lacker 1981; Hair, Hult, Ringle, &Sarstedt2013) except three items from perceived organizational support. POS6, POS7, POS8 were deleted due lower loading than 0.50. While assessing AVEas per criteria defined by Chin (1998) were greater than 0.50. AVE scores were ranging from 0.514 to 0.52. Beside this composite reliability was also assessed by following the criteria of 0.70 value (Bagozzi&Yi 1988). R2 also showing reasonable values.CR values were ranging from 0.840 to 0.883 showing internal constancy and reliability of the instrument. Detail about each item loading, AVE scores, Composite reliability and R^2 are presented in table 2 and measurement model is presented in figure 2.

Table 2 :_Instrument reliability, validity, loading_

Variable	Loadings	composite reliability	AVE	R^2
Transformational leadership		0.883	0.52	
TFL1	**0.765**			
TFL2	0.689			
TFL3	0.732			
TFL4	0.785			
TFL5	0.704			
TFL6	0.643			
TFL7	0.721			
Perceived organizational support		0.840	0.514	0.161
POS1	0.680			
POS2	0.683			
POS3	0.673			
POS4	0.753			
POS5	0.788			
Employee commitment		0.87	0.531	0.391
EC1	0.88			
EC2	0.762			
EC3	0.734			
EC4	0.780			
EC5	0.712			
EC6	0.544			

Figure 2: Measurement Model

Beside this, current study also assessed discriminant validity of the instrument which shows the length of difference of one variable from other variable in study. Furthermore discriminant validity was also assessed through HTMT values of $HTMT_{0.85}$ and $HTMT_{0.90}$ (HenselerRingle&Sarstedt 2015). Beside this VIF values were also taken under consideration to assess discriminant validity. HTMT values were under range of HTMT0.85 and VIF scores were well under recommended ranges of 10 and presented in table 3/

Table 3: *HTMT and VIF scores*

Construct	HTMT			VIF		
	EC	POS	TFL	EC	POS	TFL
EC	--					
POS	0.589	---		1.192		
TFL	0.673	0.484	--	1.192	1	

Beside this, R^2 and F^2 values were also considered and are presented in table 4. R^2 values were found as per criteria by Falk and Miller (1992). Further effect size through f^2 values were checked and found substantial.

Table 4: *R^2 and f^2*

| Variable	R2	adjusted R2	F2			Effect
			EC	POS	TFL	
EC	0.391	0.385	--			
POS	0.161	0.157	0.122	--		Substantial
TFL			0.27	0.192	--	Substantial

4.2 Assessment of Structural Model

After assessment of measurement model, hypothesis under current study framework were tested through structural equation modeling with help of Smart PLS path modeling. Bootstrapping technique resulted significant results between transformational leadership and employees commitment **(β= 0.443, t = 8.27, p value, = 0.000)** results supported hypothesis **H1**. Current study also tested direct relationship of transformational leadership with perceived organizational support and found the results **(β= 0.402, t value = 6.521, p value, = 0.000)** hence supported hypothesis**H2**. In hypothesis **H3** current study has tested the relationship of perceived organizational support with employees' commitment and found positive significant results **(β= 0.298, t value, = 4.83, p value, = 0.000)** hence hypothesis **H3** was also supported. Beside this current study also tested mediating effect of perceived organizational support between relationship of transformational leadership and employees commitment in hypothesis **H4**, and found significant mediated results **(β= 0.12, t value, = 3.873, p value, =0.000).**Conclusively current study results provided empirical evidence on support of proposed hypothesis. Table 5 and figure 3 provided for further detail findings.

Table 5: *Structural Path model*

Relationship	Beta	t value	p value	CI5%	CI95%	Decision
TFL>EC	0.443	8.27	0.000	0.356	0.533	accepted
TFL>POS	0.402	6.521	0.000	0.309	0.51	accepted
POS>EC	0.298	4.83	0.000	0.199	0.399	accepted
TFL>POS>EC	0.12	3.873	0.000	0.071	0.171	accepted

Figure 3: Structural Equation Modelling.
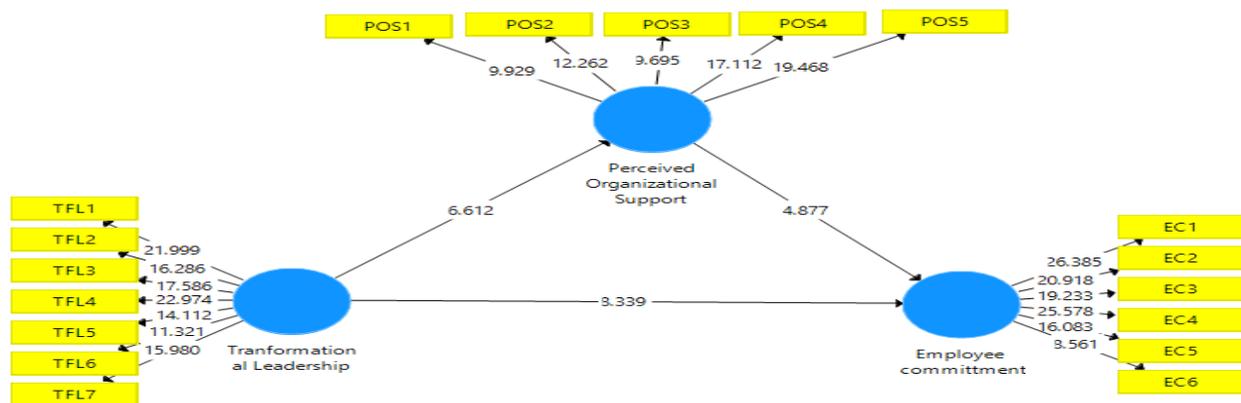
Along with structural model assessment, current study also checked predictive relevance of the model by following the recommendations of Geisser (1974); Stone, (1974); Chin (2010); Ringle, Sarstedt and Straub (2012) and Hair et al (2013) through cross redundancy measure Q^2. It is recommended that when Q^2 has value greater than zero then it shows predictive relevance.

Current study results regarding Q^2 shows all values above the zero. Hence current study model has adequate predictive relevance for model fit. Detailed results are depicted in table 6.

Table 6: *Model fit*

Construct	SSO	SSE	Q^2= (1-SSE/SSO)
Employee commitment	1338	1072.099	0.199
Perceived org: support	1115	1030.454	0.076
Transformational leadership	1621	1561	0.037

5.0 Discussion

Current study was aimed to understand that how to increase employee commitment through leadership style. Current study tried to trace out the transformational leadership which has become a mandatory tool to run an organization especially in healthcare sector to increase employees commitment followed by the perceived organizational support. Beside this, current study also focused to see that how perceived organizational support can be helpful to increase employee commitment. As for as concern to findings current study resulted in significant outcomes between transformational leadership and employees commitment directly as well as indirectly through mediation of perceived organizational support. Conclusively results regarding proposed hypothesis underlining the managerial authorities of health units targeted in Khaerpur district of Sindh Pakistan. Getting positive influence of transformational leadership towards employees' commitment through involving perceived organizational support. Additionally, significant results regarding effect of transformational leadership, pertaining to employee commitment show that, employees who are committed willing to work by showing their engagement with work (Galdeano, Ahmed, Fati, Rehan, & Ahmed 2019) are becoming better human resources.Henceforth increased perceived organizational support can deliver benefits to healthcare units in context of current study. Conclusively this can be narrated that, transformational leadership initiatives and perceived organizational support have significant relationship with employees commitment in healthcare sector of khaerpur Sindh Pakistan. This employees' commitment and perceived organizational commitment will deliver more dedication towards the health services sector.

5.1 Implications of the study.
In theoretical perspective findings of current study have landed support to the theories like Organizational support theory (OST: Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and social identity theory which postulate the perceived organizational support through organization support theory and identifying employees' commitment through transformational leadership role through social identity theory which was not studied yet under social identity theory. Hence based on theoretical support this can be narrated that, more the strong leadership and organizational support more will be the employees' commitment. While practically current study has pointed out several implications for health care sector. Top management of any sector especially health care sector has important and major role in delivering healthy services to the stakeholders (patients). This not only represent positive image in society and benefit to the community, but also helps in enhancing self-commitment of employees with organization. Human resources like doctors and other medical staff at healthcare

units are playing important role in delivering services because they are being treated good by their leaders and they get desired organizational support needed for providing better services.

5.2 Limitations current study and recommendations for future work

This research was based on cross sectional approach and data collected on self-administrated questionnaires, however, future studies can be conducted on longitudinal and cause and effect approach. Furthermore, future studies can be conducted on face to face interviews by targeting head of organizations. Additionally future studies can cover more variables concerning to measuring employees' commitment. Especially future studies can be conducted by considering green HRM practices to wards employees commitment.

6.0 Conclusion

This Study has contributed in healthcare sector by focusing on leadership style (transformational leadership) and perceived organizational support for enhancement of employees' commitment. Current study has also shown positive significant effect of perceived organizational support direct towards employees' commitment and indirect role as mediator between relationships of transformational leadership with employees' commitment. Through empirical evidences committed employees deliver better services which are direly needed in healthcare sector.

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