



Influence of Job Engagement on Transformational Leadership Style and Organizational Performance

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ABSTRACT

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In recent years, job engagement has received considerable attention among academic community and business professionals. Still such issue needs to be prioritized in the research especially as it is an essential antecedent of organizational performance. This study aims at examining the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance and to explore whether job engagement can influence on this relationship. Study data were collected from the employees working in a mobile phone company in Bangladesh and collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 20. In order to test the study hypotheses Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used. The result of measurement model indicates that the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance is statistically significant. In terms of mediation effects, job engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance.



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1. Introduction

Job engagement has become a thought-provoking topic among the academic researchers in recent years (Mohamed et al., 2020; Rabiul & Yean, 2021; Adil & Khan, 2020). Job engagement is consistently found to be the key antecedent of organizational performance (Albrecht et al., 2018; Attridge, 2009; Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Adil & Khan, 2020). Empirical evidences also have supported job engagement as the precursor of organizational performance (Bhatti et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2018). Engaged employees work with their physical energy, emotional energy, and affective energy with dedication (Albrecht et al., 2018; Kaya & Karatepe, 2020; Adil & Khan, 2020; Truss et al., 2013).

Although job engagement has huge advantages for the organizations, worldwide engagement stays between 13%-15% over the last decade (Gallup, 2013, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Harter, J., n.d.; Royal, 2019). In South Asian countries also facing engagement problem, such as 13% in India (Chaturvedi & Rajgarhia, 2018) and 14% in Bangladesh (Gallup, 2017a, 2019). Besides, strong hierarchical cultural countries such as Bangladesh has the lowest level of job engagement which is 6% only (Gallup, 2017b). To understand the fact, we further interviewed a total of 55 human resources (HR) managers from the service sector including banking sector, information technology sector, and the hospitality sector. All the managers were very concern about employees' job engagement and their customer service performance (Al Mahmud, 2020). They stated that employees just work to survive in the job and provide service to customers to fulfil the minimum requirements. Therefore, it is urgent to further investigate how to increase job engagement and consequently leads to organizational performance, specifically in the context of Bangladesh.

Previous studies have shown that job engagement is influenced by the human resources practices and leadership styles in Bangladesh (Akter et al., 2020; Rabiul & Yean, 2021). However, their studies were conducted in the banking sector and hospitality sector. Additionally, the mediating effect of job engagement on the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance has been evident by other researchers in other contexts (Olajide, 2018). However, very limited study conducted in the information technology sector, specifically the mobile company. Therefore, this study aims to understand the mediating effects of job engagement between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Particularly, transformational leadership, described as the style of leadership that transforms followers to explore above their own-interest to perform better is currently the most widely acknowledged paradigm in the study of leadership (Alom, Patwary, & Khan, 2019; Buil et al., 2019; Lai et al., 2020; Rabiul & Yean, 2021).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses development

2.1. Relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance.

Transformational leadership style refers to an approach by which leaders inspire followers to perform beyond expectations and thus transformational leadership plays a crucial role in organizational performance (Buil et al., 2019; Safiullah, 2015). Empirical evidence suggests that transformational leadership is one of the more effective leadership styles for encouraging positive in-role and extra-role behaviors (Mackenzie et al., 2001). Researchers also found that good leadership capacity is more likely to improve the performance level and to draw the organization's workers to give their best. Conversely, ineffective leadership will restrict the organization performance (Hersona & Sidharta, 2017; Mohamed & Patwary, 2020). Scholars observed leadership as getting people to do things they have never thought of doing, or that they do not want to do and do not believe are possible (Taylor, A., Santiago, F., Hauer, J., Hynes, R., & Mickahail, 2019). Other researchers have considered leadership style as a factor in the organization professed to influence the organizational performance of public organizations (Patwary, 2020). Moreover, this type of leadership encourages followers to rise above their own self-interest; provide feedback and establish high standards of performance (Bass et al., 1996). More precisely, transformational leadership motivates employees to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming their attitudes, beliefs, and values (Patwary, 2017; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). As a result, transformational leadership can improve organizational performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H₁: There is a positive significant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance.

2.2. Relationship between job engagement and organizational performance

Previous research has investigated that through the level of engagement employees repay their organization (Karatepe et al., 2018; Patwary, & Omar, 2016; Patwary, Omar & Tahir, 2020). (May, Gilson and Harter (2004) also found engagement closely related to performance. As understood by Schroeder and Modaff (2018), individuals feel an obligation to respond in caring and repay the organization when they feel engaged in the organization they work for. A minimum quit tendency and greater attachment to the organization are found among the engaged employees (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006) who ultimately contribute to the organizational performance. Further research by the academics and consulting organizations have provided substantive evidence on the positive outcomes of engagement. A large-scale Gallup (2013) research which examined 49,928 business or work units and covering about 1.4 million employees in 192 organizations, across 49 industries, in 34 countries, concluded that engagement with job strongly relates to organizational performance. Thus, job engagement is related with organizational performance (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Apart from this, Truss et al. (2013) confirmed, engaged employees are less likely to leave their employer and thus job engagement is able to increase effectiveness, improve performance and provide better business results in the organization. Empirical evidence also suggests that the presence of high levels of employee engagement enhances job performance (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Furthermore, engaged employees

are likely to have a greater emotional attachment towards their organization (Patwary, & Fauzan, 2020; Truss et al., 2013).

Empirical studies also suggest that with high levels of engagement both operating margin and net profit margins increased, whereas, these measures reduced over a three-year period in the organizations due to low engagement (Antony, 2018). Thus, looking into all previous studies it is posited that there is a significant relationship between job engagement and organizational performance and accordingly following hypothesis is developed as follow:

H₂: There is a positive significant relationship between job engagement and organizational performance.

2.3. Job engagement influences the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance

In recent years, empirical studies have found that transformational leadership styles is associated with higher job engagement (Breevaart et al., 2014). Job engagement is regarded as positive perception due to appropriate leadership style (Buil et al., 2019). Again, job engagement has positive influence on performance (Anitha, 2014). More results of alike studies also indicated that job engagement is related to organizational performance (Salanova et al., 2005). Similarly, Hayati et al. (2014) aimed to determine the effects of transformational leadership and its components on job engagement among hospital nurses and the findings indicated that transformational leadership had a significant and positive impact on job engagement. To add more, Saks (2006) observed the mediating effect of job engagement in his findings. Rich et al. (2010) also demonstrated the mediating effect of job engagement with organizational performance in their study. The influencing role of job engagement on the relationship between leadership style and organizational performance has been evident further by the researchers (Kovjanic et al., 2013).

Moreover, Bass et al. (1996) argued that transformational leadership style motivates followers to overcome their self-interest and to put effort into their assigned goals and tasks. By inspiring and supporting the followers, providing challenges, being optimistic about the future, and acting as a role model, transformational leaders enhance followers' involvement in and identification with their goals and tasks. Consequently, as demonstrated by previous research, leadership enhances organizational performance as a whole (Judge & Piccol, 2004) through the influencing effect of job engagement. Accordingly, it is posited that job engagement significantly influences the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance. Based on this, the following hypothesis is developed:

H₃: Job engagement influences the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance.

The research framework 1 for this study presents below.

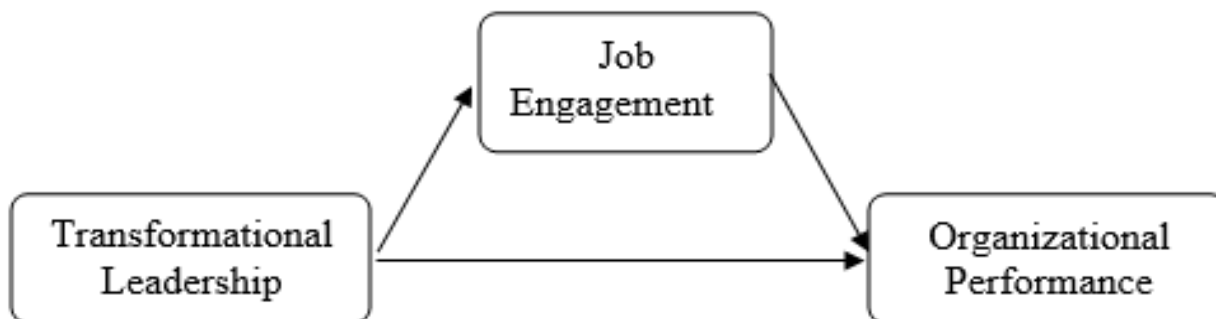


Figure 1: Research framework

The main objective of this study was to explore the mediating effect of job engagement on the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance exclusively in government-owned mobile phone company in Bangladesh.

3. Methodology

This study has adapted a cross-sectional survey design for collecting data using five-point Likert scale (strongly agree=5 to strongly disagree=1). As suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2013), survey research questionnaire is widely used method for obtaining data from a large number of respondents. Specifically, this study was conducted in a mobile phone company in Bangladesh and data was collected through structured questionnaire method.

3.1. Sample Design & Sampling

In order to draw the samples this study adopted the convenience sampling technique (Sarstedt et al., 2018). In this study, sample size was determined on the basis of the sample size rule of thumb mentioned by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). A total of 556 structured questionnaires were distributed to the respondents where, 306 questionnaires were returned. We selected 10 presentative to distribute data directly to employees instead of through HR managers that minimise the biasness. Because employees may afraid of providing their opinions if HR managers ask them to fill up questionnaires. All representatives were trained by the researchers that they can answer the questions if employees required. The questionnaires were in open envelope and requested to close it when they return them. No name or personal information was asked in the questionnaires for ensuring the anonymity. Among them, 87 were returned incomplete and 219 (40 percent) questionnaires received were usable. This rate is considered sufficient in the light of the argument of previous studies (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, Black, 1998; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014; Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2017) that a 30-50% percent response rate is suitable for the survey study.

3.2. Measurement

This study applied existing measurement scales. The survey questionnaire comprises four sections like transformational leadership style, job engagement, organizational performance and demographic information of the respondents. A total of 20 items for transformational leadership style (Bass & Avolio, 1990), 17 items scale representing job engagement (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002), and 16 items for organizational performance have been used in the study. Demographic information of the respondents has been included in the last section.

3.3. Analytical Strategy

Study questions and variables are considered as the basis for selecting data analysis methods (Burd et al., 2020). For examining the hypotheses of the constructs established on the foundation of the literature review several analyses techniques have been used in this study. The preliminary analyses such as demographic profile of the respondents and multicollinearity have been conducted using SPSS 20 version software (Shrestha, 2020). For better understanding of the hypothesized relationships, this study has conducted partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) by using Smart PLS 3.0 version software. Study data are presented analytically in a descriptive format. However, the analysis has been conducted to satisfy the research questions that generated four hypotheses that are linked with the endogenous and exogenous variables.

4. Results

With a view to attaining the hypothesis (H_1), which predicted a positive relationship between the transformational leadership style and organizational performance was tested using the PLS-SEM method and the findings reveal that transformational leadership style and organizational performance is statistically significant ($\beta=0.130$, $t=1.724$, $p<0.042$). Similarly, the results between transformational leadership style and job engagement have revealed positively significant ($\beta=0.647$, $t=15.932$, $p<0.000$). Simultaneously, the relationship between

job engagement and organizational performance is statistically significant ($\beta=0.212$, $t=3.420$, $p<0.003$).

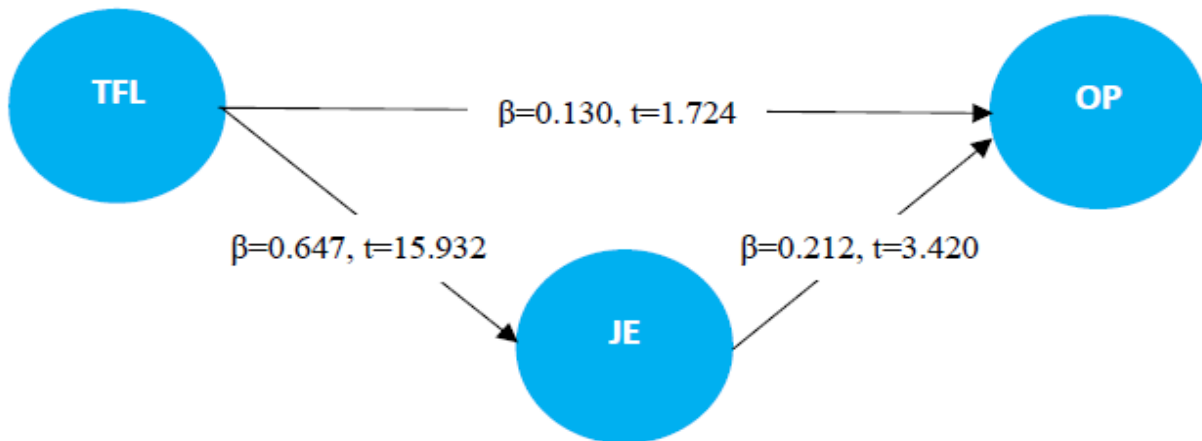


Figure 2: PLS-SEM structural model

According to (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017) the value of VAF in between 0.20 and 0.80 ($0.20 \leq \text{VAF} \leq 0.80$) represent partial mediation and the value of VAF 0.80 and above signifies full mediation (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). In this study, the result revealed that job engagement influences the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance partially ($DE= 1.724$, $IE=0.783$, $TE=2.507$, $\text{VAF}=0.31$). Thus, job engagement partially influences the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the study, in order to improving the level of the organizational performance the mobile phone companies can address the high level of job engagement. Additionally, the study findings clearly emphasize the application and importance of transformational leadership style to boost up organizational performance. Hence, by practicing such kind of leadership style organizations may be benefited in terms of their performance.

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