



# How Transformational Leadership Influence Follower's Innovative Behavior; Mediating Role of Empowerment

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**Abstract**— The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between transformational leadership psychological empowerment, and innovative work behavior. Data for this research was collected from 187 organization's employees working in the services industries in Pakistan. Structural equation modeling was utilized to test hypothesis. The findings revealed that transformation leadership and empowerment were significantly related to innovative behavior. Findings also suggest that the transformational leadership has a positive impact on the empowerment of the employees. For developing innovative work behavior in employees, organizational leadership must struggle for getting the employees' trust in the organization, by empowering them with decision making authority to show innovative behavior.

**Keywords**— Transformational Leadership; Empowerment; Pakistan; Innovative Behavior.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Employees innovative work behavior (IB) has prodigious significance for organizational effectiveness and its survival, which ultimately leads an organization towards a sustainable development [1, 2]. A process of creation and generation of an ideas, in order to form new methods of implementing innovations, is known as innovative work behavior (IB) [3]. Innovative work behavior (IB) always results in the generation of new ideas, including the efficient multitasking processes and job related managerial motivation [4]. In order to mobilize the innovation process, many organizations take into their considerations the various actors, who assist them in the improvement of employees innovative work behavior [5]. Innovative work behavior (IB) is influenced by various factors of leadership, work group relations, and employee engagement towards their work [6]. Researches shows that the innovative work behavior is well predicted by the factor of transformation leadership linking a mediated factor of empowerment [7-9], work engagement [10], and trust [11].

Leadership has captured more importance as an indicator of innovative behavior [12], and the factor which supports in the promotion of innovation is the transformational leadership [13-

19]. The transformation leadership is defined by the various management scholars as those who develop their followers' potential for work through inspiration, intellectual stimulation and empower them in the organization to develop innovative work behavior [20-22]. The way in which the transformational leaders are practicing in an organization; directly influences the creativity and performance of their followers [23]. The followers enhance their trust on their leaders, which lead them to engage in their work effectively [24-26].

Empowerment creates a mutual understanding between organizational vision and values that prove to be a source of psychological contact for enhancing loyalty to the organization [27]. Previous studies revealed that the empowerment of employees is strongly influenced by the organizational environment [28]. Employee empowerment is the result of effective transformational leadership, which keeps employees engaged in their work and it also help them to develop the innovative work behavior [7]. Moreover, trust is considered one of the most important factor for influencing the organization's success [29]. Employees trust in their leaders, which has a positive impact on efficiency such as solving problems through communication, organization outcome, work engagement and turnover intentions [30]. For employees when the task is more complex and difficult to perform in the organization, then trust will be considered important because of its interdependence [31]. The perception of employees about the justice makes an organization trustworthy, which in return directly influence the employees' behavior towards their work [32].

The main objective of this research was to discover how transformational leadership effects innovative behavior through empowerment in Pakistan organizational context.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership is a unique style which has the ability to bring employees in favor of their self-interest, involves the change of the employees' moral values, ethics, which tends them to perform better than expected [16, 33]. A number of studies have been carried out dealing with the transformational leadership while focusing on consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation of the individuals [16, 34]. Leaders with a perfect inspiration are considered more trustworthy that shows their vision setting along with features, which could help them to accomplish their tasks and also have the potential to stimulate employees innovative work behavior (IB) [20, 26].

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Innovation is defined as the process which enables the individual to develop and implement new ideas to get a better performance in their work [35, 36]. Innovation is a multi-step process that involves the individual ability to recognize a problem, create new ideas, have the ability to support and implement these ideas [2, 37]. Innovation addressed above tends to be influenced not by a single factor, but also by individual motivation, organization support and personality of the individual [38].

#### *A. Transformational Leadership, Employee Empowerment and Innovative Behavior:*

Transformational leadership has become the most significant factor in the last two decades because of its influence on employees' attitude like empowerment [39]. To enhance employees' confidence beyond their expectations is just because of transformational leadership activities [40]. Studies revealed that there is a positive relationship between the leadership and organizational efficiency because of leader's effectiveness on employees' belief and behavior [41]. Moreover, organizational effectiveness is due to the trust and empowerment and these two factors are well predicted by the transformational leadership [42]. Previous studies suggest that empowerment plays a vital role as a mediating variable along with transformational leadership which makes the employees more committed towards their organization [43].

However, the process of work engagement derives through employee empowerment which is a motivational process [44]. [45] discovered that employees will be more engaged in their work if they are more empowered. Furthermore, previous literature also suggests that the improvement of work engagement is through communication, job design, and leaders behavior [46]. However, work engagement results in the lower turnover intention, absenteeism, greater employees creativity and positive organizational outcomes [47]. Thus, the organization culture, which tends towards employee empowerment, availability of resources, and safety measures are more likely to engage employees in their work [48]. In case of empowering employees, they have more formal and informal power to access information, as these assessments to create opportunities for employees to be more engaged in their work [49].

An individual's willingness to shape his/her work or role which indicates about the employee work engagement results from the capability and self-determination of individuals [50]. Empowerment and work engagement are related in a sense that empowering employees to make them more competent to

An organization who wants to become innovative have the option to encourage its employee to be innovative because individual creativity leads an organization to success [35, 52, 53]. Work engagement suggests that employees are more motivated by the opportunity for career growth and promotion at work [54]. Therefore, leaders in any organization are highly educated and they have the responsibility of engaging their employees in the cognitive complex task, and designing strategies, which creates an effective working environment to motivate subordinates [55, 56]. Previous studies have

concluded that firms' survival depends upon the creativity and innovation of the employees [15, 19, 53, 57]

Scholars from the past two decades had argued that employee's innovative work behavior (IB) has not influenced by all kinds of the leadership style [14, 58, 59]. However, only one kind of leadership known as transformational leadership tends to influence the innovation of employee more than any other style [60, 61]. The norms of the employees shaped to promote the outcomes of the organization by making them more creative through the features of transformational leadership [62, 63]. A unique culture can be promoted by the transformational leaders, where employees challenged to generate and implement new ideas through innovative work behavior (IB) [64]. Organizations can enhance innovation by developing problem solving technique and performance evaluation to develop into motivation based organization [65].

Transformational leadership is considered important because of its ability to help the employees think out of the box that is 'not depending on others for the decision they could make and increasing intellectual power' [66]. Furthermore, it simulates the working behavior of the individual, in such a way that it transforms their dedication for organizational success [67]. Another perspective of transformational leadership in relation to innovative work behavior (IWB) is to help the individuals developing their skills and abilities for problem solving [68, 69]. A unique culture in the organization can be established through the capabilities of transformational leaders who compel the employees push themselves towards innovative work behavior (IB) [15, 64]. Consequently, different factors like problem solving techniques, motivational indicators on the basis of performance evaluation are considered to be required in building and enhancing the employees innovative work behavior (IB) [65].

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive impact on psychological empowerment.

H2: psychological empowerment has a positive impact on innovative behavior.

H3: Transformational leadership has a positive impact on innovative behavior.

#### *B. Research Methods*

The empirical research in this study consists of collecting survey data from Multinational organization's employees working in service, pharmaceutical, electronics and automobile manufacturing industry in Pakistan. All participants in this survey were full-time employees. A pilot test of this survey was conducted, and some minor changes were made to the final questionnaire. All the respondents were given one day to complete the questionnaire considering transformational leadership, trust, empowerment, work engagement, innovative work behavior and their demographic characteristics. However, carefulness was taken to make sure none of the senior management team member was present when the survey questionnaires were being filled out by the employees. It was assured to all respondents that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous and will be used entirely for research purpose. From 300 distributed questionnaires, a total

of 187 questionnaires was returned, thus, a response rate was 62.3%.

*C. Measure Instrument*

*Transformational Leadership:*

Transformational leadership was measured based on employees' perception related to their supervisor qualities, which is exhibited by their supervisor. Four dimensions of transformational leadership were covered which includes charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration by using the 65 version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) [26, 70]. Total combined items were 12, three items for each section. Questionnaire measures the dimensions of idealized influence comprising attributed and behavior (e.g., "Talks about his /her most important values"), individualized consideration (e.g., "Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group"), intellectual stimulation (e.g., "Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete an assignment"), and inspirational motivation (e.g., "Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished"). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.825.

*Empowerment:*

Employee empowerment was measured using 5-items scale adapted from [50, 71, 72]. Sample items included in this scale were "I feel competent to perform tasks required for my position", and "I am confident about my capabilities and skills to do my job." The value of Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.840.

*Innovative Behavior:*

Innovative work behavior (IB) was measured using 6-items scale from [73]. Performance of innovative work behavior (IB) was measured using idea generation ("I generate original solutions for problems"), idea promotion ("I mobilize support for innovative ideas and solutions"), and idea realization ("Transforming innovative ideas into useful applications"). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.796.

TABLE I. TABLE 1 : DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, CORRELATION (N=187)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>.812</b>	<b>(.82)</b>		
<b>Psychological empowerment</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>.830</b>	<b>.530**</b>	<b>(.84)</b>	
<b>Innovative Behavior</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>.919</b>	<b>.398**</b>	<b>.607**</b>	<b>(.79)</b>

Control variables: In this study, we used gender, age, job position, education, and working experience as a control variable.

*Analysis and Findings*

Structural equation modeling was utilized as conducted by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) implemented in SPLS for the purpose of assessing the scale reliability. The process of SEM composed of CFA along with path analysis [74]. Those items were removed for further consideration that does not load well on their respective constructs [75]. [76] recommends

regarding the sample size that models based on this will not be accepted if less than 200. While, some of researchers proposed minimum number of 100 participants may be accepted for utilizing maximum likelihood estimates [74, 77]. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to check the validity and reliability of the constructs and we did not find any problem in the confirmatory factor analysis.

*Path analysis of the model:*

In the path analysis, all 3 paths are statistically significant (see table 2). For empowerment, 1 out of 1 path is significant with transformational leadership ( $\beta=0.265$ ,  $p<=0.001$ ) and for innovative behavior 2 out of 2 paths are significant, psychological empowerment ( $\beta=0.339$ ,  $p<=0.001$ ), and transformational leadership ( $\beta=0.355$ ,  $p<=0.001$ ), respectively, which means that H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

TABLE II. TABLE 2: PATH COEFFICIENTS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTS

Hypothesis	Paths	( $\beta$ )	t Value	P Value	Result
<b>H1</b>	TL-> empowerment	0.265	4.3	**	<i>Supported</i>
<b>H2</b>	Empowerment -> IB	0.339	5.75	**	<i>Supported</i>
<b>H3</b>	TL -> IB	0.355	5.69	**	<i>Supported</i>

**\*\*P < 0.001**

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between the transformational leadership, empowerment, trust, and innovative work behavior of employees. If employees perceive that their organization is caring, supportive and fulfilling their promises, which results in developing organizational trust [78], leading to enhance employee performance. [79] proposed that the characteristics of leadership have a positive impact on the employees to boost their trust on them, which ultimately encourages them to be engaged in their work. Transformational leaders are also doing their best in terms of developing the followers potential, so, that they become independent when it came towards making decisions on their owns [20, 80]. Previous empirical studies revealed that the empowerment of employees has substantially improved through the performances of transformational leadership [81, 82]. From this, it can be concluded that employees are more comfortable with their leaders because they empower them to make their own decisions rather than just to follow the orders [8, 67].

Transformational leadership has the ability to engage employees by inspiring them to stimulate their capabilities for organizational success by exerting greater effort [83-85]. In relation to transformational leadership towards innovative work

behavior, it stimulates the working behavior of employees so, that they dedicate their efforts for the prosperity of an organization and think out of the box [66, 67]. As it is proposed in the above literature that how transformational leaders' behavior can influence and motivate the employees to be devoted towards their work [13-15]. Moreover, transformational leaders have the ability to facilitate organizational innovation through employees' innovative behavior. Innovative work behavior can be encouraged by transformational leaders through increasing the different learning activities, enabling them to develop alternative solutions to workplace problems [19].

Organizations which are pursuing to develop an innovative culture, they should have to make their best efforts in creating and sustaining that environment, which helps to promote employees innovative work behavior by focusing on work engagement. Employee engagement has a positive relationship with innovative work behavior [15, 85-87]. Transformational leaders having a vision in their minds for bringing the innovation in their followers at the individual level [88], which engender organizational innovation [89]. In order to get the advantage of engagement, an organization must be keen to develop strategies that can promote an employees' level of trust and empowerment. Along with this, reaping these benefits, organization can also facilitate a high level of employees' trust to engage more in their work, which consecutively stimulate greater performance [90-92]. In order to develop and sustain trust, the work group should be monitored regularly. More importantly, trust can be cultured in the organization by creating empathy and effective communication channel for employees [93].

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