

Organizational Commitment and Perceived Leadership Style among Public Servants

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Abstract



Pakistan is experiencing a political and economic crisis that has never been seen before. For this reason, to improve the performance of the public sector and limit the crisis' repercussions, public managers who are dedicated and successful are needed. Also, no work has been done yet from the perspective of Pakistan's public servants' perceptions to enhance the value of "leadership" in establishing "organizational commitment". This study uses the "Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)" function as a mediator to examine the correlation between 'leadership styles' and 'organizational commitment in the workplace. A sample of 100 middle managers from six public administrations in Pakistan, including "Capital Development Authority (CDA), Islamabad Electric Supply Company Limited (IESCO), Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), and Capital Hospital", were surveyed online. Leadership styles were examined using multiple regression analysis and linear regression. The results showed a positive relationship exists between commitment to one's organization and both Bass styles. Aside from that, the results also revealed that LMX, as a mediator, did not show the correlation between 'transformational leadership' and one's commitment to the organization, yet it mediated between 'transactional leadership' and 'organizational commitment'. Therefore, developing organizational commitment depends on leadership styles, and this research helps organizations understand those mechanisms. It also has ramifications for recruitment and training programs in the public service.

Keywords: Pakistan's Public Sector, Transactional Leadership, Transformative Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Organizational Dedication.

Introduction

According to Silva et al., (2019), in today's competitive economy, leadership and devotion are viewed as "the basic assets of high-performance companies" (p. 56). Balci (2003) further adds that higher levels of commitment lead to improved productivity, loyalty, and expanded job responsibilities, which in turn lead to larger contributions toward the organization's mission and goals. As a result, they go beyond what is expected of them in terms of their job obligations and set up good organizational citizenship behaviors and good job outputs. Leaders, according to Rehman et al. (2012), have a special bond with their subordinates because of their shared interests. A leader's involvement in developing organizational commitment may therefore be critical.

Moreover, a leader's connection with each of his subordinates can change over time. LMX, a theoretical framework that analyzes leadership styles and committed relationships within organizations, can be helpful. In addition, Pakistan faces numerous economic, social, and political issues. Nationwide budgetary and liquidity problems are unprecedented. The public sector is more essential than ever in Pakistan because of the growing population, Kashmir crisis, and other problems with India, foreign aid (especially from the United States), and the Afghan rebellion. Authorities are accused of unethical, unreliable, and nonprofessional conduct that has led to the country's financial troubles, according to the general public. When it comes to economic recovery and financial crisis resolution, the public sector is expected to play an important role. As a result, public officials must take on more responsibility and develop a deeper feeling of dedication as a result of their position in government.

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Apart from that, Pakistan's public leaders must be scrutinized for their role in creating organizational commitment, guiding the public sector to improved organizational performance, and saving Pakistan from collapse. The following questions occur as a result of this:

Research Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To explore the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment among public sector managers in Pakistan.
2. To examine the mechanisms of organizational commitment building utilizing a leader-member-exchange approach.

Research Questions

1. How do leadership styles affect organizational commitment as a public worker in Pakistan?
2. Is there a style of leadership that encourages public servants to stay dedicated to the organization?

Literature Review

In management and organizational behavior studies, leadership is a critical component. To be a leader, one must be able to influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others within a team or among group members (Bass, 1990). Leaders are those who influence others to attain their own and the organization's goals, as defined by Robbins and Coulter (2009).

In other words, House et al., (2002) are of the view that leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate people so that they can put up to the efficiency and achievements of an organization. Employees' motivation at work improves when leaders emphasize the importance of the work they've done (Fullen, 2001).

Leadership styles can also influence the performance of those who work directly under them. The mainstream approach in leadership literature distinguishes between transactional and transformational leadership styles (Bass, 1990). According to the current study, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles have been thoroughly studied (Rehman et al., 2012). To find out how these three approaches interact, the study focuses on the perceptions of public servants.

Transformational Leadership

There are several ways to attain transformational leadership, such as motivating others and creating new methods for doing it (Adnan, 2009). Change agents or leaders, according to John and Moser (2001), are those who bring a fresh perspective to their community or cultural organizations. It's difficult for them to forecast what will happen next because they work in such a diverse environment. The need for role modeling, establishing a vision, and communicating standards and values to all employees are often stressed by transformational leaders (Avolio and Bass, 1994; McLaurin & Amri, 2008).

It is argued by Antonakis, et al., (2003) that transformational leadership is marked by idealized influenced behaviors, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. A leader's charismatic behaviors that are founded on their values, beliefs, and principles are referred to as "idealized influence behavior" (ibid, 2003). Leadership activities or behaviors that inspire team members to view the future optimistically, emphasize the value of team spirit, construct an idealized objective, and communicate an achievable vision are referred to as inspirational motivational behaviors (ibid, 2003). Team members and followers benefit from intellectual stimulation when the leader encourages them to question assumptions or re-examine previous situations in fresh ways (Nicholson, 2007). When a leader mentors his or her followers, it shows that he or she pays special attention to their needs for success and advancement.

Transactional Leadership

The second type of leadership, transactional leadership, has been intensively researched in organizational research. Transactional leaders, according to Burns (1978), are those who drive people by appealing to their self-interest and desires. An institution's transactional leadership is a combination of bureaucratic power and legitimacy. As a result, transactional executives are required to stick to standard operating procedures, tasks, and deadlines to be successful. When it comes to work, employees are driven by incentives and punishment systems, which they see as crucial to the success of both themselves and their employers. Recognizing and assisting their subordinates in attaining their goals boosts employee confidence (Bass, 1985). Between the leader and his

subordinates, there is a two-way communication system that rewards them for reaching their job goals.

Transactional leadership can be further divided into “contingent rewards, management by exception (active), and management by exception (passive)”, according to Bass and Avolio (1994). Leaders who use contingent rewards make it clear what needs to be done and then use rewards to motivate people to get the job done and achieve results (Nicholson, 2007). It's important for leaders who are dealing with “contingent rewards”, to get their followers or subordinates to engage, commit, and perform well.

However, a leader who manages by exception ensures that his or her people meet predetermined goals. A manager whose work is actively appraised and monitored by their subordinates or followers is said to be managing by exception (actively managing) (Antonakis, et al. 2003).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Letting go of responsibility and avoiding making judgments are the hallmarks of laissez-faire leadership (Robins, 2009). They do not interfere with the work of an organization. This type of leader according to Bartol & Martin (1994), is one who "allows their followers entire freedom, provides the required materials, participates merely to answer inquiries, and avoids providing comments" (p. 67). Instead of interfering with their followers' work, they give them the freedom to do it their way.

An undeviating correlation between this ‘leadership style’ and positive workplace performances can only be defended or predicted by professionals or highly motivated scientists at work.

Therefore, at this stage. the Full Range Leadership Model has been unveiled; the next section will clarify the concept of organizational commitment and its critical function in the implementation of work successful results.

Organizational Commitment

Throughout the management and organizational behavior literature, the concept of organizational commitment has been extensively investigated and examined. In the relationship between individuals and organizations, it plays a major role (Rehman, 2012). A person's attachment to his or her organization can be increased or strengthened through organizational commitment, according to Khurram et al. (2014).

A variety of favorable results can be attributed to dedicated employees, according to a previous study by Keskes et al., (2018). Besides, Mowday (1998) said that dedicated employees are those that willingly wish to carry on their positive relationship with the organization and make positive efforts to attain organizational aims. Because of this, these individuals can put in a lot of effort and contribute to improving the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.

In the literature, organizational commitment has been defined in several ways. It was established that commitment to the organization is a wide-ranging factor that influences an individual's identification with and commitment to the organization in which he works. Organizational commitment is preceded by numerous factors, according to previous research and organizational commitment was predicted by leadership styles (Bass, 1985; Asgari et al., 2008).

As a result, how has literature investigated the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment in terms of leadership?

Leadership and Commitment to Organizational Goals

Research suggests that organizational commitment is affected by an array of elements. This means that a leader's style could be one of the most critical aspects in persuading employees to stay loyal to their employer (Webb, 2011). Meyer et al., (1993) said that employers might be influenced by the way they feel about the organization, their devotion to it, and other positive work behaviors.

Since leadership theories state that a leader's role is to build and maintain relationships with subordinates to increase their engagement, it's clear that leadership and dedication go hand-in-hand (Saher et al., 2013).

The correlation between ‘transformative leadership’ and ‘organizational commitment’ has been studied in the past and is generally accepted. Therefore, Lee (2005) found that ‘transformational leadership style’ and ‘organizational commitment’ had a positive correlation. Transformational leadership helps to improve team performance by increasing trust, dedication, and teamwork (Arnold et al., 2001). Transformative leadership and organizational commitment are generally linked,

according to previous studies. Therefore, Lee (2005) found that “transformational leadership style” and “organizational commitment” had a positive relationship with each other. Transformational leadership leads to increased levels of trust, commitment, and team performance among employees.

It has been established that transactional leadership and organizational commitment are interconnected. Also, a positive correlation between top managers' transactional and transformational leadership styles and their employees' organizational engagement in Nigerian institutions was found (Othman et al., 2013). According to Asgari et al (2008), it has been found that managers' contributions to achieving organizational goals depend on both transactional and transformational leadership styles.

"Management-by-exception" in transactional leadership has a moderately positive association with organizational commitment according to Hayward et al., (2004). According to a study by Lee and Yu (2004), both ‘transformational and transactional leadership styles have a positive impact on the results of productive organizations.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

Graen and Uh-Bien (1995) developed the “Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)”, a relational methodology for leadership. Despite its focus on leadership traits, the LMX is most interested in how a leader and his followers interact. Due to its analysis level, it accepts this duadic relationship. According to the LMX theory of leadership, leader-follower interactions are critical to the theory's success (Yukl et al., 2009). As a result of these interactions, the quality of the relationship is affected. There is a different relationship between the leader and each of his employees (of varying quality).

Besides, “LMX” is based on the social exchange theory of Blau (1979). Through this, we can better understand how “LMX’ relationships affect subordinates' work attitudes and behaviors. After communicating expectations to his followers, as stated by Hui et al. (2004), a leader offers both tangible and intangible incentives that match expectations, regardless of whether those expectations have been achieved by his followers or not. Exchange of resources occurs as a result of this, with each participant contributing a unique set of resources. Therefore, SaintMichel et al., (2011) state that "negotiation defines the LMX relationship's quality and maturity" (p. 45). To put it another way, a leader's interpersonal connections with his followers will have an impact on the type of role that they will play inside the organization.

A Mediator Between Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment: The Role of LMX (OC)

In the words of Blau (1964), “LMX’ is defined as a purposeful "sharing of favors", which indicates that if someone gives you a favor, you must pay back. Everyone's relationship with a leader is different from everyone else's. Follower emotions and views of leadership are affected by this. The influence of particular actions and ‘leadership styles’ on “LMX’ has been examined in a few research, although the majority of them have not been published (Yukl et al., 2009). Leadership styles and the “LMX” quality have received little attention in research, especially in Pakistan. After all, “LMX” is largely influenced by the leader's behavior (Dulebohn et al., 2011). This idea suggests that a relational approach is consistent with a relational leadership style, leading to a positive correlation between leaders' interpersonal behaviors and leadership effectiveness.

Transformational leadership, according to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), has a stronger connection with the LMX relationship. As it turns out, charismatic leaders tend to have an easier time convincing their subordinates to accept a higher level of responsibility within the organization. A stronger bond is formed with its workers, who become more motivated and more willing to sacrifice their own goals for the benefit of the company. Leadership transformation and LMX are inextricably linked.

Previous literature has found a greater correlation between "LMX" quality and favorable outcomes for leaders and followers, as well as the organization as a whole (Alshamasi, 2012). A leader-follower relationship is now widely regarded according to Wang et al., (2005), and is one of the most significant components in developing good and long-lasting working relationships in organizations.

Based on these findings, LMX might be viewed as a bridge between leadership styles and organizational commitment. These associations haven't received as much attention in the past. Leading research has been dominated by private firms in Western countries because of this (Rehman et al., 2012). However, Pakistan is one of the few developing countries that has conducted a study on the subject of public sector leadership.

Methodology

The study relies heavily on quantitative tools to achieve its goals. To test the research hypotheses, data were collected via an online survey. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, it was determined that participants would be chosen from internal administration in six government organizations, including CDA, IESCO, SNGPL, NADRA, PIA & Capital Hospital. Randomly selected public middle managers from participating administrations are asked to complete a questionnaire, which asks for demographic information (age, gender, and education), their perceptions of their managers' leadership style, the quality of the relationship with their managers, and whether they are committed to the organization. 20 questionnaires were distributed separately among each organization. Of which, a total of 100 questionnaires were completed from all selected organizations.

Top-level public sector leaders are represented by general managers; middle-level leaders are represented by department heads and chief executive officers (CEO). As such, they occupy a "middle ground" according to Lebirhan (2008) in the administrative structure. While managing front-line personnel, they must adopt techniques that motivate them, while still carrying out the tasks assigned by senior management, which may be politically sensitive (Appiah, 2016). In the restructuring inspired by new public management, middle management could potentially play a crucial role. On top of all of that, they are at the center of Pakistan's economic and political turmoil, which is causing tensions to rise. Therefore, it is important to investigate how this group of public workers views themselves, how they relate to the top management, and how they feel about the organization as a whole.

After reviewing the literature and keeping in mind the context of the study, the following postulates were made:

- H1: There is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and the organizational commitment of Pakistani public employees
- H2: Pakistani public employees' organizational commitment is positively correlated with transactional leadership.
- H3: When it comes to the positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee commitment, the LMX relationship plays an important role.
- H4: When it comes to the positive relationship between transactional leadership style and employee commitment, the LMX relationship plays an important role.

These include, among other things, leadership styles, "LMX" theory, and organizational commitment. According to the study, Bass's multifactor leadership questionnaire was used in a simplified form. The multi-factor leadership questionnaire is the most extensively used instrument in the literature to measure transformational and transactional leadership (Ozaralli, 2003). Transformative leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership are three subscales of the MLQ-6S, which consist of 21 items. The transformative Leadership Scale consists of 12 components. Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention are the four dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation. The three dimensions are based on the three axes of the spherical coordinate system. Five of the six items on the transactional leadership scale integrate two dimensions: dependent incentive and exception management. The three components that make up each dimension are as follows: To measure laissez-faire leadership, there are only three elements to consider, when it comes to leadership styles, transformational has a Cronbach alpha of 0.96, whereas transactional and laissez-faire have a Cronbach alpha of 0.84 and 0.61, respectively.

Liden and Maslyn's (1998) multi-dimensional scale was used to assess the quality of the interaction between public managers and their superiors in the government sector. For Scale, this value is 0.92. The scale has 15 components. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.87, which is a very good result.

Results and Discussion

The latest version of SPSS statistical software was used to analyze the data. Both the Leadership Measurement Index, as well as organizational commitment, had associations with leadership attributes. An analysis using multiple linear regressions was done to identify noteworthy connections in this research study.

Descriptive Statistics

The demographics of the participants are displayed in the table below (Table 1, see Appendix). There were 57% women and 43% men among the respondents. There were 10 percent of respondents under

the age of 30, 44 percent aged 30 to 40, 37 percent aged 40 to 50, and 9 percent were above 50 years old in the survey. About 51% had a master's degree whereas only 2 percent did not have an education beyond the eighth grade. There were 8 people with no job experience, 28 with 5-10 years of experience, 25 with 15-to-20 years of experience, and 20 with more than 20 years of experience.

Transformational leadership has the highest idealized influence (3.51), and inspirational motivation (3.51) levels are displayed in table 2 (see Appendix). Exception management is the most effective in terms of its contribution to transformational leadership in terms of effectiveness. Correlations between transformational leadership dimensions increased from 0.78 to 0.91 ($p < 0.05$) (Table 3, see Appendix).

They also indicate a favorable link between the two types of leadership: transactional leadership and organizational commitment ($r = 0.612$) and transformational leadership and organizational commitment ($r = 0.616$). There is a slightly larger association between transformational leadership and organizational commitment than there is between transactional leadership and organizational commitment in general. There is a less significant association between laissez-faire management and the organization's commitment than there is between transformational and transactional leadership.

There is a substantial difference between men and women when it comes to several of the issues (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, exception management, and leader-member exchange LMX) (Table 5, see Appendix).

As a result of the study, male managers had a closer relationship with their immediate superiors than did female managers. Female counterparts, on the other hand, are less aware of top leadership's transformational behaviors than their male counterparts. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in organizational dedication between men and women.

Regressions Results

The results of the analysis are presented in tables 6 to 10 (see Appendix). According to Table 3's significance correlations and Tables 6 and 7's regression values, "transformational leadership" is positively connected to organizational commitment ($p < 0.01$). Transformational leadership was found to have only one dimension, idealized influence, that had a significant impact on the commitment to the organization (Table 8, see Appendix).

Employees who perceive more transformative leaders display more corporate engagement. Based on these findings, H1 was confirmed. Transformative leadership has also been linked to the Leadership Measurement Index (LMI). LMX and occurrence have a favorable association.

Transformative leadership and organizational commitment through LMX are not significantly related. There is no correlation between transformative leadership and organizational commitment, as illustrated in Table 9 (see Appendix). When it comes to organizational commitment in Model 1, transformational leadership ($p = 0.000$) is an important beta. However, LMX does not have a significant beta coefficient. H3 is therefore rejected.

According to the results, transactional leadership is positively associated with an organization's commitment. When it comes to exception management, transactional leadership has a big impact on organizational commitment (Table 8, see Appendix).

The influence of transformational leadership on organizational commitment is greater than that of transactional leadership, according to a study.

A regression of LMX on both organizational commitment and transactional leadership demonstrates that LMX has a substantial beta, while transactional leadership has a much smaller one. So, LMX modulates the association between transactional leadership and organizational commitment, according to the study. In part, H4 has been approved.

Therefore, it follows from these findings that the association between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is not mediated by the LMX, whereas the relationship between transactional leadership and organizational commitment is mediated in part. Results demonstrated that transformational and transactional leadership styles have a direct impact on the organizational commitment of Pakistani public managers, too. In contrast, transformational leaders generate higher organizational commitment among public managers than transactional leaders. Previous research has indicated that transformational leaders are more effective at getting people to commit to them than transactional leaders (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003).

Individual influence, a feature of transformational leadership, has been proven to have a considerable impact on organizational commitment, according to the findings. Also, charismatic leaders play a crucial role in encouraging government employees. The ethical behavior and role model position of a public leader encourages his followers to imitate and identify with him (Bass, 1990). An important aspect of transactional leadership is management by exception. This type of management has a tremendous impact on organizational commitment.

Further, research has shown that a manager's gender and relationship with their superior are related. Relationships between men's top-level managers and their immediate superiors were more fulfilling. Compared to women, men were more likely to observe transformational behaviors in the top executives of government organizations. Because of Pakistan's male-dominated culture, these outcomes can be attributed to a male-dominated society. After 20 years, despite a massive increase in the number of women working in public service, society is beginning to change its opinion of women's talents. Existing males or political parties are supportive of female managers overcoming the glass ceiling and taking on significant leadership roles.

Conclusion

With the use of LMX and organizational commitment, two Bass (1985) leadership styles were studied in this study, along with their dimensions. While working with public sector organizations in Pakistan, it sought to study the relationship between different leadership styles and organizational commitment. In addition to its theoretical and practical consequences, the study's findings have a wide range of potential applications. As a result, it adds to the expanding body of literature on leadership and organizational commitment. Leadership's role in fostering organizational commitment is discussed in this article. Transactional leadership has also been shown to promote organizational commitment by strengthening the quality of connections between leaders and their followers. More research is needed on the methods through which transformational leadership impacts organizational commitment, as well, as has been indicated by numerous authors (Keskes et al., 2018). Transformative leadership and LMX are not mutually exclusive, according to the findings. This is in addition to finding out that transformative leadership has a direct impact on organizational engagement.

It appears that Pakistani public managers respond positively to transformational leadership styles that emphasize values and ideals (idealized influence), enhancing organizational commitment. In the past, studies have demonstrated that leaders' idealized impact can stimulate and shift the energy of collaborators. These findings are remarkable, especially in the context of the general public. It is from them that we get more support for the idea of instilling a sense of public duty in government entities.

According to this concept, hierarchy is determined by a leader's moral integrity, dedication, and authenticity. As a result, public officials should combine administrative efficiency, public service, and ethics. Also, in this study both transformational and transactional leadership styles are concluded to be necessary for the development of organizational commitment.

It also contributes to a developing body of knowledge on leadership styles and organizational commitment in Pakistan, where little to no study on the subject exists. Pakistan's public sector would also be affected in a variety of ways by this development. Ethics and public service principles are essential determinants of organizational commitment, according to this study's findings. This document also focuses on how important it is to teach public managers how to build a work climate that supports high levels of dedication. If they are not addressed, they will harm the recruitment and training of Pakistani public officials. Human resource norms should be used to select public managers. Transformative experiences should be discussed in interviews, as well as interpersonal abilities. Additional training interventions should emphasize developing transformational skills and cultivating high-quality exchanges between leaders and followers in the workplace, as there is still a strong emphasis on theoretical courses and strict supervision of subordinates' work by superiors in current training programs.

Recommendations

Employee motivation in Pakistan's public sector is linked to leadership style perceptions, according to the findings of the study. Results from prior studies suggested a link between perceived leadership styles and employee engagement and performance, which necessitated further study in this area (Chaudhry, Javed, & Sabir, 2012; Vanhala & Stavrou, 2013). The conclusions of this study may be confirmed or refuted by future studies that use broader populations and investigate a larger sample

size. It's important to look at the effects of leadership on employee motivation across gender and other external factors such as rewards and organizational goals. Moreover, as a follow-up study, it's possible to look at how leadership and employee motivation vary among cultures. The impact of different leadership styles on employee motivation may be culturally specific, as are the metrics of how effective different types of leadership styles are (Hwang et al., 2015). Researchers in the West may come up with different results from those in the East. Finally, an idea for future research is to analyze the link between leadership styles and employee motivation by employing LMX theory as a mediator in other industries. As an example, the relationship between private sector leaders and employees can appear to be quite different from the one between public sector firms' leaders and their workforce. To understand how employee engagement differs between firms in the private and public sectors, it is necessary to look at a variety of factors.

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