

Transformational leadership and employees' performance: the mediating role of employees' commitment in private banking sectors in Pakistan

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Abstract: In this competitive era, organisations face issues related to leadership styles in maintaining employee performance and commitment. Leadership, like transformational leadership, motivates employees to achieve the target for an organisation. However, employee performance and commitment are behavioural factors that help them achieve organisational goals. These factors develop emotional attachments like loyalty and faithfulness among the employees towards the organisations. This study examines the relationship between transformational leadership, employee commitment, and employee performance in a developing country like Pakistan. Although, in the twenty-first century, issues related to leadership styles have given new ways for researchers to further insight into employee performance and commitment study. However, this paper aims to determine the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance by mediating the role of employee commitment in the private banking sector. The cross-sectional and descriptive survey was used in the data collection; 466 employees of the banks participated in the study. The research indicates that transformational leadership positively impacts employee performance and commitment. The findings show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employees' performance and employee commitment.

Article History

Received:
12-Dec-2022

Revised:
24-Mar-2023

Re-revised:
13-Jun-2023

Accepted:
15-Jun-2023

Published:
30-Jun-2023

Keywords: idealised influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, employees' loyalty, employees' motivation, emotional attachments.

How to Cite: Anwar, S., Qambrani, I., Shah, N. A., & Mukarram, S. (2023). Transformational leadership and employees' performance: the mediating role of employees' commitment in private banking sectors in Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 7(1), 120-136. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/7.1.7>

Publisher's Note: IDEA PUBLISHERS (IDEA Journals Group) stands neutral with regard to the jurisdictional claims in the published maps and the institutional affiliations.

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1. Introduction

In the modern era, competition is increasing daily; almost every company strives to perform better and secure a higher rank. Several factors affect the performance of an organisation; employees are the essential elements of the organisation. Once an employee is committed to the organisation's progress, he will make sure to put all his efforts in the best possible way to attain the specified objectives. However, not every person in the company is so committed, and most even care about their part, not cohesion and coordination. Here comes the role of a leader. A leader ensures that each employee is performing well and that the activities are aligned with each other and the organisational goal. Additionally, the transformational leadership style enables leaders to transform those employees' thoughts and behaviours who do not put their best initially. Hence, transformational leadership helps motivate employees to be committed and ensures organisational success. Transformational leadership studies find in the Spanish communities the relation between job performances and organisational citizenship behaviour directed as an organisation (Buil et al., 2018).

Furthermore, like other leadership styles, transformational leadership also impacts the intellectual capital, innovation, and organisational performance in the business setting. Transformational leadership is highly innovative in Jordan's business organisations and attains high performance it also involves communication with employees and achieving objectives (Alrowwad, 2020; Tariq et al., 2021). Nonetheless, transformational leadership has a positive effect on the engagement of active and independent critical thinking in the telecom sector of Pakistan (Khan et al., 2020). However, the mediating relationship of behavioural integrity positively influences employee performance in the banking sector (Khan & Mahmood, 2023; Saleem *et al.*, 2019).

The banking sectors are essential to the country's economic growth. Employees of these sectors must be committed to their work and perform well in the organisation. Banking is considered the most important sector of any country. It has its code of conduct. Bank employees need regular motivation and commitment to their jobs for good performance. To perform well, the organisation needs loyal and committed employees for their firm, those who attach to it emotionally and ethically. The Pakistani banking sector's previous research has been done on the influence of employee commitment on job satisfaction (Mahmood *et al.*, 2019). Employee commitment and job satisfaction significantly impact transformational leadership in the banking sector (Eliyana & Ma, 2019; Din et al., 2021). Considering the studies available, the relationship among transformational leadership, employee performance, and employee commitment encompasses minimal studies. When it comes to the banking sector of Pakistan, it is felt that this unexplored area should be given attention. Hence, this study tries to find a relationship among the variables with a particular focus on the banking sector, and here, employee commitment plays a moderating role. Furthermore, the hypothesis will be tested on the four areas of transformational leadership: (1) idealised influence, (2) individual consideration, (3) inspirational motivation, and (4) intellectual stimulation.

2. Literature review

2.1. Transformational leadership

Leaders are the change agent of the organisation; they are known as the essential factor nowadays in competitive markets. Decision makers are achieving competition by implementing various leadership styles in their firms. Leadership style is a crucial element in the competitive markets for attaining objectives (Elsan-Mansaray, 2019; Aman & Jan). Creative activity within the workforce is always supported by effective leadership. Leaders have the right to influence their followers to adopt certain habits. As a result, such overbearing oversight encourages a firm's creative abilities. Culture, environment, organisational structure, background, and the nature of a company's business all influence leadership. As a result, managerial and administrative leadership styles may vary (Fu *et al.*, 2022; Ali *et al.*, 2021). Leaders' and followers' agreement is motivation and values essential to organisational success (Udovita, 2020). There are three styles of leadership transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership style (Biza & Irbo, 2020). The transactional leadership style is the hope of the employees' best performance, so they achieve the expected result, awards, and profit from their task completion (Tuffour *et al.*, 2019). Literature supports successfully implementing organisational leadership and employee attitude (Farahnak *et al.*, 2020). Transformational leadership directly impacts employee performance in SMEs (Putri & Muhdiyanto, 2018).

Transformational leadership is about the rewards exchange between employees and followers. It encourages the employees to fulfil their rewards. Transformational leadership transforms people and motivates them to achieve more than their expectations (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2019). Transformational leadership illustrates the employees' loyalty to the organisation (Biza & Irbo, 2020). Transformational leadership impacts factors such as managerial performance, corporate turnover rate, and employee retention (Farahnak *et al.*, 2020). The literature indicates that their transformational leadership includes four elements, i.e., inspirational motivation, idealised influence, individualised consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2019). Transactional leadership has three dimensions, i.e., management-by-exception active, contingent reward, and passive. It is lined with emotions, values, ethics, and the organisation's long-term goals that impact market trends and innovation. Transformational leadership exceeds the leaders' interest to get the best workers, followers, organisation, and society (Eliyana & Ma, 2019).

Transformational leadership engages the employee in the motivation and encouragement of the desired turnover of the organisation. In Indonesian SMEs, transformational leadership is tested with the mediating relationship of organisational citizenship behaviours; it partially affects employee performance (Putri & Muhdiyanto, 2018). Transformational and transactional leadership styles positively impact the commitment in the competitive insurance industry of Sri Lanka (Silva & Mendis, 2017). Transformational leadership theory indicates that attitude

changes during change implementation and innovation. It is also eligible to determine the change needs and encourages followers to change their interests towards the firms and the best groups (Farahnak *et al.*, 2020). Transformational leadership is essential for performance, efficiency, and company survival (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2019).

2.2 Employee performance

Employee performance is considered the proper platform to achieve the organisation's specified goals. Organisational success and failure depend on employee performance (EP)(Hussain *et al.*, 2019). Employee behaviour at their workplace can define employee performance, which helps the employee achieve outcomes according to organisation objectives. Effective job performance can evaluate employee work performance and help achieve organisational goals (Na-Nan *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, performance helps measure employees' genuine attitudes at their workplace from different aspects. Performance dimensions are work quality, work quantity, and behaviours with colleagues (Sudiardhita *et al.*, 2018). Employee performance involves organisational betterment, especially in productivity and efficiency. The organisation's financial and non-financial success relies on employee performance (Bataneh, 2019).

Employees who perform better will lead the organisation towards success; ultimately, it will fail if they do not fulfil their job well. According to Tuffour *et al.* (2019), leadership style is the performance of the leader's impact and explicit activities. Leadership directly impacts the EP (Wolo *et al.*, 2020). Transformational leadership affects organisational citizenship behaviour and employee performance, ultimately influencing the origination output. Many factors influence employee performance, and leadership style is one of them. Transformational leadership is linked with organisational commitment and employee job performance (Hussain *et al.*, 2019).

2.3 Employee commitment

Employee commitment is the psychological behaviour of the employees, which illustrates the values and goals of their organisation's objectives (Mahmood *et al.*, 2019). Employee commitment indicates the intention and attitude toward the organisation's profit. An employee can perform his regular tasks proudly. The employee's behaviour shows loyalty which influences their better performance (Khan *et al.*, 2020; Sharma *et al.*, 2021). The research explains that affective commitment and trust in leadership were both positively predicted by perceived transformational leadership. The association between transformative leadership and organisational commitment was also mediated by faith in leadership and its beneficial influence on the level of commitment (Yuan *et al.*, 2022). The employee commitment is divided into three parts, i.e., affective, normative, and continuance (Swamy *et al.*, 2020). An effective commitment explain the emotional attachment between employees and the organisation (Teo *et al.*, 2019).

An effective commitment is associated with the emotional identification of the organisation, continuance costs related to leaving the organisation, and normative for staying in the organisation recognising obligations (De Silva *et al.*, 2019). It is necessary to focus on leadership style and employee commitment to achieve more profit for the organisation (Udovita, 2020). The leadership task is primarily to continuously motivate and communicate with employees to create more loyalty and commitment outcomes (Elsan Mansaray, 2019). According to a study, leadership style significantly impacts employee commitment (Swamy *et al.*, 2020).

3. Hypotheses development and conceptual framework

3.1. Transformation leadership and employee commitment

Transformational leadership motivates employees and gives them a platform for a higher level of performance with their positive attitudes. Therefore, this connection makes a difference in employees' overall performance and eligibility for rewards and promotions. Theoretically and empirically, transformational leadership is linked with the employees' work performance (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Transformational leadership impacts achieving high performance and motivating employees to achieve mutual goals (Naderi *et al.*, 2019). Transformational leadership and occupational commitment individually and interactively affect job performance (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2020). Transformational leadership is essential for the organisation in performance and quality. Organisational managers must care about employees' problems and basic needs and provide appropriate solutions and training to improve their performance (Putri & Muhdiyanto, 2018). Transformational leadership directly and positively affects employee performance (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2020). It has been observed that transformational leadership significantly impacts employee performance (Eliyana & Ma, 2019).

H1: Impact of transformational leadership style on the employees' commitment.

3.2. Transformational leadership and employee performance

The correlation analysis indicates that transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles are connected to employee commitment (Swamy *et al.*, 2020). Meta-analysis research found a strong connection between transformational leadership and employee commitment (Puni *et al.*, 2020). Results of the literature show that transformational leadership positively impacts all three dimensions of employee commitment (Biza & Irbo, 2020). Transformational leadership has a creative leadership style and vision which supports the individual employee motivation in the decision-making and creates the work environment. In other words, transformational leadership enhances the workers' commitment (Anwar *et al.*, 2021). There is a lower correlation and coefficient between transformational leadership and effective, normative continuance.

In contrast, there is no such relationship in the commitment with transactional leadership (Silva & Mendis, 2017). The research findings indicate that transformational leadership positively connects with employee commitment, speciality effectiveness, and normative dimensions (Biza & Irbo, 2020). In the previous literature, employee commitment was tested directly with the employee's job performance.

H2: Transformational leadership effect on employee performance.

3.3. Employee commitment and employee performance

The study of the literature proves that employee commitment enhances the performance of the employees. Moreover, in HRM, effective commitment improves performance; for example, many studies demonstrated that performance evaluation and training, job descriptions, and empowerment increase affective commitment and directly affect performance (Wojtczuk-Turek & Turek, 2021). Employee performance influences commitment, which an employee has toward their organisation and its values (Sendawula *et al.*, 2018). Employees who think their company considers them a team and is committed to rewarding and retaining them will also give them high commitment in return (Schwaiger & Zehrer, 2022). The previous study shows that employee commitment positively impacts job performance; furthermore, in the Meli Bank in Kurdistan, Iran, employee commitment affects employees' performance (Nadeeka & Weerasinghe, 2020).

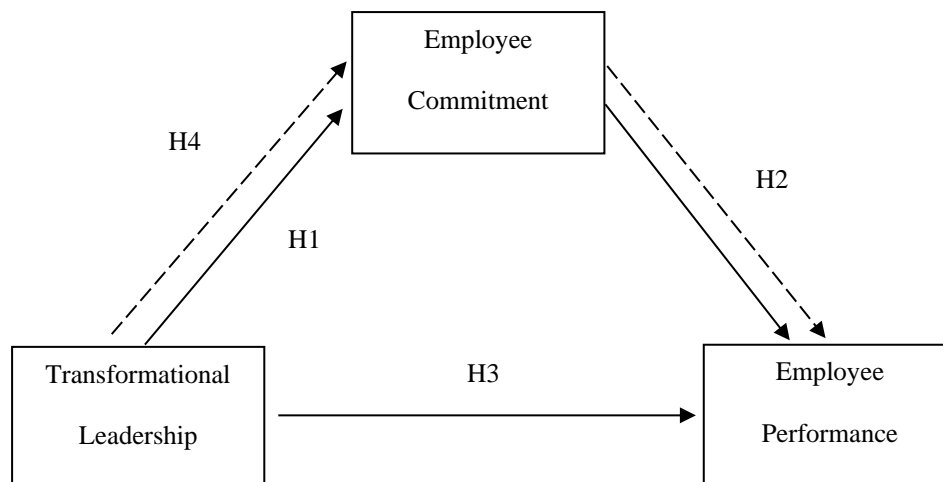
H3: Employee commitment effect on employee performance

3.4. Mediating relation between transformational leadership, employee performance, and employees' commitment

In organisations, committed employees are attached for an extended period to their work because they feel more motivated to perform their job. Employee commitment explains that employees work for organisational benefits (Sharma *et al.*, 2021). This feeling enhances behaviour and motivates employees to express their willingness to work (Uddin *et al.*, 2019). Employee commitment plays a partial mediator role between transformational leadership and employee performance. Employee commitment might impact transformational leadership directly and indirectly (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2020). The organisational commitment supports improving employee performance and increases the competition around the organisations (Sungu *et al.*, 2019). Organisational commitment affects the job performance of the employees for achieving organisational goals. Research findings also support that employee commitment is linked to the motivation to work in a powerful organisation with less power distance (Rafiei & Abdollahzade, 2018).

H4: Effect of transformational leadership on employee performance while taking employee commitment as the mediator.

3.5. Conceptual framework



4. Research methodology

The survey method is used for the data collection in this quantitative research. Employees of the eight private banks of Karachi city were the population of the study. The respondents were employees of United Bank Limited, Bank Al-Habib Limited, Habib Bank Limited, Muslim Commercial Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, Sindh Bank, Bank Al-Falah, and Bank Islami. Further, employees were categorised based on experience from 0 to more than ten years, and the officer grades from AVP, OG-I, OG-II, and OG-II. The questionnaire was developed from the previous paper and was measured on the 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Agree, 5=Disagree). Overall, the items loading equal to or greater than 0.7 were considered satisfactory. Moreover, in the hypotheses tested in the study, the hypothesis is accepted if the P value is less than 0.05. Otherwise, it will be rejected. Five hundred research questionnaires were distributed, 473 received respondents, and 456 valid forms were analysed.

5. Data analysis and results

After receiving responses, the data was analysed through the PLS-4 software to convert data into numerical form.

5.1 Respondent's demography

The demographic data in table-1 illustrates that employees of united bank limited participated in the majority, 17.76% (N=81), whereas only 4.82% (N=22) of employees participated from the Bank Al Falah Limited. The majority of the respondents, 29.61% (N=135), have more than ten years of experience in their job. On another, only 21.27 (N=97) employees had 0-3 years of experience. Further, employees on the AVP rank were 26.5% (N=121), whereas 20.39% (N=93) of employees participated in the survey.

Table 1. Respondent's demography (N=456)

	Category	Frequency	Percent
Bank Name	Bank Islami Pakistan Ltd	51	11.18
	Habib Bank Limited	77	16.89
	Bank Al Habib ltd	74	16.22
	Sindh Bank ltd.	69	15.13
	United Bank Limited	81	17.76
	Bank Al Falah	22	4.82
	Bank Dubai Islami	23	5.04
	MCB	59	12.94
	Total	456	100.0
Experience	0 to 3 years	97	21.27
	4 to 6 years	121	26.54
	7 to 10 years	103	22.59
	more than 10 years	135	29.61
	Total	456	100.0
Officer Grade	AVP	121	26.54
	OG-I	93	20.39
	OG-II	145	31.80
	OG-III	97	21.27
	Total	456	100.0

5.2 Measure

For multifactor leadership, we adopted the three-dimension scale (Avolio *et al.*, 1995). Each dimension has five scales: five items of idealised influence, five items of inspirational motivation, five items of intellectual stimulation, and five items of individualisation consideration. Employee performance items were adopted from the individual work performance scale (Koopmans *et al.*, 2014).

5.3. Construct reliability

The reliability was measured through composite reliability (CR). It is linked with the item's internal consistency. Table 2 shows a CR value that is more significant than 0.7. To confirm the construct's reliability, CR must be equal to or >0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Table 2: Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
EC	0.897	0.919	0.618
EP	0.766	0.866	0.683
TFL	0.957	0.962	0.627

5.4. Convergent validity

It indicates that either item is correlated to the other or not. The average variance extracted (AVE) is measured through convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The cut of the value of the AVE should be >0.5, and for the factor loading, convergent reliability should be >0.7. In Table 2, the overall AVE is more significant than 0.5 of the constructs.

5.5. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is used to measure the empirical difference among the constructs. It is also decided through Fornell and Larcker, the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio, and crossing loading in the items (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Discriminant validity confirms if the value of HTMT is less than 0.9. In table 4, all values are less than 0.9, thus ensuring the discriminant validity of the items in variables.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

	EC	EP	TFL
EC	0.786		
EP	0.717	0.826	
TFL	0.680	0.871	0.792

Table 4. Path coefficients

	Beta value	SD	T value	P values
EC -> EP	0.233	0.024	9.508	0.000
TFL -> EC	0.680	0.021	32.981	0.000
TFL -> EP	0.713	0.025	28.727	0.000
TFL ->EC-> EP	0.709	0.020	27.008	0.000

5.6. Hypotheses testing

These three hypotheses are tested in this research. Table 4 shows the result of the hypothesis; if the P value is <0.05, its mean hypothesis is accepted. According to hypothesis testing, H1 is ($\beta=0.233$, $P=0.00$). Transformational leadership has a significant impact on employee commitment in the bank sectors. Moreover, in the H2 ($\beta=0.680$, $P=0.00$), TFL significantly impacts the EP. H3 is ($\beta=0.713$, $P=0.00$), which implies that TFL has a potential impact on EP. In the same way, H4 ($\beta=0.709$, $P=0.00$) results show that the relationship among TFL, EC and EP is significant.

5.7. R square

The R square is a predicate overall impact of the exogenous (independent) on the endogenous.

(dependent) variable (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The value of *R* squares is 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25, high, moderate, and low, respectively. Hence Table 5 confirms that removing TFL has a moderate impact on the EC and a higher impact on the EP.

Table 5. R-square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EC	0.462	0.461
EP	0.788	0.787

5.8. F-Square

F-square is the effect size; calculating F square determines every path model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). F-square changes when a particular variable is removed from the model. The effect size of the eliminated construct is 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for small, medium, and significant impacts, respectively. Hence table 6 shows that EC has a medium effect on the EP, whereas TFL significantly affects the EC and EP.

Table 6. F-square

	EC	EP	TFL
EC		0.137	
EP			
TFL	0.859	1.289	

6. Discussion

This research aimed to determine the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance and the moderate effect of employee commitment on the banking sector of Pakistan. According to the research results, transformational leadership positively impacts employee commitment and performance directly, which proves the previous study that transformational leadership positively impacts employee commitment (Biza & Irbo, 2020). Transformational leadership delight affects direct and indirect employee commitment (Mahfouz *et al.*, 2020). Transformational leadership style is essential for the banking sector of Pakistan. It can change employees' perceptions and behaviour toward the organisation, leading to commitment and improved performance. Organisations should hire more trained and skilled employees for their workplaces. Employees will become more loyal and committed to their organisation if they have transformed leaders for their firms. Transformational leadership illustrates employees' loyalty to the organisation (Biza & Irbo, 2020).

When employees receive appreciation and encouragement, they work more for the organisation. Leaders should motivate employees with incentives and yearly rewards and appreciate them by giving them participation in decision-making, meetings, and other

organisational tasks. The motivation can be in the form of monetary value or just acknowledgement of one's performance. Most organisations need to improve such behaviours, so employees do not show commitment and hence, switch jobs (Scuotto et al., 2022). Transformational leadership transforms people and motivates them to achieve more than their expectations (Mahfouz et al., 2019). Moreover, if the organisation wants more profit and benefit, they transform it with the leadership style.

7. Conclusion, recommendation, and contribution

The study proves that transformational leadership has a direct impact on employee performance. There is mediating role of employee commitment between transformational leadership and employee performance in the private banking sector. The study investigates how transformational leadership directly impacts employee performance in Pakistan's banking sector. Leadership is the main ingredient influencing the employee's performance and commitment. Those employees who are highly committed to their work will also enhance their performance at the organisation.

This study also gives future suggestions to the researchers, like current research has been done in the banks of Karachi city, Pakistan. Therefore, future researcher can conduct research on the same variable in other countries with the same demographic variables. Furthermore, the researchers can adopt a different research strategy than a cross-sectional study. The results show the practical and theoretical implementation of the policy of the banking sectors. It contributes to the making policy for enhancing the leaders' transformation, which leads to employee commitment and performance. Managers of the organisation should emphasise the motivation and rewards system policies in the firm that encourage the employee in the work performance and commitment.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest(s) with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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