



THE MEDIATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BETWEEN TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GROUP MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF ACADEMICIANS IN HEIs OF KPK, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Group management skills including communication skills (CS), motivation skills (MS), change-management skills (CMS) and negotiation skills (NS) are supported by and support leadership styles of every member in the group of knowledge workers like academicians in a higher education institution like University. This obviously happens in every individual member of faculty that his/her transactional (TRS) and transformational (TRF) leadership styles cognitively and behaviorally affect his/her and others' CS, MS, CMS, and NS in the work environment. As per existing literature on the topic, TRF is expected to be heavily linked with these skills as compared to TRS. The current cross-sectional study measures the nature and weight of these connections among the knowledge workers like Faculty members who have to perform as leaders (every teacher is a leader for students, junior teachers, and administrative staff) as well as experts in the above mentioned organizational skills in daily affairs of the workplace.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Exchange of information and ideas is called *Communication* between the sender and the receiver. The sender and receiver can be individuals, groups, or organizations. This process occurs via one or another media - the message carrier. Communication denotes understanding that is possible only if the message is understood exactly as intended by the source (Logan & Leppa, 2001). Sender prepares a message made of words or symbols while keeping in view the level and attitude of the receiver. The receiver always perceives the message on the basis of his/her understanding, experience, as well as norms and values (Alfredson & Cungu, 2008).

Motivation is employees' readiness to carry out tasks in the organization with commitment. Some employees want to perform tasks but they are diverted and failed to work properly showing that they possess high desire but little dedication. Other employees work hard on their task but their

performance is not effective or remains below standard. They exhibit interest in work but they fail due to having lack of achievement motive (Whetten & Cameron, 2011). It is the duty of organizational management to work on such employees with unique motivational strategies. Corporate objectives can be realized only through managers with required motivational skills who can perform as successful team leaders by focusing on the diversity of individuals (Namvaran, et al., 2013).

Change management is the routine job of all the managers. Organizations constantly interact with the dynamic environment, which pressures the organizations to re-engineer, re-organize, right-size, and merge as needed. Likewise, to remain compatible with the environment, organizations keep on changing as per the demands of emerging work environments (Nikolaou et al., 2007). Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) like universities need faculty members who possess expertise in identifying change, understanding its dynamics and then make arrangements to stay in tune with the environmental demands and thus stay up-dated. Every faculty member is expected to play the role of catalyst or a change-agent for the successful execution of required change (Nickols, 2010).

Negotiation is the process of handling conflicts of workforce with each other or between management and workforce and no organization is an exception to this natural issue of work life. In this process, managers/leaders adopt multiple strategies however; the success of any strategy is anchored on how it is executed. The leaders first view the situation, understand all critical factors, bring all stakeholders on board and then sort out the solutions to conflicts (Alfredson & Cungu, 2008). It is also needed that conflict resolution must be in time and instant to help the institution or organization keep going. It also boosts the morale and job satisfaction of the faculty thereby increasing their sense of responsibility (Namvaran, et al., 2013).

Task-orientation characterizes transactional leadership style where the emphasis is on the workers' productivity, supervision, and realization of organizational goals (Maria, 2012). Such leaders demand agreement of workers with timely completion of tasks, work as per standards, work efficiency and effectiveness using reward-punishment tools (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). These types of leaders maintain the status-quo. The focus is on work and work-quality so ways and means are devised to improve task performance (Zumitzavan & Udchachone, 2014). These leaders are result-oriented in emergency situations where a reduction of possible losses and to minimize the damage to the organization is on the priority (Mohiuddin, 2017).

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate team members to give a unique and special performance in chasing the objectives of the institute. This style is expected to be very impressive where a leader works as a role model for the followers or team (Robbins et al., 2012; Zumitzavan & Udchachone, 2014). Such leaders inspire employees to get motivated for doing things to the best of potentials thereby becoming capable enough to handle challenging tasks to achieve the challenging objectives (Bhutto & Sheikh, 2017; Hasan & Rjoub, 2017). Further, the transformational leaders make all-out efforts to understand their team members, their positives and negatives and then hand over authority to them for doing their work on their own (Dartey-Baaha & Mekporb, 2017; Mohiuddin, 2017).

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

Research philosophy is the base of any research methodology. Researcher's belief in one or another philosophy of research determines which type of tools and techniques will be used for data collection and analysis. Current research follows 'Positivism' thereby using scientific methods to conduct research. As per positivism, verifiable facts and figures are knowledge (ontology) for which observable concepts are used to identify, record and communicate (epistemology).

2.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The research was started from a preliminary study of existing research to construct a Theoretical Model regarding the research issue to be verified from the field study with new readings from the stakeholders of the issue. The extracted model (using thematic analysis) guided the field study wherein first-hand data was collected through a structured questionnaire (extracted from the literature) from the subjects. Quantitative field data were analyzed statistically (by using SPSS-22) to verify answers (in the form of hypotheses emerging from the model) to understand the issue under consideration.

2.3 RELIABILITY

Table 1 shows the reliability scores of the six variables used in this study. The reliability is measured by using the Cronbach's Alpha, where each variable passes the reliability test by scoring > 0.7. Thus, it is established that the instrument (questionnaire) is good to obtain reliable responses.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Variables	n	Alpha-Score
Communication-skills	6	0.897
Motivation-skills	6	0.899
Change Management-skills	6	0.831
Negotiation-skills	6	0.853
Transactional-leadership	6	0.855
Transformational- leadership	7	0.783
Questionnaire	43	0.969

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 LEADERSHIP STYLES

a. Transactional Leadership Style (TRS)

Transactional leaders are characterized by going with the cookbook – following documented rules and regulations with no elasticity. Transactional leaders don't prefer to use mind freely and beyond the standards of behavior rather they follow the organizational codes of business. Performance-based rewards for the reinforcement of workers and penalty/punishment on bad performance are used as the order of the day (Maria, 2012). Rewards are in the form of praise, promotion, appreciation, incentives, awards, and gifts (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). While, penalties like wage-cut, suspension, explanation-call, demotion, and termination are commonly used by transactional leaders/managers including teachers (Dartey-Baaha & Mekporb, 2017).

In the context of Maslow's theory of needs-hierarchy, transactional leaders work at the physical level of satisfaction from needs. These leaders, therefore, operate at basic physiological needs of workers capitalizing on their economic commitment only (Maria, 2012). Such leaders use an

exchange model where every worker is treated on merit. The workers who perform as per specified standards, are rewarded and those who fail to do so are punished until the problem is resolved. It is notable that such leaders fit for completing specific tasks by handling every activity separately (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013).

b. Transformational Leadership Style (TRF)

Transformational leaders are more people-oriented where followers believe that their leaders possess unique competencies, determination, and persistence. These leaders give attention to the needs of each worker; guide them in solving problems with role-models thereby motivating them to be ready to face challenging situations (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Robbins et al. 2012). These types of leaders can change the workers into a team by respecting them as organizational human capital (Bhutto & Sheikh, 2017). They can change the organizational environment as aspired by the workers and give them the feelings of organizational ownership (Hasan & Rjoub, 2017; Mohiuddin, 2017).

Transformational leaders explicitly explain the organizational objectives before the workforce exhibiting determination and commitment to work with full attention. They try to enhance levels of motivation and morale of their followers using diverse tools (Bass & Riggio 2006) including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). These types of leaders plays role-models for their workers and assigns them challenging tasks for creating a sense of ownership and empowerment while working in the organization aculty (Mohiuddin, 2017).

3.2 GROUP MANAGEMENT SKILLS

3.2.1 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Skillful managers and employees never communicate in haste. They understand what information to give, to whom, and when. They believe in the credibility of a message to reduce the chances of misconceptions. They are also required to listen with head and heart and keep ensuring information sharing rather than just sending messages. They value the impacts of accurate, clear and credible information (Logan & Leppa, 2001). Effective communication is both a science and an art, and essential for every employee playing the role of manager or leader at any level of the organization. The science of communication is about what to communicate, as well as knowledge of the factors affecting the exchange of information (Jackson et al., 2007). How a manager/leader negotiates on employees' issues of pay, promotion, transfer, absenteeism, affects interpersonal relations. Good communication leads to effective relations while bad communication creates delay, confrontation, and de-motivation (Harris, 2012). For effective communication skills, managers require skills related to problem-solving, leadership, and team-building, conceptual and technical skills as well as human skills to understand the issues of team members (Lawrence, 2014).

3.2.2 MOTIVATION SKILLS

Motivation skills of teachers create a kind of class environment where every student maintains his/her interest. The effectiveness of teacher leaders is anchored on how they motivate learners in the teaching and learning mechanism (Kochhar, 2001). Demotivation is an intentional behavior demonstrated by over-expectations and misunderstanding of employees. Managers/leaders motivate their workforce through a work environment which creates feelings of security, protection, respect,

and ownership among the employees (Langan-fox et al., 2002). To motivate students for becoming independent/self-motivated learners, teachers give them timely feedback on performance; assign them tasks; help to understand different concepts; and provide a supportive environment for learning (Tella, 2007). Rewards on good performance play a role to motivate followers (Whetten & Cameron, 2011).

3.2.3 CHANGE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Classical research on change management focused on the systems and structure approach while neglected the human aspect. Therefore it was pointed out that management of most of organizations has been facing social problems in the implementation of changes. It is incumbent on the organizations, which are planning implementation of organizational change have to consider the role of committed and dedicated workers who are capable to accept the change and to successfully implement it (Nikolaou et al., 2007). The subject matter of managing change is studied in Economics, Public Administration, Business Administration, Systems and Industrial Engineering, and Behavioral Sciences (Nickols, 2010).

Teachers are the key elements in education, and their professional qualities play an important role in change management. Research shows that in this highly challenging environment only those organizations can remain competitive, which have the potential to adapt as per environmental inputs (Collinson et al. 2010). It is indispensable for the academic institutions and other organizations to recruit and train employees and enable them to work in a challenging environment. These employees must learn to be innovative and skillful to use new technologies, with self-motivation and be able lead the organization with updated knowledge and skills (Jašarević & Kuka, 2016).

3.2.4 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

The harmony and uniformity of an educational institution depend on the negotiation skills of academicians. Students are often confronted in a variety of conflicts with university administration as well as with other students. These conflicts emerge on account of unfriendly and rigid policies and practices of school administration or discriminatory treatment with some students (Rogers, 2001). To become an effective negotiator the teachers listen patiently, ask about possible solutions, and bring all the stakeholders on the page where everyone feels satisfied (Goldwich, 2009).

The changing and competitive work environments are creating multiple conflicts and issues regarding governance and employee-management relations. Therefore the workforce has to be more skillful and expert negotiators for handling the situation appropriately and diffuse the differences as per expectations of all stakeholders (Alfredson & Cungu, 2008). Negotiation skills are critical and demand fair, objective, and honest negotiators who also maintain the record of all negotiations. A successful negotiator brings all the parties to dialogue using common grounds and tries to capitalize on this opportunity by sorting out a solution best suitable for the interests of all the concerned stakeholders (Lawrence, 2014).

3.3 THEORETICAL MODEL

Following the theoretical model Figure 1, where Transactional leadership is the independent variable, the transformational leadership is the mediator and the group management skills

(communication skills, motivation skills, change-management skills, and the negotiation skills) are the dependent variables. Hypothesis testing are conducted for relationship of these parameters.



Figure 1: Mediation of Transformational Leadership between Transactional Leadership and Group-management Skills

4. FINDING

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 2 shows the frequency of male and female respondents belonging to Gomal University and Peshawar University. Table 3 shows the range, mean, and standard deviation of all the six variables used in this study.

Table 2: University * Gender Cross-tabulation

University	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Gomal University	74	35	109
Peshawar University	76	48	124
Total	150	83	233

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Communication-skills	233	1.40	5.00	3.963	.884
Motivation-skills	233	1.71	5.00	3.914	.804
Change Management-skills	233	1.83	4.83	3.796	.677
Negotiation-skills	233	1.67	4.83	3.836	.695
Transactional-LS	233	1.80	4.80	3.822	.639
Transformational-LS	233	1.86	5.00	3.798	.608

4.2 TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

H#1: Transactional and Transformational leadership styles are correlated with Group-management Skills. **(Accepted)**

Table 4: Correlations of Predictor with Criterion-variables

n=233		CS	MS	CMS	NS	Trans
Transactional	r	.659**	.689**	.623**	.778**	1
	p	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	
Transformational	r	.760**	.831**	.713**	.819**	.823**
	p	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001	< 0.001

In Table 4, both the transactional and transformational leadership styles are significantly correlated with the group-management skills (Communication skills, Motivation skills, Change-management skills, and Negotiation skills). However, the correlation of transformational leadership

is stronger with the Group-management skills as compared to the correlation of Transactional leadership with Group-management skills. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted as True that the Transactional and Transformational leadership styles are correlated with Group-management skills.

a. Mediation – 1 (TRS [TRF] CS)

H#2: Transformational leadership mediates between Transactional leadership and Communication skills. **(Accepted / Full Mediation)**

Table 5: Effects of TRS on TRF

Model	R	R ²	Adj R ²	Std. E	F	Sig.
1	.823a	.677	.676	.346	484.610	< 0.001b

In Table 5, it can be seen that the R² value is .677 showing the overall effect of Transactional leadership on the Transformational leadership, with the p-value less than 0.001. Thus, Transactional leadership has significant effects on Transformational leadership (path ‘a’ is significant).

Table 6: Beta statistics of TRS on TRF

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.803	.138		5.823	< 0.001
	Transactional	.784	.036	.823	22.014	< 0.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), TRS b. Dependent Variable: Transformational

Table 6 shows that Transactional leadership has the β value .784, which means that .784 SD change can be brought in the Transformational leadership due to 1 SD change in the Transactional leadership.

Table 7: Effects of TRS on CS (without and with Mediator TRF)

M	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. E	Change Statistics					F	Sig.
					R S Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change		
1	.659a	.435	.432	.666	.435	177.515	1	231	<0.001	177.515	<0.001b
2	.762b	.581	.577	.575	.147	80.464	1	230	<0.001	159.522	<0.001c

In Table 7, it can be seen that in Model 1 (M 1), the effect of Transactional leadership on Communication skills is R² = .435. But in Model 2 (M 2) there is a greater effect of both Transactional leadership (Independent variable) and Transformational leadership (Mediator) on Communication skills (i.e., R² = .577), which clearly shows the role (effect) of the mediator on Communication skills.

Table 8: Beta Statistics of TRS and TRF on CS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.476	.265		1.792	.074
	Transactional	.912	.068	.659	13.323	< 0.001
2	(Constant)	-.311	.245		-1.270	0.206
	Transactional	.145	.104	.105	1.394	0.165
	Transformational	.979	.109	.674	8.970	< 0.001

c. Predictors: (Constant), TRS, TRF; Dependent Variable: **Communication Skills**

Table 8, it can be observed that in Model 1, the Transactional leadership has Beta (β) weight .912 with p-value less than 0.001. However, in Model 2, the role of Transformational leadership (Mediator) is quite dominant with p-value less than 0.001, β weight .979, and it undermines the effect of Transactional leadership (by reducing its β weight from .912 to .145) and makes it insignificant (p-value increases from < 0.001 to 0.165). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted as true and it is concluded

that there is full mediation of Transformational leadership on the relationship between Transactional leadership and Communication skills.

b. Mediation – 2 (TRS [TRF] MS)

H#3: Transformational leadership mediates between Transactional leadership and Motivation skills. **(Accepted / Full Mediation)**

Table 9: Effects of TRS on MS (without and with Mediator TRF)

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error	Change Statistics					F	Sig.
					R S Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change		
1	.689a	.474	.472	.585	.474	208.523	1	231	<0.001	208.523	<0.001b
2	.831b	.690	.687	.450	.216	160.040	1	230	<0.001	256.064	<0.001c

In Table 9 Model 1 (M 1), the effect of Transactional leadership on Motivation skills is $R^2 = .474$. But in Model 2 (M 2) there is a greater effect of both Transactional leadership (Independent variable) and Transformational leadership (Mediator) on Motivation skills (i.e., $R^2 = .690$), which clearly shows the role (effect) of the mediator on Motivation skills.

Table 10: Beta Statistics of TRS and TRF on MS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.599	.233		2.574	.011
	Transactional	.867	.060	.689	14.440	< 0.001
2	(Constant)	-.269	.192		-1.403	0.162
	Transactional	.020	.081	.016	.250	0.803
	Transformational	1.081	.085	.817	12.651	< 0.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), TRS, TRF. b. Dependent Variable: **Motivation Skills**

In Table 10 Model 1, the Transactional leadership has Beta (β) weight .867 with p-value less than 0.001. However, in Model 2, the role of Transformational leadership (Mediator) is dominant with a p-value less than 0.001, β weight 1.081 and it undermines the effect of Transactional leadership (by reducing its β weight from .867 to .020) and makes it insignificant (p-value increases from < 0.001 to 0.803). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted that there is full mediation of Transformational leadership on the relationship between Transactional leadership and Motivation skills.

c. Mediation – 3 (TRS [TRF] CMS)

H#4: Transformational leadership mediates between Transactional leadership and Change-management skills. **(Accepted / Full Mediation)**

Table 11: Effects of TRS on CMS (without and with Mediator TRF)

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error	Change Statistics					F	Sig.
					R S Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change		
1	.623a	.388	.385	.53062	.388	146.355	1	231	<0.001	146.355	<0.001b
2	.716b	.513	.509	.47442	.125	58.968	1	230	<0.001	121.025	< 0.001c

In Table 11 Model 1 (M 1), the effect of Transactional leadership on Motivation skills is $R^2 = .388$. But in Model 2 (M 2) there is a greater effect of both Transactional leadership (Independent variable) and Transformational leadership (Mediator) on Change-management skills (i.e., $R^2 = .513$), which clearly shows the role (effect) of the mediator on Motivation skills.

Table 12: Beta Statistics of TRS and TRF on CMS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.274	.211		6.028	< 0.001
	Transactional	.660	.055	.623	12.098	< 0.001
2	(Constant)	.718	.202		3.548	< 0.001
	Transactional	.117	.086	.111	1.368	0.173
	Transformational	.692	.090	.622	7.679	< 0.001

c. Predictors: (Constant), TRS, TRF. b. Dependent Variable: **Change Management Skills**

In Table 12, it can be observed that in Model 1, the Transactional leadership has Beta (β) weight .660 with the level of significance (p-value) less than 0.001. However, in Model 2, the role of Transformational leadership (Mediator) is dominant with a p-value less than 0.001, β weight .692 and it undermines the effect of Transactional leadership (by reducing its β weight from .660 to .117) and makes it insignificant (p-value increased from < 0.001 to 0.173). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted as true and it is concluded that there is full mediation of Transformational leadership on the relationship between Transactional leadership and Change-management skills.

d. Mediation – 4 (TRS [TRF] NS)

H#5: Transformational leadership mediates between Transactional leadership and Negotiation skills. (**Accepted / Partial Mediation**)

Table 13: Effects of TRS on NS (without and with Mediator TRF)

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error	Change Statistics					F	Sig.
					R S Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change		
1	.778a	.605	.603	.43784	.605	353.379	1	231	<0.001	353.379	<0.001b
2	.839b	.704	.701	.37968	.099	77.187	1	230	<0.001	273.557	<0.001c

In Table 13, it can be seen that in Model 1 (M 1), the effect of Transactional leadership on Motivation skills is $R^2 = .605$. But in Model 2 (M 2) there is increased effect of both Transactional leadership (Independent variable) and Transformational leadership (Mediator) on Change-management skills (i.e., $R^2 = .701$), which clearly shows the role (effect) of the mediator on Motivation skills.

Table 14: Beta Statistics of TRS and TRF on NS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.602	.174		3.455	.001
	Transactional	.846	.045	.778	18.798	< 0.001
2	(Constant)	.093	.162		.577	.565
	Transactional	.349	.069	.321	5.087	< 0.001
	Transformational	.634	.072	.555	8.786	< 0.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), TRS, TRF. b. Dependent Variable: **Negotiation Skills**

In Table 14, it can be observed that in Model 1, the Transactional leadership has Beta (β) weight .846 with the level of significance (p-value) less than 0.001. However, in Model 2, the role of Transformational leadership (Mediator) is dominant with a p-value less than 0.001, β weight .634 and it reduces the effect of Transactional leadership (by reducing its β weight from .846 to .349), but its p-value still remains significant, i.e., < 0.001. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted as true and it is concluded that there is partial mediation of Transformational leadership on the relationship between Transactional leadership and Negotiation skills.

5. CONCLUSION

Whatever is the leadership style, employees need communication, motivation, change management, and negotiation skills to perform their work in a group work environment. However, their need is assumed to be more fundamental under TRF type of leadership. Under TRS the role of these skills is assumed lesser or secondary as in public sector organizations where TRS prevails more powerfully than any other style.

In the background of public sector organizations in developing countries, assuming TRS as the determinant of all above-mentioned management skills, TRF was tested for its role as mediator. The results verify the assumptions except on negotiation-skills where both TRS and TRF have been found equally supportive. There is full mediation of TRF between CS, MS, CMS, and the TRS, showing the transformational behavior of leaders influencing the transactional leadership style.

Summarized findings are

1. Transformational leadership is getting dominant among faculty members in higher education institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
2. A transactional style is equally operative and in practice in the public sector due to the dominance of this style in almost all public sector organizations.
3. Transformational style is, however, creating an environment of communications, motivations and change management more noticeably.
4. Surprisingly, negotiation skills nourishing on both TRF and TRS. The partial mediation of TRF between TRS and NS reveals that in the current work environment both styles are supportive to NS.

6. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The used or generated data and the result of this study are available upon request to the corresponding author.

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