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# **Transformational leadership as a Determinant of Organizational Commitment: The mediating effects of Psychological Empowerment and Psychological well-being**

## **Abstract:**

The present study aims to examine the linkage between transformational leadership and organizational commitment through two underlying mechanisms of psychological empowerment and psychological well-being. Data were collected from (n=299) nurses in Sargodha district of Pakistan. Preacher and Hayes (2008) procedure was used to test direct and mediating hypotheses. The results of the study indicate that transformational leadership positively influence the organizational commitment of nurses. Furthermore, the results support the mediating role of psychological empowerment and psychological well-being between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. These findings suggest that when the nursing staff perceives their leader as transformational, they feel more empowered and higher in well-being, which in turn increase their commitment to their hospitals. This study offers a better understanding of the ways through which transformational leadership affect organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, Psychological empowerment, Psychological well-being, and Organizational Commitment.

## **Introduction:**

Although Nursing is considered as the central component of the healthcare sector in all part of the world. However, in a developing country like Pakistan, it has a significant contribution to health care. Pakistan's estimated population is over 200 million making its fifth most populated nation in the world. More than half of people do not have access to basic health and education facilities. The availability of nurses is insufficient to meet the requirement of healthcare. Although, nurse to population ratio has been improved from 1:32000 in 1960 to 1:5199 by 1997 (Ghaffar, Kazi & Salman, 2000), but still it is very low as compared to developed nations. Research shows that

increase in salary and monetary benefits are not appropriate method to resolve nurses' shortage in hospitals, instead, organizations should also focus on non- monetary factors to motivate nursing staff (Chang, Chen, & Lan, 2011).

Improvement in quality of patient care is a primary goal of health care organization (Clarke & Aiken, 2008). Nurses' commitment to their hospital is very critical in maintaining safety and caring environment (Needleman & Hassmiller, 2009). Because nurses work closely with patients in hospitals, so their commitment to their hospital is highly important for quality assurance. In general, high commitment is linked to high job satisfaction and low turnover intention. Studies on the health care sector predicted that hospitals with a high retention rate among the staff provide outstanding services to their patients as compare to hospitals where the turnover rate is quite high (Studer, 2004). High committed nursing staff not only perform their duties beyond their job description but also play an essential role in building their organization's reputation in the community.

Transformational leadership has been a hot topic among the researchers of leadership and management since the last few decades. Research shows that transformational leadership has a significant impact on work-related outcomes (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Ng, 2017 ). Transformational leadership inspires individuals to perform at an unexpected level and produce exceptional outcomes. Transformational leaders change employee's attitudes in ways that enhance their motivation to achieve organizational goals. In the Pakistani context, most of the studies on organizational commitment were conducted in banking, education, and telecom sector, i.e. ( Bushra, Ahmad & Naveed, 2011; Batool, 2013) but there is no published study available on organizational commitment of nursing staff. This study is not only attempted to investigate the association between transformational leadership and organizational commitment but also

attempted to uncover multiple mechanisms between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Transformational leadership.***

Transformational leadership is defined as “a process through which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978 p. 20). A transformational leader is one who “looks for the potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (Burns, 1978 p. 4). Bass (1985) mentioned that a transformational leadership style leads to a higher level of motivation and performance in employees than transactional leadership style. Shamir, House & Arthur (1993) pointed out that transformational leaders convey salient messages to their employees about the impact and importance of the group’s task and how their efforts contribute toward a group’s success. Transformational leadership leads their employees through motivation and inspiration and inculcate valuable and positive changes in their workers.

### **Organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment is defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982 p.27). Organizational Commitment (OC) shows the degree of association employees have with their organization (Fu and Deshpande, 2014). Demirta & Akdogan (2015) classified OC in three elements as, “a robust a strong belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization, willingness to exert considerable effort for the organization and a strong desire to remain a member of the organization.” Research has found that organizational commitment leads to many benefits

for both employees and the organization (Randall, 1987). Rowden (2000) found that higher levels of commitment lead to job security, career advancement, and increased rewards for the employees.

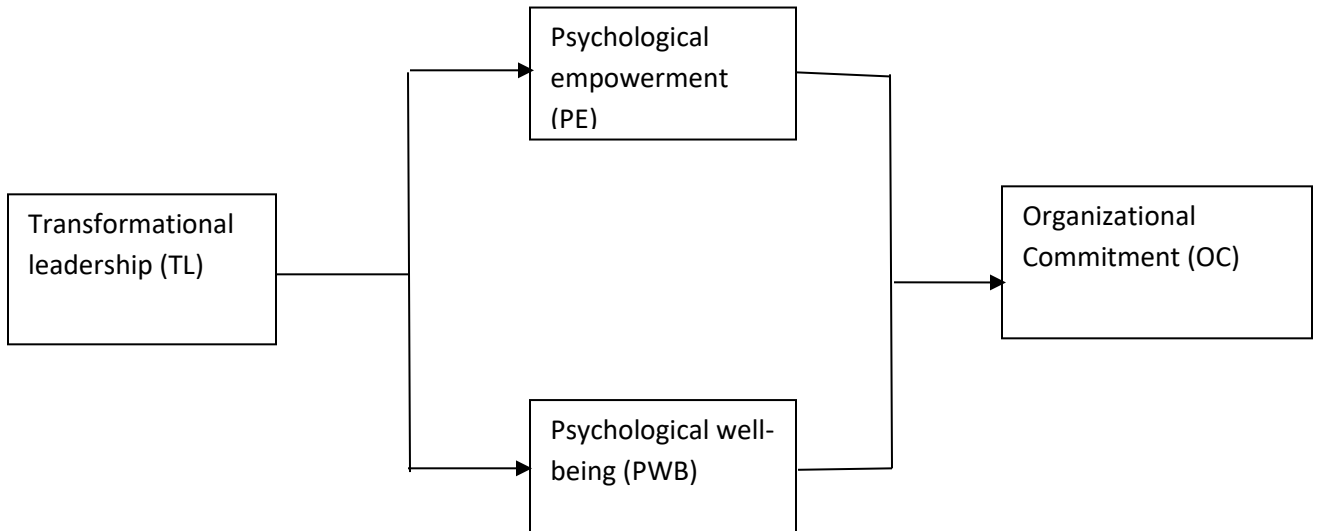
### **Psychological empowerment**

The concept of employee empowerment has been extensively studied during the last two decades in different settings and contexts, such as information technology organizations and academics (Aydogmus, Camgoz, Ergeneli & Ekmekci, 2017), social workers (Itzhaky & York, 2000), banking managers (Ergeneli, Ari, & Metin, 2007), public welfare caseworkers (Petter et al., 2002), Manufacturing firms (Erdogan, Ozyilmaz, Bauer, & Emre, 2017). Hotel staff (Amenumeey & Lockwood, 2008) and nurses (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004). Spreitzer (1995) defined psychological empowerment as “increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual’s orientation to his or her work role: competence, impact, meaning, and self-determination” (p. 1443). Organizations use empowerment as an important tool by delegating the responsibility and freedom to their employees so that they use their creative ideas to add value in products and services offered by these organization (Lawler, 1986).

### **Psychological well-being**

Psychological well-being is an essential dimension of the overall well-being of employees (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Psychological well-being is the state of happiness and satisfaction with experiences at work and general in life, utility, sense of achievement, and belongingness. Psychological well-being has been studied with a number of job-related variables, i.e. with working environment (Klitzman and Stellman, 1989; Schütte et al., 2014), job insecurity (Burchell, 1994), job burnout (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004), and employee performance (Devonish, 2013), Psychological capital (Roche, Haar, & Luthans, 2014).

**Figure 1: The Hypothesized mediation model**



### **Transformational leadership and organizational commitment**

The linkage between transformational leadership and organizational commitment has been studied in number of studies (Ross & Gray, 2006; Triana, Richard, & Yücel, 2016; Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang & Lawler, 2005; Welty Peachey, Burton & Wells, 2014) and in a number of cultures and work settings (Emery & Barker, 2007; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). Bushra, Ahmad & Naveed (2011) found transformational leadership as a major predictor of organizational commitment while studying banking sector employees of Pakistan. Transformational leaders involve their followers in the policymaking process and help them to increase their potential (Bass & Avolio, 1994). When managers consider the needs of their followers and appreciate their efforts of applying new approaches to solve work-related problems, motivate them to get more engaged in their job, this results in the higher commitment of staff to their organization (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). This discussion leads us to the following hypothesis:

*H1. There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.*

### **Transformational leadership and psychological empowerment**

Psychological empowerment is one of the main factors that distinguishing transformational leadership style from other styles of leadership styles (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003), So it can be proposed that psychological empowerment may work as a mediator between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Some research studies have demonstrated the positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment (Aydognmus, Camgoz, Ergeneli & Ekmekci, 2017; Jauhari, Jauhari, Singh, Singh, Kumar & Kumar, 2017; Barroso Castro, Villegas, & Casillas Bueno, 2008). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

*H2. There is a positive association between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment.*

### **Psychological Empowerment and organizational commitment**

Empowered employees consider themselves to be more competent and influential on their organizations and at the job. Social exchange theory posits that when employees perceived that their organization is empowering them, they are more likely to reciprocate it in the form of higher commitment to their organization (Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden, 1999). Empowered employees perceive themselves to have an impact on their organizations and jobs (Avolio et al., 2004). In this way, empowerment motivates employees to perform the highest level and exhibit a higher organizational commitment to achieving organizational goals (Spreitzer, 1995). We therefore hypothesize:

*H3. Psychological empowerment has a positive impact on organizational commitment.*

*H4. Psychological Empowerment mediates the link between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.*

### **Transformational leadership and Psychological well-being**

Transformational leaders can help employees to reduce stress level through their mentoring function (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Bass & Riggio (2006) highlighted that Transformational leaders help their subordinate to achieve challenging goals through their continuous support and motivation. McVicar (2003) suggested that transformational leadership influence well-being of employees, especially in the health sector, where the environment is highly stressful. We expect a definite link between transformational leadership and Psychological well-being. Hence, we hypothesize that:

*H5. Transformational leadership has a positive impact on Psychological well-being.*

### **Psychological well-being and Organizational commitment**

Nielsen, Yarker, Randall & Munir, (2009) argue that transformation leaders enhance self-efficacy in employees and increase trust in management, which results in higher Psychological well-being. Also, researchers have found a positive relationship between well-being and employee outcomes such as organizational commitment (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton (2012). Hence, we expect a positive relationship between Psychological well-being and Organizational Commitment. As a result, we hypothesize:

*H6. Psychological well-being has a positive impact on organizational commitment.*



We proposed that Transformational leadership is related to Psychological well-being and that Psychological well-being is positively related to organizational commitment. Thus, we also propose that:

*H7. Psychological well-being mediates the link between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.*

## **Methodology**

We focus on the nursing staff of public and private hospitals of Sargodha District, which is the 11th largest city in Pakistan with a population of over 2 million. It consists of more than 30 big hospitals. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, 330 were returned, and 299 were finally used for the analysis. The surveys were conducted in English because it is the medium of instruction in all higher education institutes in Pakistan and is understood among the nursing staff of hospitals in Pakistan. A cover letter showing the purpose of the visit was attached in front of the questionnaire. Data were analyzed by using SPSS macro, which was developed by Preacher and Hayse (2008) to test all over hypotheses. The sample consists of 52.5 % males and 47.5 % females. Out of total respondents, 64 percent are married, and 36% are Single. A total of 73 % has aged less than 35, 30 percent are less than 25 years old, 17 % between ages 36 to 50, while only 10 % have aged more than 50 Years.

## **Measures**

### **Transformational leadership**

The scale of transformational leadership was measured by using seven items taken from (Carless et al., 2000). Sample items are “My supervisor treats staff as individuals, supports and encourages their development” “My supervisor encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions. A one-factor CFA using seven items indicate a acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 10.093$ , CFI = 0.94, IFI = 0.95, GFI = 0.94, AGFI=.90, NFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.07).

### **Organizational commitment**

The questionnaire of organizational commitment is adopted from (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). The scale consists of Five items. Sample items are “I would be happy to work at my organization until I retire” “I would be happy to work at my organization until I retire” A one-factor CFA using eight items yielding an excellent fit ( $\chi^2 = 3.064$ , CFI = 0.99, IFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, AGFI=.97, NFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.04).

### **Psychological empowerment**

The Psychological Empowerment was measured by adopting a scale developed (Spreitzer's, 1995). The Questionnaire contains 8 items for example “I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work” “I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job” A one-factor CFA using eight items indicate a good fit ( $\chi^2 = 35.093$ , CFI = 0.96, IFI = 0.96, GFI = 0.95, AGFI=.90, NFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.07).

## **Psychological well-being**

The Psychological well-being was measured by adopting a scale developed by (Diener, et Al., 2010). The Questionnaire contains eight items, for example, “I am engaged and interested in my daily activities” “I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.” A one-factor CFA using eight items yielding a acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 37.958$ , CFI = 0.96, IFI = 0.96, GFI = 0.97, AGFI=.91, NFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.085).

## **Descriptive Statistics and Correlation**

Table 1, exhibits descriptive statistics (which include mean, standard deviation, and correlations) of the demographical variables. Psychological empowerment is found to be significantly correlated to Psychological empowerment (.575,  $p < 0.01$ ), Psychological well-being (.621,  $p < 0.01$ ) and organizational commitment (.529,  $p < 0.01$ ). A Significant correlation is found between and Psychological empowerment and organizational commitment (.674,  $p < 0.01$ ), and between Psychological well-being and organizational commitment (.617,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1 Correlations and descriptive statistics**

| Variables                      | Mean   | S. D     | 1      | 2      | 3     | 4       | 5       | 6       | 7       |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|--------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. Gender                      | 1.4749 | .50021   | 1      |        |       |         |         |         |         |
| 2. Marital status              | 1.3512 | .49298   | .213** | 1      |       |         |         |         |         |
| 3. Age                         | 2.0635 | .93370   | .072   | .213** | 1     |         |         |         |         |
| 4. Transformational leadership | 4.1639 | .1.54134 | -.043  | .018   | -.068 | 1(.703) |         |         |         |
| 5. Psychological empowerment   | 2.5707 | .74113   | .014   | .064   | .011  | .575**  | 1(.863) |         |         |
| 6. Psychological Well-being    | 2.5552 | .69122   | -.009  | -.019  | -.007 | .621**  | .696**  | 1(.792) |         |
| 7. Organizational commitment   | 2.5699 | .78272   | .010   | .019   | .019  | .529**  | .674**  | .617**  | 1(.766) |

\*\* . significant level.  $p < 0.01$  level,  $N = 299$

## Mediation Analysis

### Mediating Effect of Psychological empowerment

Regression results have been analyzed according to instructions given by Barron and Kenny (1986) and Preacher and Hayes (2008). Table 2.1 shows a significant positive relationship between variable transformational leader and organizational commitment ( $B = .2686$ ,  $SE = .0250$ ,  $t = 10.7420$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hence, the first condition of mediation has fulfilled and supported our first hypothesis *H1*. Next, there is a significant positive relationship between variable transformational leader and psychological empowerment ( $B = .2764$ ,  $SE = .0228$ ,  $t = 12.1056$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results support our second hypothesis *H2* and the second condition of mediation. Next, a significant and positive effect of psychological empowerment and organizational commitment is observed ( $B = .5829$ ,  $SE = .0539$ ,  $t = 10.8139$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hence and third hypothesis *H3*, and the third condition of mediation are supported. Fourth, a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment has been reduced substantially and has become

( $B=.1075$ ,  $SE=.0203$ ,  $t=4.1490$ ,  $p<.001$ ). These results partially supported hypothesis  $H4$ . However, according to Preacher and Hayes (2008), mediation should be tested based on the significance of the indirect effect. In this study, the author first applied four conditions of Barron and Kenny (1986) and then tested the significance of the indirect effect by bootstrapping the sampling distribution as per the recommendation of Preacher and Hayes (2008). So in the fifth step, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on organizational commitment is also found to be significant (Sobel  $Z= 0.1611$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). As the bootstrap result on a 95% level of confidence for all confidence intervals does not contain zero (LLCI=.1238, ULCI=.2036). Hence these results have also supported our hypothesis  $H4$ .

**Table 2.1: Testing of Mediation(Psychological empowerment)**

| <b>Variable</b>  | <b>B</b> | <b>SE</b> | <b>t</b> | <b>P</b> | <b>LLCI</b> | <b>ULCI</b> |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Transformational leadership regressed on Organizational commitment: Total effect                                 | .2686    | .0250     | 10.7420  | .0000    | .2194       | .3178       |
| Transformational leadership regressed on Psychological empowerment   | .2764    | .0228     | 12.1056  | .0000    | .2315       | .3213       |
| Psychological empowerment regressed on organizational commitment   | .5829    | .0539     | 10.8139  | .0000    | .4768       | .6889       |
| Transformational leadership regressed on organizational commitment for Psychological empowerment : Direct effect | .1075    | .0259     | 4.1490   | .0000    | .0565       | .1585       |

**The indirect effect of Transformational leadership regressed on organizational commitment**

| <b>Value</b> | <b>Boot SE</b> | <b>Boot LLCI</b> | <b>Boot ULCI</b> |
|--------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| .1611        | .0203          | .1238            | .2036            |

## Mediating Effect of Psychological well-being

Table 2.2 shows positive significant relationship between variable transformational leader and organizational commitment (B=.2686, SE=.0250, t=10.7420, p<.001). Next, there is a significant positive relationship between transformational leader and psychological well-being (B=.2783, SE=.0204, t=13.6440, p<.001). Hence, hypothesis *H5* has accepted. Next, Significant and positive effect of psychological well-being and organizational commitment is noticed (B=.5322, SE=.0642, t=8.2915, p<.001). It supports third hypothesis *H6*, and the third condition of mediation are supported. Fourth, a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment has been reduced substantially and has become (B=.1205, SE=.0288, t=4.1866, p<.001). So *H7* was partially supported. The fifth, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on organizational commitment is also found to be significant (Sobel Z= 0.1481, p<0.001). As the bootstrap result on a 95% level of confidence for all confidence intervals does not contain zero (LLCI=.0993, ULCI=.1930). Hence these results also have supported our hypothesis *H7*.

| <b>Variable</b>  | <b>B</b>       | <b>SE</b>        | <b>t</b>         | <b>P</b> | <b>LLCI</b> | <b>ULCI</b> |
|--|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Transformational leadership regressed on Organizational commitment: Total effect                               | .2686          | .0250            | 10.7420          | .0000    | .2390       | .3375       |
| Transformational leadership regressed on Psychological Well-being  | .2783          | .0204            | 13.6440          | .0000    | .2383       | .3185       |
| Psychological Well-being regressed on organizational commitment  | .5322          | .0642            | 8.2915           | .0000    | .4059       | .6585       |
| Transformational leadership regressed on organizational commitment for Psychological Well-being: Direct effect | .1205          | .0288            | 4.1866           | .0000    | .0639       | .1771       |
| <b>Indirect effect of EOHRM on OP</b>  |                |                  |                  |          |             |             |
| <b>Value</b>   | <b>Boot SE</b> | <b>Boot LLCI</b> | <b>Boot ULCI</b> |          |             |             |
| .1481  | .0245          | .0993            | .1930            |          |             |             |

## **Discussion:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership, empowerment, well-being, and organizational commitment. This study consists of seven hypotheses. Including five hypotheses related to direct relationships, and the remaining two were related to mediating relationships. Using statistical analysis, we found support for all our hypotheses.

The study found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment which is consistent with previous findings (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Dunn, Dastoor, & Sims, 2012; Tyssen, Wald & Heidenreich, 2014). The relationship between transformational leadership and Psychological empowerment is found significantly positive, which is in line with the study of Balaji & Krishnan (2014). The relationship between transformational leadership and Psychological well-being is also found positive, which is consistent with previous research (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007). The relationship between Psychological empowerment and organizational commitment is found significant which is in line with the study of Bogler & Somech, (2004). Also, the relationship between Psychological well-being and organizational commitment is found significant which is inconsistent with the study of Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock & Farr-Wharton (2012). One of the aims of the study was to test whether Psychological empowerment and Psychological well-being were the routes through which transformational leadership influence the commitment of nursing staff. This study is unique in a sense as it has identified multiple mediating mechanisms The transformational leadership-to-commitment mediation process through Psychological empowerment found in this study is consistent with the previous study of Avolio et al. (2004), which suggested that transformational leadership has an indirect influence on commitment through

Psychological empowerment. This study further shows that transformational leadership influence commitment through the second mediator Psychological well-being as well. This transformational leadership-to-commitment mediation process through Psychological well-being has not been studied before.

This study has highlighted the importance of psychological empowerment and psychological well-being in particular. It shows that psychological empowerment and psychological well-being mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. This study suggests that if nursing leaders use transformational leadership style, it inculcates in nurses feelings of empowerment and well-being, which ultimately increase their commitment to their hospitals.

### **Recommendation:**

This study is seeking to understand relationship leading from transformational leadership style of nurse's supervisor to the organizational commitment of nursing staff. This study found that transformational leadership significantly affect Organizational Commitment and suggests that Nurse leaders are in a position to influence the nurse's commitment by adopting a transformational leadership style.

The findings of this study further indicate that transformational leadership significantly influence Organizational commitment through two routes — one through employee empowerment and others through well-being. Transformational leader cultivates in nursing staff, the feelings of empowerment and well-being, that ultimately increase their organizational commitment. So, employee empowerment and well-being are indispensable for boosting the organizational



commitment of nursing staff. Furthermore, by demonstrating the mediating role of psychological empowerment and well-being on the relationship between perceived transformational leadership and organizational commitment. This study draws attention to a decisive role; inspiration and delegation can play in enhancing the commitment of employees.

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