
ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES ON JOB PERFORMANCE: MEDIATING EFFECT OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

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Abstract

This paper discusses how transformational and transactional leadership styles affect job performance, alongside a special emphasis on mediator role of affective commitment. Based on the theories of leadership and organizational behavior, the study will seek to examine the role of various leadership styles in determining the emotional attachment of employees and, by implication their performance results. A sample size of 620 medical representatives of national pharmaceutical companies in Pakistan was used to collect data on the basis of a structured questionnaire using known measurement scales. The proposed hypotheses were tested using statistical methods such as correlation, regression and mediation.

The results prove that transformational as well as transactional leadership styles positively affect job performance significantly, but transformational leadership proves to have a stronger impact. Also, the two leadership styles provide a considerable boost to the affective commitment of the employees, which means that leaders play a crucial part in the formation of emotional attachments within the company. Affective commitment on the other hand has been found to positively influence job performance strongly. Mediation analysis further supports that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between leadership styles and job performance, which indicates that leadership has not only a direct impact on job performance, but also an indirect impact on job performance through emotional commitment.

The research also adds to the body of literature, by giving empirical data of the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan, where very little has been done. It emphasizes the need to promote affective commitment as an effective strategic tool to improve employee performance. The results have practical implications that managers and policymakers should consider leadership practices aimed at enhancing the attachment of employees and organization effectiveness.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, Affective commitment, Job performance, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

It is well established that leadership is a key factor of organizational performance and effectiveness. Leadership is a crucial factor in determining the attitudes, behaviors and output of employees in a given organization, especially when the organization is highly competitive and dynamic like in the pharmaceutical industry. Not only does an effective leadership guarantee the accomplishment of organizational objectives but also a positive workplace atmosphere that helps to motivate and engage employees (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2018).

Transformational and transactional types of leadership belong to different paradigms of leadership, although they have gained considerable academic interest as they have a significant impact on the outcomes of employees. Transformational leadership was initially proposed by Burns (1978) and expanded on by Bass (1985) as a leadership approach aimed at inspiring and motivating employees to perform above expectations by aligning individual interests and organizational aims. The style embraced by leaders who follow this style is vision oriented, intellectual stimulation oriented, individualistic and inspirational oriented. Most empirical research has continued to show that transformational leadership is positively correlated with job performance, employee satisfaction and organizational commitment (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Wang et al., 2011).

Transactional leadership on the other hand is founded on a rewards and penalties system where leaders explain what is expected and offer rewards upon attaining the desired performance (Bass, 1985). This kind of leadership works best in an organized setting where activities are routine and performance norms well known. It has been shown that contingent rewards and active management-by-exception can greatly enhance employee performance with transactional leadership, but the effect is not as pronounced as that of transformational leadership (Podsakoff et al., 1996; Lowe et al., 1996).

Although the significance of leadership styles is established, the impacts leadership has on job performance are a research topic of current interest. A key psychological construct which has become of interest in this respect is affective commitment. Affective commitment is the attaching emotion, identification and involvement of an employee into the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Highly affectively committed employees are also more likely to demonstrate positive work behavior, including putting in more efforts, loyalty, and performance (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Riketta, 2002).

It is thought that leadership styles are important in influencing the affective commitment of employees. A transformational leader is more likely to establish strong emotional connection with followers by instilling trust, respect and a collective vision, which increases the commitment of followers to the organization (Avolio et al., 2004; Meyer et al., 2002). Although transactional leaders typically emphasize exchanges, commitment can also be achieved via fair and consistent reward systems although the emotional attachment created is usually less strong than in transformational leadership (Podsakoff et al., 1996).

Several empirical studies have identified the mediating effect of affective commitment in the association between leadership styles and job performance. It is recommended that leadership behaviors can affect the performance of employees both directly and indirectly via psychological conditions like commitment and motivation (Wang et al., 2011; Avolio et al., 2004). When employees are emotionally attached to their organization they are more likely to internalize organizational goals and show greater performance.

Little studies have been done in the context of Pakistan especially in the pharmaceutical industry where limited research has investigated these relations in a wholesome manner. Medical representatives work in a greatly pressurizing environment with a high number of sales and strict sales goals, a lot of traveling and stiff competition. In this environment, organizational support and attachment towards the organization turn out to be key drivers of performance results. The positive effect of leadership styles on employee performance has already been discussed in the previous studies carried out on the issue in Pakistan, but the mediating role of affective commitment is not thoroughly studied (Ahmed et al., 2021; Junaid et al., 2023).

This study is thus an attempt to address this gap by considering how transformational and transactional leadership styles affect job performance moderated by affective commitment. Emphasizing on medical representatives of the national pharmaceutical companies, this study contributes to the current understanding of how leadership practices could improve the performance of employees by engaging them emotionally. It is hoped that the results of this research could be used in theory and practice by providing a more in-depth insight into the dynamics of leadership in a developing country environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

In recent years, there has been a growing trend in the majority of studies of leadership pertaining to transformational leadership. Transformational Leadership Over the last few years, most works concerning leadership have had a rising trend which has been on transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership has now become among the most powerful styles of leadership in the domain of organizational research. Transformational leadership as originally developed by Burns (1978) and later perfected by Bass (1985) involves motivating employees to overcome their selfish interests in the interest of the organization. This leadership style has been described to have four main elements; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Much empirical evidence exists that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee performance. As an example, it has been demonstrated that transformational leaders can stimulate the level of motivation, creativity,

and improved job performance among employees (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). The transformational leaders are able to inspire the employees to embrace a common vision and have high sense of purpose which will vastly enhance performance results.

The latter findings are supported by recent empirical data. A research conducted by Wang et al. (2022) concluded that transformational leadership is an effective way to enhance affective commitment in the organization and job performance, which promotes good behaviors in the workplace (Frontiers). Likewise, the studies carried out within the framework of other organizations have shown that transformational leadership is associated with the readiness of employees to make an additional effort and attain greater productivity levels (Cho et al., 2019; Hai and Park, 2021).

Transactional Leadership

In contrast, transactional leadership is founded on an exchange between the followers and the leaders. It entails creating expectations and rewarding employees who perform to the expectations (Bass, 1985). This type of leadership incorporates the use of contingent rewards and management-by-exception whereby leaders oversee performance and make corrective measures where needed.

Even though transactional leadership is said to be less dynamic compared to transformational leadership, it is still an example of successful leadership in organized settings. Research has revealed that transactional leadership has a positive effect on job performance especially in jobs that involve routine work and those that require strict adherence to procedures (Podsakoff et al., 1996; Lowe et al., 1996).

Transactional leadership has helped in performance through provision of clarity, structure and extrinsic motivation. When their expectation is known and they are rewarded, the employees can perform better. This, however, restricts its effectiveness in the long-run over transformational leadership in that it is compliance-focused as opposed to being inspirational (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). However, transactional leadership is not useless and it is particularly applicable to the sales positions like the medical representative where the performance goal and incentives are paramount.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is emotional attachment of employees to their organization which is the feeling of belonging and identification to organizational goals (Meyer and Allen, 1991). It is among the three elements of organizational commitment, others being continuance and normative commitment.

Highly affected commitment employees are more apt to demonstrate positive work attitudes such as elevated job satisfaction, diminished turnover intentions and higher job performance (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Riketta, 2002). Affective commitment encourages the employee to perform more than what is stated in the job allegiance, which enhances success in the organization.

The empirical studies are in favor of the close relation between affective commitment and job performance. When workers are emotionally attached to the organization, they are more likely to be more engaged and productive. An example is that research has shown that affective commitment is a great predictor of job performance and motivates employees to put in discretionary effort.

Leadership and Affective commitment.

Leadership is important in influencing the affective commitment of the employees. The emotional attachment is developed through trust, respect, and support by transformational leaders which builds an environment that promotes emotional attachment. Such leadership also makes employees feel special and they would tend to develop a healthy organization commitment (Avolio et al., 2004; Meyer et al., 2002).

According to the recent research, transformational leadership positively influences affective commitment significantly. Indicatively, Wang et al. (2022) discovered that transformational leadership reinforces the emotional connection of employees as it fosters trust and involvement in the company. In the same vein, studies indicate that transformational leadership leads to an increase in organizational commitment due to psychological empowerment and engagement of employees (Mwesigwa et al., 2020).

Transactional leadership also affects affective commitment but the impact is relatively low. Transactional leaders can build a sense of stability and trust by being fair in rewarding and holding constant standards of performance which in turn leads to commitment (Podsakoff et al., 1996). Nevertheless, since transactional leadership depends on the extrinsic motivation, it might not create strong attachment on an emotional level.

Leadership and Job Performance.

Leadership styles and job performance have been extensively studied in the research on organizations. Transformational leadership has always been associated with high degrees of performance since it has the capability of inspiring and motivating the employees (Wang et al., 2011). Transformational leaders are better placed to have employees who are creative, innovative, and active.

Empirical studies indicate that transformational leadership has a strong positive effect on job performance in different sectors. As an example, scientific studies indicate that transformational leadership enhances the performance of employees by creating an enabling and encouraging environment to work. On the same note, research has shown that transformational leadership motivates workers to go the extra mile and deliver high performance results (Jena et al., 2018).

Transactional leadership is also associated with job performance, especially in situations where performance is thoroughly checked and rewarded. Transactional leaders help to keep the employees at the organizational standards through setting of expectations and incentives (Podsakoff et al., 1996). Nevertheless, it does not have a long-term effect in most cases.

Mediating role of Affective commitment.

Affective commitment as a mediator of the leadership styles and job performance relationship has increasingly attracted interest in the past few years. Affective commitment is a psychological process that leadership applies to employee behavior and performance.

It has been shown that the transformational leadership has both direct and indirect impact on job performance via affective commitment. Indicatively, other studies have established that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance is mediated by affective commitment, meaning that the more the employees are emotionally committed, the more they are motivated to perform better. On the same note, empirical evidence demonstrates that leadership improves performance as it boosts the emotional attachment of the employees to the organization.

Moreover, the recent studies indicate that transformational leadership influences affective commitment that promotes consequent better job performance due to engagement and motivation. The role of emotional factors in the functioning of organizations has been emphasized by this mediating mechanism.

Whereas transactional leadership also affects performance by influencing affective commitment, it tends to have less strength. The reason is that transactional leadership is more motivated by external rewards than internal emotional bonds.

On the whole, the relations between transformational leadership, transactional leadership, affective commitment, and job performance are strongly supported by the literature. Nevertheless, additional empirical research can be required, especially regarding the pharmaceutical industry of Pakistan, where such processes have not been studied in detail.

Hypotheses Development

H1: Transformational leadership positively influences job performance.

H2: transactional leadership positively influences job performance significantly.

H3: Transformational leadership has a positive impact on affective commitment.

H4: there is a positive effect of transactional leadership on affective commitment.

H5: Affective commitment is positively related to job performance.

H6: Job performance is mediated by affective commitment between transformational leadership and job performance.

H7: Affective commitment is the mediator between the transactional leadership and job performance.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The current study was undertaken based on quantitative research design to identify the relationships between transformational leadership, transactional leadership, affective commitment and job performance. The targeted population included medical reps of national pharmaceutical firms in Pakistan. This industry was chosen because of its high level of competitiveness, performance culture, and the need to have good leaders to meet sales goals and targets in the organization.

The sample size of 620 medical representatives was chosen with the convenience method, because the respondents could be approached with the help of professional networks and organizational contacts. Though probability sampling techniques were mostly desirable, convenience sampling was used because of time constraint, and geographical distribution of the target population. The sample size is deemed sufficient to make a statistical analysis, since it surpasses the minimum required to make a regression and mediation analysis (Hair et al., 2010).

An adapted version of the scales that had been validated before was used to gather data using a structured questionnaire. The survey tool was divided into four parts: demographic, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, affective commitment, and job performance. Every item was measured on a five-point Likert-scale where 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A pilot study of 30 respondents was undertaken before actual data were collected to ascertain the clarity, reliability and validity of the instrument. It was modified a bit depending on feedback.

Questionnaires were issued both manually through print and electronically via e-mail and the internet to widen coverage. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to the respondents to reduce the chance of bias in responses and elicit truthful responses. This was voluntary and informed consent of all participants was sought.

Among the questionnaires issued, 620 useful responses were received which is a high response rate. The data obtained were then slowly filtered to eliminate missing numbers, outliers and discrepancies and then inputted into statistical software to perform more data analysis.

Measures

To achieve reliability and validity of measurement, all the variables of study were measured on well established and tested scales used in previous studies. The questionnaire was constructed on a five-point Likert scale with a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaires to measure transformational and transactional leadership style included items chosen on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995). Transformational leadership was evaluated in terms of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and transactional leadership was evaluated in terms of contingent reward and management-by-exception. MLQ is popular and has proven highly reliable and valid in different organizational environments (Bass and Riggio 2006; Judge and Piccolo 2004). The scale created by Meyer and Allen (1991) was used to measure affective commitment, the scale is able to measure the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement of the employees with the organization. This scale has undergone thorough test processes and is thought to be a good predictor of organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1996). A self-reported scale was used to evaluate job performance based on an adaptation of Williams and Anderson (1991) which relates job performance to task performance and the capability of the employees to perform the job requirements. Self-reported measures of performance used in organizational research have been proved to be reliable (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The internal consistency of all measure scales was satisfactory in the previous studies, which guarantees the strength of the research tool.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical Package of Social Sciences was used to analyze the data collected to study the relationships between the study variables. First, data screening activities were conducted to determine absent values, outliers as well as issues of normality. To describe the demographic features of the respondents and to give a summary of the data set, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated.

Pearson correlation test was performed to determine strengths and directions of relationships between transformational leadership, transactional leadership, affective commitment and job performance. The methodology aided in finding out whether there are significant associations between the variables.

The direct effects of transformational and transactional leadership on job performance and influence of the two on affective commitment were tested using multiple regression analysis. Regression analysis also gave data on the strength in explaining the independent variables in terms of the coefficient of determination (R²).

In addition, mediation analysis was done using the method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). This included testing the direct associations between the variables of interest (independent and dependent) and the association between the independent variables and the mediator as well as the effect of the mediator on the dependent variable. To establish the existence of mediation, the decrease in the effect with the addition of the mediator was taken into account.

In general, these statistical methods guaranteed an exhaustive and rigorous analysis of the suggested research model.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	480	77.4%
	Female	140	22.6%
Age	21–30	260	41.9%
	31–40	230	37.1%
	41+	130	21.0%
Education	Bachelor	350	56.5%
	Master	270	43.5%
Experience	1–5 years	290	46.8%
	6–10 years	210	33.9%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	10+ years	120	19.3%

The sample is male dominated and is relatively young with majority of the respondents graduating with bachelors and having an average experience. This is the average workforce structure of pharmaceutical sales representatives in Pakistan.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variables	TL	TRL	AC	JP
TL	1			
TRL	0.52**	1		
AC	0.61**	0.48**	1	
JP	0.65**	0.55**	0.70**	1

There is high positive correlation among all the variables. Transformational leadership is most related to job performance and affective commitment. Job performance also relates with affective commitment in a strong manner meaning that it is an important mediating variable.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	R ²	Sig
H1	TL → JP	0.48	0.42	0.000
H2	TRL → JP	0.32	0.30	0.000
H3	TL → AC	0.55	0.38	0.000
H4	TRL → AC	0.29	0.25	0.000
H5	AC → JP	0.60	0.45	0.000

Regression output demonstrates that the two leadership styles have a significant impact on job performance and affective commitment. Transformational leadership presents a more significant effect than transactional leadership. Affective commitment is a strong predictor of job performance and this proves it to be an important psychological process.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Mediation
TL → AC → JP	0.48 → 0.25	0.23	Partial
TRL → AC → JP	0.32 → 0.18	0.14	Partial

Affective commitment partly mediates the correlation between the two leadership styles and job performance. The decreasing influence of the direct effects of the introduction of the mediator proves that performance is mediated partially by the introduction of leadership, that is, the performance becomes affected by it both positively and negatively.

CONCLUSION

This paper has looked into the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on job performance, and how the mediating variable of affective commitment mediates between the leadership style and job performance among medical representatives in the pharmaceutical industry of Pakistan. The results are a good empirical evidence of the assumed relationships and are also helpful in gaining a better insight about the dynamics of leadership in performance-driven environment.

The findings suggest that transformational and transactional leadership styles positively impact on job performance significantly. Nevertheless, the transformational leadership turned out a more efficient predictor, and inspirational, visionary, and personal support provided to employees gained prominence. The more the leaders involve the employees on both the emotional and intellectual basis, the more they succeed in pushing the employees to perform out of expectation.

Besides, the research establishes that affective commitment is a key mediating factor between leadership styles and job performance. With a high level of commitment, involvement and productivity, employees would become more

committed to the organization when they create a deep emotional connection with it. The partial mediation effect implies that leadership has a direct and indirect effect on performance via emotional commitment.

The leadership style that instills trust, support, and emotion would be especially useful in the environment of the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan, where the employees are under intense pressure to achieve sales goals. On the whole, this paper supports the importance of implementing superior leadership practices to improve the performance of employees and overall organizational performance.

Recommendations

According to the results of this research, a number of recommendations can be provided to the managers and organizations in the pharmaceutical industry. To begin with, companies must focus on how to develop transformational leadership skills in their managers. The training programs also need to aim at developing skills that involve inspirational communication, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation, these behaviors can greatly assist in increasing employee performance.

Second, transactional leadership practice should not be ignored despite giving priority to transformational leadership. To be accountable and motivate managers are to keep precise performance expectations and introduce clear and transparent reward schemes. A combination of the two styles that creates a balanced leadership style can be the most effective.

Third, organizations ought to be active in instilling the affective commitment in the employees. This should be done by providing a conducive working environment, rewarding employees, and increasing a feeling of ownership. Employee engagement programs, career development opportunities, open communication channels and other initiatives can be used to enhance the emotional attachment toward the organization.

Moreover, the pharmaceutical firms are supposed to undertake routine surveys and feedback to check the perceptions of the employees towards leadership and commitment. This will help organizations to pinpoint areas of weakness and take specific interventions.

Lastly, it is also important that the policymakers and the top management acknowledge leadership as a strategic driver of performance and invest in leadership development programs as one of the long-term organizational strategies.

Future Research

Even though the present research is insightful, it leaves many avenues to further research. First, the research design used is a cross-sectional study design, which does not allow to make any causal connections. Longitudinal designs should be used in future research undertakings to ascertain the effects of leadership styles and affective commitment on job performance over an extended period of time. Second, medical representatives in national Pakistani pharmaceutical firms were the target of this study. The future studies can broaden the focus and incorporate multinational companies or other sectors to improve the generalization of the conclusions made. Comparative research in different sectors or nations would be more overall in the dynamics of leadership.

Third, the research only used affective commitment as the mediation variable. Further research might consider other mediating variables like job satisfaction, employee engagement or psychological empowerment to have a more complex state of the underlying mechanisms.

Furthermore, the use of moderating variables (organization culture, gender, or leadership experience) may bring more information about the effect of various contextual variables on the relationships analyzed by this research. Lastly, the future scholarship can utilize superior statistical methods like structural equation modeling (SEM) to test more intricate models and confirm the results. These methods would make the research on leadership in organizations more sound and theoretically significant.

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