

The Impact Of Transformational Leadership On Innovative Performance, Moderating Role Of Leader Empathic Concern

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Abstract

Innovative performance has become a key aspect of the organizational success and survival. The accomplishment of the organizational success and survival is led by the leader. Accordingly, the study aimed to examine the role of the transformational leadership towards the innovative performance of the organizations. Additionally, the study aimed to test the moderating role of leader's empathic concern on the relationship between the TL and the innovative performance. 340 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents working in the software houses, Lahore by using the simple random sampling. Finally, 203 questionnaires were used for the data analysis. The study findings revealed that TL found to positively influence the innovative performance. Additionally, the study revealed that due to the empathetic concern the relationship between TL and innovative performance tend to decrease.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, leader's empathic concern, innovative performance, empathy, organizational performance

Introduction

Innovation economic theory addresses that, in order to boost up the results of innovation for economic development, there should be a proper room for innovation, knowledge and entrepreneurship operations(Scerri, 2020). The rapid and constant change in business competition has converted the innovation process in the last few decades. Due to such a situation of rapid change in competition, the internal resources of a firm along with internal capabilities have become inadequate for required

competition. To achieve the desired goal in such competition, the organization need external resources and chances by collaborating with external stakeholders like customers, suppliers, and research institutions etc.(Kaya, Abubakar, Behraves, Yildiz, & Mert, 2020)

To enhance competitiveness, innovative products play their role for the growth of the company. Innovative performance means introducing something new in market, new process system, or new gadgets into the market. Companies are supposed to be in better condition when they

innovate using internal and external resources of knowledge. Such dual embeddedness helps followers in gaining great potential. This combination of capabilities strengthens the competitive advantage through innovation (Yang, Wang, & Jiang, 2020; Taqi, e Ali, Parveen, Babar, & Khan, 2021). For attaining competitive benefits and long-lasting success of companies, innovative performance plays an integral part. For increasing productivity and enhancing economic conditions around the globe, countries rely on innovation (Seifollahi, 2018). In this era of increasing globalization, intense competition, and the increase in the war of day-to-day change in trends, the only way to grow globally is that if firms innovate (Chen, Chen, & Vanhaverbeke 2011; ul Mustafa, Abro, & Awan, 2021). In any organization, maintaining such processes which helps in enhancement of subordinate's performance is the responsibility of a good leader (Zahide Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2019).

Leaders provide their subordinates personal care, loyalty, and respect. They motivate their followers by providing them best assistance. In transformational management philosophy, it is a elementary assumption that a transformational leader treats every follower respectfully and take care of their needs. He acts as a mentor so that, his subordinates can achieve more and grow in better ways. The followers are tending to be more likely to do their work to increase learning, when a leader guides his followers as a coach to show some efforts to be innovative and creative by framing problems and approaching old situations in new ways. Furthermore, leaders help to instantly increase development and growth among subordinates which is advantageous for business when a leader pays special attention to their subordinates (Bilal Afsar, 2019; e Ali, Khan, Taqi, & Khan, 2021). (Munir, 2020) highlights the importance of TL saying that it enhances the existing human resource and it always helps to raise efficiency and spirit of working as much as

possible. However, TL is one of the suitable styles of leadership to motivate employees towards innovative performance (Awan, Abro, & Mustafa, 2021; Andriani, Kesumawat, & Kristiawan, 2018).

Empathic concern reflects the consequences of actions in term of how they affect others. Empathic concern has an emotional focus and concerns having empathy (Karianne Kalshoven, 2012). The innovative performance is highly characterized on empathy concern. If the leader show empathy on his employees, then the performance of the employees become innovative. In a highly empathic concern climate, the employees are inclined more towards the organization than to their selves. In the similar way empathic concern boost up the element of TL in the leaders and the leaders work and behave in a good and a positive environment. (Munir, Khan, Javed, e-Ali, & Zaib, 2022; M. Ministero, J. Poulin, E. K. Buffone, & DeLury, 2017).

Empathic concern defined as a degree in which behaviors like empathy and perspectives of subordinates are respected. Empathic concern is an important theory to study leadership. Some researchers have identified that leader's empathic concern is more important for team innovation (Septi Andriani, 2018). Leader's empathy has been viewed as empathy for and attunement to other feelings and situations. In several research, empathy has been declared as an important side for effective leadership. Where leaders realize their obligation to support, inspire and motivate their followers. For an organization's success, leadership with empathy or connections and links between leaders and their employees raise motivation and productivity (Svetlana Holt, 2017,). Many theorists have argued about the relationship between TL and innovative performance in an organization. Some theorists revealed that there is positive relationship between TL and innovative performance (ul Mustafa, & Nishat, 2019;

Bednall, Rafferty, Shipton, Sanders, & Jackson, 2018).

Empathy means understanding others mental conditions and someone's feelings. This is all about how leader or people relate with subordinates or others. According to research, empathy has been declared in relationship with organizational phenomena, like leadership emergence (Hoogh, 2012). Innovative performance of organization was ignored as, the nature of job is very hectic and stressful. Because of this, the employee lacks the innovation in his performance. Leadership plays a vital role in enhancing the innovative performance of the employees. In the presence of TL, the innovativeness of the employee increases and the employee feel positive in the organization. Furthermore, in the developing countries like Pakistan, leader's empathic concern is not a serious topic of the organizations. Organizations ignored the leader's empathic concern, because of this the innovativeness of the employees disturbed. However, in the presence of leader's empathic concern, it enhances the leadership style and boost up the innovative performance of the employee. Therefore, main objective of this research is to examine the relationships among variables and to examine the impact of TL on innovative performance while leader's empathic concern is playing the role of moderator.

Literature Review

TL (TLM)

The idea of the (TLM) was originally developed by (Burns, 2004). TL has attractive interest over the last few decades due of two trends. First, major global economic changes the early 1970's, in which numerous huge companies needed to make several fluctuations in their businesses, caused rapid changes that led to increase in the market.

The true style of leadership is measured such as TL, how will it effect organizational goals and behaviors so that new organizational goals can be achieved. TL is leadership that involves change within an organization. TL is categorized as leadership in need because of the need to motivate subordinates to achieve high-level of goals that beyond the scope of their interests. (Andriani et al., 2018).

The study suggests that the managers in TL are likely to motivate and encourage, their team members to make a revolution through innovation that will aid the growth and success of the organization. According to the research of preceding revisions, the (TLM) is the greatest valuable style as related to other guidance styles. In the TL style, the working of the subordinates is improved and developed, and the subordinates are encouraged, this improves their coordination with each other and results in better outcomes (Ali & Rasheed, 2021). In the TL style, the followers learn to be leaders by actively participating in bringing about change. Previous research has found, that TL can transform the status quo in the organization effectually by taking suitable actions at every phase of the procedure of change. the transformational leader will comprise a new vision about the future by using new plans if the previous ways are not appropriate (Andriani et al., 2018).

Leader's Empathic Concern

According to the study, the empathic concern is the capability of an individual to understand the point of view of the other individual and then react to the experience observed by that person (Wambsganss, Weber, & Söllner, 2021). According to this study, a leader's empathetic concern for employees in the leader's ability to understand and listen to other people. Empathy is related to listening, which is accepting and considering employees' suggestions, ideas, and opinions. The ability to listen allows leaders to better understand other people's situation by

putting them in their shoes. The leader's compassion and empathic concern makes him aware of, feels, the suffering of his followers and leads the leader to take action to alleviate the suffering and pain of the supporters (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2017).

Innovative Performance

According to the study, the capability of an individual to generate, ideas that are unique is an important aspect of the innovative performance of an employee because such out-of-the-box ideas are the basis of the innovative development of an organization. The innovative performance of an individual is likely to increase by creating a network in the workplace that will cover all structural weaknesses and this will enable the individuals to come up with more unique ideas (Carnabuci, DI ´ OSZEGLI, & Zurich, 2015).

Studies suggest that the business entities get most of the innovative ideas from their employees and sometimes from their clients as well. Information regarding different products and services is collected by the clients and then they provide that information to the business entities by describing their needs and requirements to the manufacturers, in this way innovation in the product and services is encouraged. Knowledge gathered from various sources increases innovative performance by speeding up the process of learning (Yang et al., 2020).

According to the literature of the previous studies, the impact of product development on a firm's economic performance is innovative performance. In a wide sense, a firm engages in three types of activities regarding innovation i.e., patents, R&D, and production of new products and new services, all these activities are considered pointers to evaluate the innovative performance. In narrow terms, the innovative performance is gauged by the new products and services (Kaya et al., 2020).

Recent studies suggest that in the innovation process networks and external sources of knowledge are considered highly important. Firms consider sources like suppliers, clients, technology organizations, and their rivals for generating new ideas, and hardly innovate without help and on their own. Open innovation may seem like it gives benefit by providing free ideas, but sometimes it causes negative effects because collaboration can be a cause of lack of secrecy regarding technologies and can also cause high cost for finding information (Chen et al., 2011).

TL and Innovative Performance

Previous research has identified that when we see the influence of TL on innovative performance, communication between the leader and his followers is considered very important, because the leader will understand his follower, and this will motivate him and increase his innovative performance (Suk Bong Choi, 2015). TL focuses on the unity and learning of the team this will positively effect, on the performance of team. Innovative performance is correlated to the high level of TL, and according to the study employees get encouraged by the high level of TL and their performance also becomes better than the expectations (Bednall et al., 2018).

TL, leader's empathic concern and innovative performance.

Innovative performance is an important element for the organization, because nowadays the main challenge faced by companies, is to bring innovation in their business. The companies must improve their existing products and should also bring new products to the market through innovative performance which will add value to their business. Leaderships play a key role for an organization innovative performance (Reuvers, Engen, Vinkenburg, & Wilson-Evered, 2008). TL is considered as the most renowned type amongst other leadership styles because TL

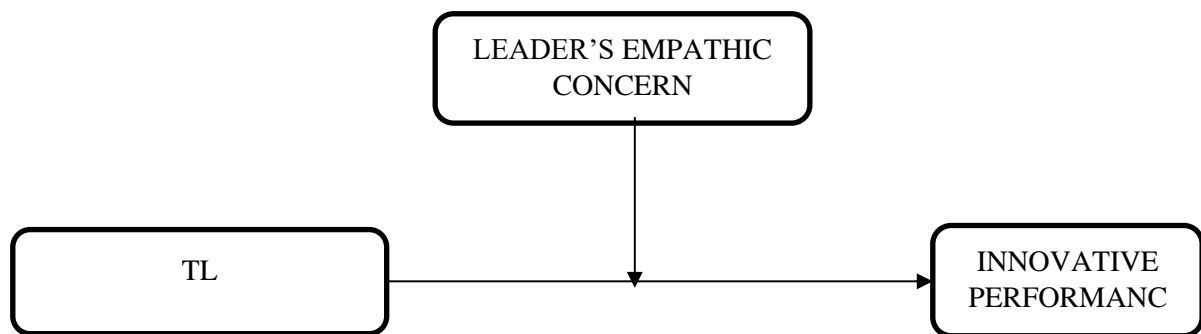
increases the capacity of the commitment of the employees in an organization as a result their innovative performance also increase(Moolenaar, Daly, & Slegers, 2010). According to previous studies, TL is a crucial indicator of the innovative performance of employees. TL has a positive and strong influence on the innovative performance of employees because innovative performance of employees is linked with the support and interaction with their leader(Pradhan & Jena, 2019). The leader’s empathic concern towards his team is also important to increase the innovative performance(Zak, 2020). In the TL style, the leader has more empathic concern for his employees, because of empathic concern leader will understand the problems of his team better

and will motivate, and encourage them due to empathic concern the leader tolerates the mistakes of his subordinates and guide them to develop their skills, this will increase the innovate performance and the employees will be able to achieve bigger goals of the organization(Andriani et al., 2018).

Hypothesis

- There is significant relationship between TL and innovative performance.
- Leader's empathic concern significantly moderates the relationship between TL and innovative performance

Theoretical framework



Methodology

This study was conducted during December 2020 to February 2021. A realistic, pretested self-administrative questionnaires designed on 5-point Likert scale was adopted by the researcher to measure the TL (Bass & Avolio, 1992) having the measure of 12 items, innovative performance (Janssen, 2000), 9 items measure was used and for leaders empathic concern (Davis, 1983) 7-items scale was used to collect data. A total of 340

questionnaires was floated among the employees of software houses and out of which 203 were received back. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis in SPSS 21. Process techniques designed by (Hayes & Preacher, 2013) was also performed in order to check the moderating effect of leaders empathic concern.

Results

Demographics

Table: 1

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percent
Gender	Male	154	75.9	75.9

	Female	49	24.1	100
Total		203	100	
Age	More than 20 to 25	41	20.2	20.2
	More than 25 to 30	59	29.1	49.3
	More than 30 to 35	57	28.1	77.3
	More than 35 to 40	18	8.9	86.2
	More than 40 to 45	6	3.0	89.2
	More than 45 to 50	21	10.3	99.5
	More than 50	1	0.5	100
Total		203	100	
Sector	Public	10	4.9	4.9
	Private	193	95.1	100
Total		203	100	
Experience	Less than 1 year	19	9.4	9.4
	More than 1 year	55	27.1	36.5
	More than 2 years	28	13.8	50.2
	More than 3 years	16	7.9	58.1
	More than 4 years	10	4.9	63.1
	More than 5 years	19	9.4	72.4
	More than 6 years	21	10.3	82.8
	More than 7 years	35	17.2	100
Total		203	100	

Table no.1 shows the frequency distribution of the data. The table suggest that 154 males and 49 females were participated in this survey. According to the percentage, 75.9% of the total respondents were males and 24.1% were females. Further, 41 of the participants were of 20-25years, 59 were of age 25-30 years, 57 were of 30-35 years, 18 were from 35-40 years, 6 were from 40-45 years, 21 were from 40-45 years and only 1 participant was above 50 years. 19 people participated have less than 1 year of experience, 55 people participated have more than 1 years of experience, 28 people participated have more than 2-year of experience, 16 people participated have more than 3-years of experience, 10 people participated have more than 4years of experience, 19 people participated have more than 5year of

experience, 21 people participated have more than 6year experience, 35 people participated have more than 7years of experience.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In the following table 2, the confirmatory factor analysis results are given. The results show that Cronbach's Alpha values of all the study constructs are greater than 0.70 which means that all the instruments of this study constructs are reliable. Further, factor loading value is greater than 0.5 and AVE is also greater than 0.5 which confirm the convergent validity criteria. Furthermore, this study constructs have CR value of greater than 0.80 which indicates the standard criteria of reliability.

Table 2

		IP	Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Innovative Performance	IP1	0.892	0.863	0.87	0.902	0.651
	IP2	0.788				
	IP3	0.751				
	IP4	0.7				
	IP6	0.884				
	IP6	0.884				
Leader Empathic Concern	LEC1	0.82	0.877	0.88	0.907	0.621
	LEC2	0.742				
	LEC3	0.848				
	LEC4	0.853				
	LEC5	0.719				
	LEC6	0.737				
TL	TL10	0.867	0.942	0.951	0.952	0.714
	TL11	0.75				
	TL2	0.907				
	TL3	0.91				
	TL4	0.849				
	TL5	0.807				
	TL9	0.81				
	TL1	0.846				

Discriminant Validity

While adopting the deductive approach and following the cross-sectional research it is mandatory to meet the discriminant validity criteria to confirm that variables are different

from one another. Therefore, the results in table 3 confirms that HTMT value of all of this study constructs is lower than 0.85 which confirms the discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table: 3 Path Coefficients

	HTMT		
	IP	LEC	TL
IP			
LEC	0.78		
TL	0.739	0.847	

The following table 4 shows the values for the path coefficients, explained variance, and t-

statistics. As per the results of the study R² is valued 0.513 which presents that 51.3% of total

variation in the innovation performance is explained by TL. TL significantly and positively ($\beta = 0.324$, $t = 4.546$, $p = 0.000$) influence the innovation performance. Furthermore, leader's

empathic concern found to reduce the relationship strength between TL and innovative performance ($\beta = -0.075$, $t = 2.931$, $p = 0.003$).

Table: 4 Path Coefficients

	Original	Standard	T Statistics		R-Square
	Sample (O)	Deviation (STDEV)	(O/STDEV)	P Values	
TL -> IP	0.324	0.071	4.546	0	0.513
TL*LEC -> IP	-0.075	0.026	2.931	0.003	

Discussion and conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to take a closer look at the relationship between TL and innovative performance and to check the moderating role of leader's empathic concern between TL and innovative performance. H1 proposed the relationship between the TL and innovative performance. The results show the direct and positive relationship between TL and innovative performance (Adel Tajasoma, 2015; Silke A. Eisenbeiss, 2008). Our study shows that by promoting the positive environment of TL, the innovative performance of the employees will increase. The employees love to work under the leadership of transformational leader. TL positively influence the innovative performance of the employees. Our findings also suggest that, the TL influence the employees to think broader, creative and innovative and provide them the enough confidence to perform well and beyond the expectations. This implies that when leaders behave positively, charismatically, empower their followers, the follower's innovative performance will increase. Similarly, the current study proposed the moderating role of leader's empathic concern between the TL and innovative performance. The results show that, leader's empathic concern moderates positively, weakly and highly significant between TL and innovative

performance. Study finds that leader's empathic concern weakens the relationship between the TL and the innovative performance. Reason for such results may be attributed to the low practice of empathetic concerns by the software house leaders especially in the private sector. Non-public companies are not playing their role for the betterment of their employees and there is a lack of proper leadership in the private sector companies. The other reason is, the data was collected from the few companies in Lahore and the data size was small. If the data size increased and the data firms increased for data collection, the results may go in the favor and will shows the strong moderating role between TL and innovative performance.

Limitations and future studies

the following limitations deserves mentoring. First, our field study was based on few software houses in Lahore and the data was collected from the limited number of respondents because of the limited time period and in only one time span. If the data was collected from the large number of respondents and in different time span, the results would be more valid. The sector selected for our study was software houses, other sectors such as educational institutions, banks and manufacturing companies can be selected as sample. Other variables can also be the part of the study such as, ethical leadership, employee innovative work behavior and knowledge sharing etc. other It remains to be explored that how these gender differences tackled in the organizations. The final limited is that, future research should explore, if supervisor's empathic concern deviates between different employees during different conversations or it remains the same with all employees. It may also address that how familiar the employees are with their supervisor; it may include the tenure of the supervisor and the communication style of supervisor. However, future research needed to explore the said limitations and the role of supervisor's empathy towards his employees.

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