

Impact of Transformational Leadership on the Affective Commitment of Employees in the Service Sector

Rekha Aranha, Maria Thomas, Avil Saldanha

Abstract: Purpose – There are few studies that have studied the relationship between Transformational leadership (TL) and organisation commitment (OC), but there are very few studies on the service sector especially in the Indian context. This study aims to fill the gap in literature by empirically examining the impact of four dimensions of TL using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) on the Affective Commitment (AC) of the employees, within the context of the service sector in Bengaluru. **Design/methodology/approach** – A total of two hypotheses were proposed for testing transformational leadership using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) questionnaire, (Bass and Avolio, 1997) and five items of affective organization commitment developed by Allen and Meyer (1996) was used for affective commitment. The questionnaire was administered to 210 employees working in various industries in the service sector in Bengaluru to measure the impact of TL on the AC of the respondents.

Findings – The analysis of the data collected shows that TL has a positive impact on the affective commitment of the employees. In particular, the results of an empirical investigation revealed that individualized influence and individual consideration by the transformational leader had a significant impact on the affective commitment level of the employees. The employees in the hospitality industry had a difference in opinion compared to IT, Banking & education sector employees on the intellectual stimulation by the leader and their affective commitment towards the organization.

Originality/value – This paper contributes to the existing literature of leadership and OC by providing practical evidence leading to the improvement of information and the understanding of the relationship between TL and AC.

Keywords - Affective commitment, Bengaluru, Organization commitment, service sector employees' transformational leadership.

Paper type - Research paper

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a strong dimension of organization commitment (Sabir et al., 2011). Many job-related behaviours like boldness, inspiration, and performance can directly effect the OC (Bass; 1985, Stogdill; 1963). Bass

(1985); Stodgill (1963) identified two types of leadership i.e., Transformational and transactional. Ramchandran and Krishnan (2009) leadership style is a strong determinant of employee commitment. Burns (1978) state that Transformational leadership (TL) helps leaders and followers to help each other to advance their morale and motivation." Bass (1985) advocated that transformational leadership depends on the extent of influence the leader gives to the follower. Quality of leadership in organizations determines the success of any organisation. A leader's role is to facilitate the cooperation of people in the workplace. Therefore it has become imperative for today's organizations to emphasize understanding, developing, and improving their leadership. The leaders enhance the proficiency and effectiveness of their followers, and the organization functions in general. Various organizational factors like competition, changing environment has bought massive changes in the leadership infrastructure. Thus the adoption of a proper leadership style has become essential for organizational effectiveness. Transformational Leader brings in positive changes in his followers. He empowers them and increases their skills intending to improve the performance and outcomes of the organization. A transformational leader is energetic and enthusiastic. They are involved in the process and are determined to help others in the process. Transformational leaders gather respect, trust, and admiration from their followers.

Organizational commitment (OC) refers to employees' emotional attachment towards their organization. The personal-attachment guides individuals to be loyal to the organisation (Meyer, 2002). Affective commitment leads to increase in tenure and retention of employees as they feel the organisations mission and ethics is in congruence with their personal value (Beck & Wilson, 2000). Affective commitment is the relative strength of the relationship with one's organisation (Mowday et al., 1982). Affection for your job occurs when there is a secure emotional attachment with the organization. It has a tremendous effect on employee commitment and performance. It encourages bringing others into the talent pool of the organization.

The affective commitment of an employee is directly related to a optimistic involvement at work. So management should create policies so that maximum employees have positive work experience.

Revised Manuscript Received on November 15, 2019

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Transformational Leadership:

Tichy and Devanna (1986) state that transformational leadership characteristics include qualities like the courage, honesty, principles, knowledge, and capability of visionary. Avolio and Bass; 1988, 1994, Bass and Riggio; 2006; Baldoni; 2005 categorized the FOUR I's. Positive relationship has been identified between OC, TL and a assortment of leadership behaviors .(Lo et al., 2009) have found that transformational & transactional leadership is positively correlated with affective commitment. Leader takes the style of pacesetter and makes follower achieve beyond their potential (Krishnan, 2004). Attributes like imagination, team direction, and appreciations, training influence, accountability, and acknowledgment are vital for the effectiveness of transformational leadership (Parry, 1996). Transformational leadership is positively linked with employees' attitude, their work behavior, motivation and performance (Dumdum et al.2002). Transformational leaders intellectual stimulate and motivate the subordinates to achieve based on organisations value (Givens 2008).

b. Affective Commitment (AC):

The employees' emotional attachment with the organization (Jaros et al. 1993). Cooper et al., 2005; Meyer et al., 2002, found affective commitment has strong positive correlation with absenteeism, performance, & OCB than continuance commitment and normative commitment. Meyer & Allen 1991; Somers, 1995 in their three component model described commitment as a want , necessity, and an responsibility. However, affective commitment is found predict outcomes such as turnover and absence (Meyer et al., 2002). Behavioural variables such as OCB, working additional hours, material sharing, and manager's assessment of performance predicts affective commitment of employees (Solinger et al., 2008). Lack of positive attitude towards employer and work during the initial days at work shows low affective commitment and lead to turnover (Porter et al., 1976). However there is no positive correlation between affective commitment and performance (Mowday et al., 1982; Mowday et al., 1979). Empowering employees at work and formalization of policies leads to affective commitment, Morris et al.,(1980); O'Driscoll (1987); Podsakoff et al., (1986), Organizational commitment & leadership have moderate effect (oztekin, et al.,2015). Sense of belongingness among the employee leads to organisation commitment (Marchiori & Henkin, 2003).

c. Transformational & Affective Commitment:

Davenport (2010) found that leadership styles are important predictors of organizational commitment. TL style has positive affect on the commitment of the followers, Mert et al. (2010); positive relationship between TL &OC; Tseng et al. (2009). Ekeland (2005); Chandna and Krishnan 2009 found that TL has positive and strong relationship with AC. The behavior of transactional & transformational style considers strong element of organization achievement (Laohavichien et al., 2009). Transformational leader supports and motivates the subordinates to think critically

which affect employee commitment (Avolio & Bass, 1994). In the Indian banking industry there exists positive relationship between TL & AC (Rai and Sinha, 2000). Arnold, Basling et al., 2001;TL helps subordinates to enhance their trust and commitment. A transformational leader frequently provides solutions to the problems, which boosts enthusiasm and commitment of employee (Lawler, 2003). Precursor of commitment is leaders' style (Willims et al., 1986). Marmaya et al., 2011 found that both transformational and transactional leadership are positively related with organizational commitment, however Malaysian employees are influenced more by transformational leadership. Leader's behaviour's based on their leadership style play a vital role in defining levels of organizational commitment (Silva, Mendes, 2017). Hayward et al., (2004) there is a positive correlation between TL & AC, however between TL and other forms of commitment is low . Kent & Chelladurai (2001); (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015); Ekeland (2005); Chandna and Krishnan, (2009); affective commitment and normative commitment has positive correlation with individualized consideration. *From the literature review, the following hypothesis were framed:*

1. *Ho: Transformational leadership has an impact on the affective commitment of employees in the service sector (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015), (Hayward, Goss and Tolmay, 2004)*
2. *Ho: There is no significant difference in the opinion of employees working in various industries on transformational leadership & affective commitment dimensions.*

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

TL has four aspects i.e., individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation & idealised influence. In this research, the impact of each element of TL on the AC of employees is considered. The TL has been measured through the multifactor leadership questionnaire by Bass & Avolio (1997), consisting of 17 items. Five-point Likert scale was used to analyse each response. AC is measured using Allen & Meyer (1996) questionnaire consisting of 6 items.

Components of Transformational Leadership

- **Inspirational Motivation-** Transformational leaders have a clear vision in their minds and can articulate it clearly to their followers. The leader is filled with the same motivation and passion, just like his followers to achieve the organization's goals.
- **Intellectual Stimulation-**The status quo is challenged and the followers are encouraged to think beyond their potential. They help their followers to learn new ways and to think differently to achieve their goals.
- **Individualized Consideration-** A transformational leader offers strength, support, and encouragement to his followers.

- They keep the communication channels open for everyone to share their ideas, and leaders give direct recognition for unique contributions from individuals.
- Idealized Influence – contribution as a role model for groups

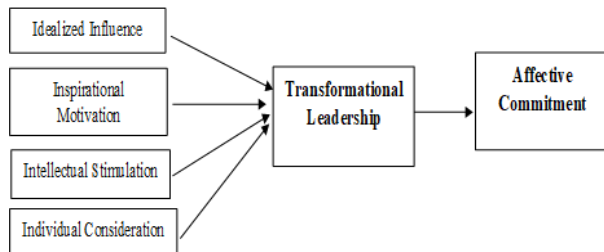


Fig 1: Effect of Independent variables on the dependent variables

IV. SAMPLE AND PROCEDURES:

The population chosen for the study comprises of employees in the service sector i.e., IT services, Education, Hospitality, Healthcare and Banking, and Financial Services. A sample of 210 respondents in the service sector is considered for the study. The sampling technique used is stratified random sampling. Each stratum comprises of individuals working in different industries. The pilot study is conducted on 30 responses received. A Cronbach alpha of 0.919 for transformational leadership questionnaire and a Cronbach alpha of 0.868 is obtained for affective commitment scale. The KMO value for transformational leadership is 0.899, KMO for affective/emotional commitment is 0.732, which states the sample adequacy to continue the analysis. Regression analysis was done to predict the effect of TL on the AC of personnel in the service sector.

A. Measures :

Primary instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire consisting of questions about Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) for transformational leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1997) & Allen and Meyer Scale for affective commitment (Allen & Meyer 1996). The sample size was 210 respondents representing the various industries in the service sector. The respondents' demographic profile based on gender, age group, years of experience and position within the organisation was collected along with responses to ascertain the impact of each variable on transformational leadership attributes and affective commitment.

V. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

A. Descriptive Statistics:

Out of 210 respondents, 53.3% of the respondents were men, and 46.7 % of the respondents were women. The data contained an almost equal representation of men and women. Majority of the responses were given by employees between

21-30 years of age (61.4%), 32.4 % between the ages 31-40 years. A small percentage of respondents were of the age group of 41-50 and 51-60. 43.3 % of the respondents were in the middle level of the organization, 32.4% were at the junior level, 16.7 % in the senior level, and 7.6% in the entry-level. 45.2% had 2-5 years of experience, 19% with 0-2 years & 6-8 years, 16.8 % had nine years and above experience.

1. Ho: There is no significant difference in the opinion of employees in various industries on transformational leadership & affective commitment dimensions.

The transformational and affective commitment dimensions were taken separately to compare the opinion of the respondents working in various service industries considered for the study. The Anova analysis showed that there is a difference in the opinion of employees on intellectual stimulation dimension and on all the other aspects, the employees had the same view. To find -out the difference among the employees the Post-hoc analysis is conducted and the results are as follows; The employees working in the hospitality Industry had a difference in their opinion compared to (Education $p=0.014$, IT services $p=0.018$, Banking & financial institutions $p=0.035$ which is <0.05).

There is a difference in the opinion of employees working in IT & hospitality industry ($p=0.039 < 0.05$) on affective commitment. Respondents from all the other sectors considered for the study have the same opinion on the affective commitment they have towards their organization.

2. Ho: To analyze the impact of transformational leadership on the affective commitment of employees working in the service sector.

The regression analysis shows that only 21.2% of independent variables (individual consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence) predict affective commitment among employees in the service sector. Individualized influence ($\beta=.310$, $p=0.012<0.05$, Ho rejected) and Individual consideration ($\beta=0.481$, $p=0.000<0.05$, Ho rejected) is statistically significant. For the other two independent variables i.e. inspirational motivation ($\beta=-.145$, $p=0.337$), intellectual stimulation ($\beta=0.131$, $p=0.268$) Ho is accepted.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.460 ^a	.212	.196	3.76651
a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealised Influence, Inspirational Motivation				

Table 2: Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
10	(Constant)	8.029	1.185		6.777	.000
	Idealised Influence	.310	.123	.233	2.524	.012
	Inspirational Motivation	-.145	.151	-.094	-.962	.337
	Intellectual Stimulation	.131	.118	.083	1.111	.268
	Individual consideration	.481	.123	.312	3.904	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Affective commitment						

The regression equation is as follows: $Y=a+bx$

Affective Commitment (y) = 8.029 (a) + .310 idealised influence (x1) - .145 inspirational motivation (x2) + .131 intellectual stimulation (x3) + .481 individual consideration (x4). For every unit increase in Idealised influence there is 31% increase in affective commitment. If inspirational motivation is increased by an unit it will decrease the affective commitment by 14.5%. Every unit increase of intellectual stimulation will increase the affective commitment by 13.1% and individual consideration will increase by 48.1%.

VI. DISCUSSION

Leadership plays a vital role in the organizations' success. The subordinates want their leader to be friendly, supportive, encouraging, motivating, influencing, and being considerate (Avolio and Bass; 1988, 1994, Bass and Riggio; 2006; Baldoni; 2005). Therefore, a leader must be a role model and support the subordinates to perform their roles effectively.

Ho1 - is supported by previous research that there is a positive influence of TL on the AC (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). The leader should offer strength, support, and encouragement to his followers. There should be transparent communication encouraging every member to share their ideas, and leaders should provide direct recognition for unique contributions from individuals. The Ho4, i.e., individualized consideration, has a positive correlation with affective commitment is supported by previous research, Kent & Chelladurai (2001). In brief, the results of the study demonstrated that idealized influence and individualized consideration of the leader impacts the affective commitment of the employees in the service sector as these two variables were statistically significant. The employees show more emotional commitment when they have a transformational leader who gives support and encourages the subordinates in the organization. The results show that the idealized influence of the leader will increase the affective commitment by 31% and individualized consideration of the leader will increase the affective commitment by 48%.

VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research focuses on the four I's of transformational leadership and the affective commitment of the employees working in the service sector. Affective commitment is the emotional attachment based on the employees' sense of belongingness with that organization. A transformational leader will always help the subordinates to think critically (Avolio & Bass, 1994). This study concludes that employees working in the hospitality sector felt that their leader does not challenge the status quo, and hence it also acts as an impediment to their creativity. The research confirms that idealized influence and individualized consideration will undoubtedly enhance the emotional commitment of the employees.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The research confirms that transformational leadership impacts positively affective commitment of personnel in the service sector, Ekeland (2005); (Chandna and Krishnan 2009). Leadership is a strong dimension of organization commitment (Sabir et al., 2011). The paper only attempts to analyze the transformational leadership and affective commitment. Normative and continuance commitments are not considered in this study.

From this paper, it is clear that the subordinates want to view their leader as a role model who supports, encourages, and motivates them to work effectively in the organization. The leaders need to influence and consider their subordinates, instill trust, and confidence in them so that the team members are an emotional commitment to their organization.

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