



TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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ABSTRACT- Stress is the main issue that affects individuals' life from each dimension like social and professional lives. The occupational stress is employee anxieties and worries about his/her work which is basically outcome of various dynamic issues like working environment, working load and poor relationships with colleagues and immediate supervisor/ leadership. The leadership is important concept whose main role is to inspire their followers/ employees towards the attainment of certain well-defines and clear objectives. For this drive, leaders use different styles to motivate their employees by considering their needs and resolving worries at workplaces in which the leadership styles (transformational and transactional) is most broad package for employees' motivation and performance leading to stressless situation at workplace. For this purpose, data was collected from the faculty members hailing from higher institutions of KP, Pakistan, and thus was analyzed over statistical procedures to achieve desired objectives. Some recommendations are also extracted from the conclusion of study.

Keywords: Transactional Leadership, Occupational Stress, Emotional Intelligence & HEIs

I. INTRODUCTION

In higher educational background, the leadership is vital in determining and ensuring the high-values tasks of imparting the quality education to the present and future generations. It is the leadership who tries to ensure effectiveness in teaching and learning processes to guarantee the required outcomes aligned with needs and demands of stakeholders (Bakar & Mahmood, 2013). Effective leaderships are critical for managing institutional governance both from micro and macro perspectives. The higher education is considered as effective driver for social, academic and economic development and this role is possible only over dynamic leadership (Graham & Antony, 2017). The leadership has been considered as beacon of hope for promoting the higher education in letters and spirits. The leadership is vital success factor for all originations however, its role is effective and phenomenal in higher educational context due to their active role in social and economic development (Guillén & Treacy, 2011). The main purpose of effective leadership is to increase motivation and commitment and to reduce fears and apprehensions of employees at the workplaces (Qamar, Inamullah, Nseer, Hussain & Ahmad, 2016). In this linking, leadership can play important role in the workforces' apprehensions over different leadership styles.

The leadership styles gained momentum during the past decades with respect to various employees and institutional dynamic outcomes in which transformational and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership is more popular keeping in view their active attributes about employees' motivation to perform efficiently and to attain effectively the assigned tasks (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transactional leadership is popular by providing the different packages of rewards for the employees' inspirations to achieve the assign tasks. However, effectiveness of the particular styles is always based upon context and situation where these leaders are functioning (Sharma & Singh, 2017). The main responsibility of the leaders is to maintain the trust and confidence of the employees on their leaders which in turn helps in increasing potentials and self-esteem and reducing their apprehensions and worries about professional affiliations (Odumeru, James & Ogbonna, 2013). The employees, apprehensions lead to higher high level of the job burnout and emotional strain overwhelmed at occupational stress.

The occupational stress is the critical matter for institutions in managing the employees and leading factor for employees in managing the uneasiness at workplaces. The employees who are satisfied with their working environment and their immediate leaders are likely to have advanced level of the potential and elevated efforts in performing their responsibilities and in attaining their assigned tasks (Gill, Flaschner, & Shachar, 2006). The employees who are stressed due to certain issues related with working environment and concerned leaderships are likely to have lower level of performance and decreased level of motivation thus have reduced concentration on their work and tasks (Harms, Credé, Tynan, Leon & Jeung, 2017). Thus,

it is the prime responsibility of leadership to consider needs and apprehensions of employees to get desired outcomes. The employees are likely to cater undesirable situations through intellectual capabilities (Lyons & Schneider, 2009). leading to higher level of emotional intelligence and for this purpose, emotional intelligence has been used widely as mediator in connecting the leadership and occupational stress.

Problem Statement

The leadership is vital for considering the employees needs and apprehensions. To what extent, the transactional leadership is effective towards the occupational stress in the main theme of this study. In addition, this study also examined the mediating role of emotional intelligence in relationship between transactional leadership and occupational stress.

Objectives & Hypotheses

1. To examine association among transactional leadership, occupational stress and emotional intelligence (hypothesis # 1).
2. To examine mediating role of emotional intelligence in relationship between transactional leadership, and occupational stress (hypothesis # 2).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The universities (higher education institutions) are different from other human service organization due to its functions, importance, standing and roles in the socio-economic and socio-academic development. The universities have inclusive chain of command under the dynamic leadership of vice chancellor and head of different department and section who are the functionaries and responsible for the smooth functioning of the institutions (Haider & Sultan, 2008). On the other hand, the faculties and workforces on administrative positions are also responsible for the smooth functioning of the institutional affairs. In this regard, the teachers are basic unit in university hierarchy who are not only performing teaching and learning responsibilities but also performing the role as administrators in different units of the universities (Akhter & Sharif, 2012). In this connection, the leadership role is critical in shaping the teachers' behavior by motivating them towards realizing institutional standards and success in all respects.

The role of leadership (head of departments) is critical in determining the teacher attitude towards involving in the teaching and administrative tasks by developing their capabilities and sense of responsibility to manage the assigned tasks effectively. In this connection, the universities have been considered as the vital sector in contributing to the various sector by providing intellectuals to different sectors on economies (Bakar & Mahmood, 2013). These intellectuals are the outcome of the effective role of teachers and the ultimate responsibility of the leadership (Bryman & Lilley, 2009). The teachers as leaders are responsible in nurturing the students' behavior and developing their capabilities to face challenges in their academic and professional lives (Graham & Antony, 2017). Consequently, the role of teachers is as important as the role of leadership in the universities as the ranking and success of the universities are dependent upon the effective role of leadership supported by the efficient role of the teachers.

The emotional intelligence represents intellectual capabilities of employees to adjust themselves in recent times of uncertainties due to economic and technological changes (Zhao, Tan, Gao & Wang, 2019). In this respect, numerous dynamic factors are responsible to maintain the emotional balance of employees like trust in leadership, psychological contracts along with the information and communication technologies, performance management thereby eliminating the employees' apprehensions at the workplaces (Yvonne & Shelley, 2004). Similarly, leading people in diverse situation needs the extraordinary abilities and skills from leaders in making employees emotional balanced, stable and intelligent (Zarch, Marashi & Raji, 2014). The emotionally intelligent employees are likely to have strong will towards institutional vision, readiness toward institutional mission and dedication towards the attainment of the institutional objective more carefully and effectively. However, the emotional balance is likely to be affected through politics within the institutions.

TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The transactional leaders' effective attributes comprise the management by exception active and passive wherein the leaders sometimes remain active while sometimes remains passive based upon the situations (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008). The leaders' abilities to cope with the situation directly tells upon the effectiveness of the concerned leadership. The leadership is thus critical in determining the attitude and

responses of workforces in diverse situation and manners and thus active towards considering workforces apprehensions at workplaces (Nasser & Aini, 2016). These leaders are active in managing the employees worries and stress at workplaces thus providing them suitable support when required by the concerned employees (Dai, Chen & Wu, 2013). The leader tries to maintain the trust of the employees and try to reduce their apprehensions towards their professional affiliation that make them inspired and committed (Silva & Mendis, 2017). The leaders are much focused on the exchanged relationships wherein the rewards and punishments are exchanges based upon the level of efforts and potentials for chasing the assigned tasks and responsibilities. The rewards and punishments are basically contingent on the efforts and potentials that concerned employees show while chasing institutional tasks (Bass & Avolio, 1993). The leaders' effective behavior is critical in determining the institutional success in prolonged manners in competitive environment.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

The stress is natural in the organizational context as each employee face different difficulties in managing their assigned tasks in diverse working environments which is main responsibility of the leadership in institutions to provide the conducive environment where the employees can show their utmost performance towards the achievement of institutional strategic goals (Lyons, & Schneider, 2009). The employees' stress when not handled properly, it may lead the employees towards lower performance and lead ultimately influences the institutional performance (Ryska, 2002). Employees when face complex situation wherein they are not able to perform effectively then it becomes the responsibility of the leadership to remove all the related discrepancies associated with assigned tasks to satisfy workforces to perform better and to achieve effectively (Shafieipour, Ghasemi, & Aslani, 2011). Therefore, main responsibility falls upon shoulders of leadership and management who are thus responsible for ensuring conducive environment. The occupational stress is critical for the workforces and institutions in diverse manners as it causes the lower performances on the part of workforces and causes lower achievements on the part of concerned institution (Zhang, Lepine, Buckman, & Wei, 2014). The stress brings along the physical and psychological problems along with anxieties, depressions (Mark, & Smith, 2018) and, physical fatigues and chronic angers which influences the workforces' efforts and potentials towards the achievement of assigned tasks and responsibilities.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The emotional intelligence mutual fundamentals that make it distinctive includes the use of intelligence for the understanding of ones' self, coping with demands, problem-solving, and capability to mature the desired relationships (Matthews, Zeidner, Roberts, 2002). Similarly, it is the learned facility to understand, recognize, experience, and express the human feelings in productive and healthy behaviors (Jaeger, & Eagan, 2007). Emotional intelligence is thus used in decision-making facility wherein the decisions are based upon intelligence by responding through emotional dimensions (Sanchez, Perez & Petrides, 2010). The emotions have been used as recognizing factor towards various organizational activities wherein the decisions are required for best interest of concerned organization and wherein desired outcome is shared for the best interest of concerned organization in contemporary and competitive environments (Alzyoud, Ahmed, & Pahi, 2019). The emotionally intelligent workforces are dire need of each organizations as organizations need the intelligent, capable and emotionally balanced workforces to attain their desired tasks more comprehensively. The intelligence is used to take the suitable decisions based upon the intelligence and emotions of the individuals for the best interest of the concerned organizations.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The positivism approach rests upon objectivism wherein researcher accepts reality as social actors in external environment. Similarly, consistent with the positivism philosophy, the researcher used well-designed methodology to collect measurable data that can be used for statistical analyses (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). The current study used abductive approach by following positivist paradigm. Thus, using survey (cross-sectional) data is possible only to observe design of relationships among research variables which is main theme of this study (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Hence, survey approach has been used in this study to collect data from respondents and analyze to examine relationships among research variables under study. The researchers have investigated different issues concerning the high education in Pakistan and especially with reference to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) with diverse outcomes by ensuring the importance of higher education for regional and national development (Khattak, Khan, Khan & Tariq, 2012). The sampling design first phase is to select the target population wherein the current study was based in examining the views of the faculty member in higher educational institutions in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which recommended that faculty are target population. In this regard, the purposive convenient sampling technique was used for the sample-size determination wherein sample (N = 270) was drawn using statistical formula (Yamani, 1967). Thus, 270 questionnaires were distributed among which 254 were recollected. The data was collected through structured questionnaire adopted from existing research studies like transactional leadership (Bass & Ayalio, 2004), occupational stress (Clark, Michel, Early & Baltes, 2014), and emotional intelligence (Li, Saklofske, Yan, Bowden & Fung, 2012). The data was analyzed through different procedures to reach the conclusion.

IV. RESULTS OF STUDY

The results obtained through descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, mediation analysis and test of significant have been presented in this section in order to make the accurate decisions (hypotheses acceptance & rejection) which thus helps in reaching the study conclusion. Thus, the results of present study have been presented in systematic manner to facilitate the audience in understanding the study outcomes.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Transactional Leadership	254	1.61	6.10	3.5571	0.92058
Emotional Intelligence	254	2.10	6.45	4.0512	1.03850
Occupational Stress	254	1.87	7.00	4.3263	1.28985

Table 2 Distribution of Normality Test

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Transactional Leadership	.141	-.276	.236	-.485
Emotional Intelligence	.141	.114	.236	-.392
Occupational Stress	.141	-.189	.236	-.394

Table 3 Collinearity Statistics

Model	Collinearity		Durbin-Watson
	Tolerance	VIF	
(Constant)			1.341
Transactional Leadership	.588	1.564	
Emotional Intelligence	.790	1.679	
Occupational Stress	.621	1.612	

Table 4 Reliability Statistics

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Transactional Leadership	12	0.709
Emotional Intelligence	12	0.868
Occupational Stress	12	0.798

H₁: Association among the Research Variables of the Study through Correlation Analysis.

Table 5 Correlation Analysis (H₁)

		TRS	EMI
Transactional Leadership	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.455**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	254	
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	.544**	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	254	254

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation has been used to examine the association among the research variables used in this study like the predicting variables (transformational & transactional) leadership styles, mediating variables

(emotional intelligence & organizational politics) and criterion variable (occupational stress). The hypothesis # 1 examined the association among variables through correlation. The results show significant association among the research variables likewise, transformational leadership and occupational stress (.765 & .000), transactional leadership and occupational stress (.544 & .000), emotional intelligence and occupational stress (.657 & .000), organizational politics and occupational stress (.746 & .000), transactional and transformational style (.417 & .000). Therefore, the correlation provides sufficient information about association between predicting, mediating and criterion variables of the present study under investigations.

Similarly, significant association has been evident between transformational and emotional intelligence (.527 & .000), transactional and emotional intelligence (.455 & .000), emotional intelligence and organizational politics (.611 & .000), transformational and organizational politics (.474 & .000), transactional and organizational politics (.583 & .000). The correlation also provides significant information about the association among the independent variables themselves and mediating variables themselves. The results of correlation provide diverse significant information about association among research which was hypothesized through hypothesis # 1. In this connection, as per results from correlation, the hypothesis (H1) is thus accepted and substantiated. Consequently, the correlation provides significant information for moving towards the regression.

H₂: Emotional intelligence significant mediates connection between transactional leadership and occupational stress.

First Mediation Step (a)

Table 6 Model Summary

R	R-square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4553	.2073	.8583	65.8924	1.0000	252.0000	.0000

Table 7 Coefficient of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.2243	.2324	9.5688	.0000	1.7665	2.6820
Transactional Leadership	.5136	.0633	8.1174	.0000	.3890	.6382

Independent Variable: Transactional Leadership
 Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

Second & Third Mediation Steps (b & c)

Table 8 Model Summary

R	R-square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7124	.5075	.8258	129.3436	2.0000	251.0000	.0000

Table 9 Coefficient of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	.1882	.2662	.7069	.4803	-.3361	.7125
Transactional Leadership	.4318	.0697	6.1939	.0000	.2945	.5690
Emotional Intelligence	.6424	.0618	10.3957	.0000	.5207	.7640

Independent Variable: Transactional Leadership and Emotional Intelligence
 Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

Fourth Mediation Step (c)

Table 10 Model Summary

R	R-square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5436	.2955	1.1767	105.7041	1.0000	252.0000	.0000

Table 11 Coefficient of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.6169	.2722	5.9410	.0000	1.0809	2.1530
Transactional Leadership	.7617	.0741	10.2813	.0000	.6158	.9076

Independent Variable: Transactional Leadership

Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

The second mediation model offered vital information about mediating role of the emotional intelligence in connecting transactional leadership and occupational stress. The mediation outcomes revealed results about essential process (four-steps) where first path (a) confirmed the prediction of emotional intelligence (mediator) through transactional leadership (predictor) where 21% change is witnessed in addition to significance values (Beta = .5136 and p-value = .000). The mediation third and second paths established the consequences regarding the prediction of the occupational stress (criterion variable) through transactional leadership and emotional intelligence (predictors) where 51% change is witnessed in addition to significant values (Beta = .4318 & p-values = .000 and Beta =.6424 & p-values = .000) respectively. The mediation third path exposed 30% change is due to transactional leadership in occupational stress in addition to significant Beta (.7617) and significant p-values (.000) respectively in the mediation procedure.

In deciding mediation, mediation all steps offered sufficient data where decrease in evident in Beta values from (.7617) in path = c (direct relationship) to (.4318) in b and c' (indirect relationship) and where the remaining paths in mediation process remained significant which revealed that emotional intelligence (mediator) mediated partially the relationship between the occupational stress and transactional leadership (also calculated as difference between c and c'), meaning that in predicting the outcome variable (occupational stress), both emotional intelligence and transactional leadership are effective. The mediation is also confirmed by normal theory test, where confidence level (.000 < 0.05) and total effect (.3628 > 0) that established the existence of mediation. Consequently, from first mediation model results that was hypothesized through (H₂) is therefore accepted, based upon the results and hence substantiated.

V. DISCUSSION

The higher education is the research context in this study which has been widely recognized as the significant sphere that is responsible for the socio-academic and socio-economic growth and development of developed as well as developing countries. The existing research studies explored various issues including the leadership and other significant phenomena is higher educational context with diverse information and outcomes (Knight & Trowler, 2001; Martin, Trigwell, Prosser & Ramsden, 2005; Bolden, Petrov & Gosling, 2008; Akhter & Sharif, 2012; Bakar & Mahmood, 2013). These studies examined various and challenges in context of higher education in order to find better solutions to various problems face by the higher education institutions. The higher education has been considered as vital actor for providing diverse expertise to diverse sectors which thus considered as future leadership for various organizations.

The transactional leadership style is that trait of leadership wherein leaders are focused on the tasks' achievement through exchanged behavior. The transactional behavior of the leader is contingent upon tasks' achievements wherein different transactional rewards are associated with the efforts and potentials of the followers. These leaders are effective in different situation and in this connection known as situational leadership as recommended by various researchers in the different studies (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Dai, Chen & Kuan, 2013; Prasad & Junni, 2016; Gale, Duffey, Gates & Peek, 2017). These leaders are most effective towards the transactional behavior wherein rewards and punishments are being offered to the workforces based upon their inputs and outputs towards the assigned tasks and responsibilities in institutions.

The occupational stress is widely researched phenomenon is different contexts as predicting and outcome variables based upon the nature of research studies. The literature revealed that stress is the main reason for lower commitment, lower performance and decreased motivation as it discourages the workforces towards chasing the institutional strategic tasks and objectives. In this connection, different researchers examined role of occupational stress in managing the institutional priorities in different situations (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield & Stough, 2001; Vasileva, Baird, Blair, 2011; Mark & Smith, 2018; Simons, Munnik, Frantz & Smith, 2019). The stress not only affects the professional affiliations but also influences

the social life of the workforces in diverse manners leading to higher level of the dissatisfaction and demotivation of the employees in institutions.

The emotional intelligence is significant phenomena that is widely recognized as significant predictor for managing institutional tasks. The emotionally intelligent leaders as well as employees are considered as backbone for institutional development and success as it inspires both the functionaries to manage the institutional priorities. The emotional intelligence has been widely researched in different context with different outcomes and consequences which are critical for the institutions in competitive environment (Mayer, Roberts, Barsade, 2008; Li, Saklofske, Bowden, Yan & Fung, 2012; Sánchez, Extremera, Berrocal, 2016; Zhao, Tan, Gao, Wang, 2019). In this connection, the sufficient evidence has been provided by existing research about the role of the emotional intelligence in managing institutional objectives.

VI. CONCLUSION

The association among the research variables were hypothesized wherein the results from the correlation confirmed the significant association among the research variables of study. The cause-&-effect relation was also hypothesized wherein the regression results confirmed and validate the relationship existence. The mediating role of mediators have been hypothesized through various hypotheses wherein the results provide sufficient information in reaching the mediation decisions. The group mean differences in respondents' responses were also hypothesized wherein the results from test of significance confirmed the desired connection. In this regard, this study confirmed the desired relationships as extracted from theoretical framework about relationships among research variables over different statistical procedures in order to reach the conclusion and to conclude the study systematically there following the required standards.

The first hypothesis was about the association among the research variables like leadership styles (transformational & transactional), occupational stress, emotional intelligence and organizational politics. The association among these variables was hypothesized and examined over correlation. The results of correlation confirmed the existence of association among research variables likewise, independent and dependent variables, independent and mediators, mediators and dependent, independent themselves and mediator themselves. However, the association was based upon the nature of research variables in order to provide the strength and direction in relationship. In this connection, based upon the correlation results, the first hypothesis was thus accepted and substantiated through the results of the existing research studies on similar issues in similar as well as diverse contexts with similar and diverse outcomes and consequences. The fourth hypothesis was about the mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting the transactional leadership and occupational stress and results from mediation procedure confirmed that emotional intelligence again significantly mediated the connection between transactional leadership and occupational stress and thus hypothesis was substantiated.

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