

The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment: Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract—This paper aims to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment and to verify the mediating effect of job satisfaction on their relationship. The authors find the following conclusions through quantitative research. First, spiritual inspiration and idealization have significant positive effect on value commitment; second, intellectual inspiration, idealization and individualized consideration have significant positive effects on commitment to effort; third, individualized consideration had a significant positive effect on retention commitment; fourth, internal satisfaction and external satisfaction have a mediating effect on the relationship between spiritual inspiration and value commitment; fifth, internal satisfaction and external satisfaction have mediating effects in the relationship between intellectual inspiration and idealization and commitment to effort; sixth, internal satisfaction and external satisfaction have mediating effect on the relationship between individualized consideration and retention commitment.

Keywords: *transformational leadership, job satisfaction, organizational commitment*

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the application and display of influence, which can stimulate the will of members in a group and guide them to strive to achieve specific goals. From the perspective of traditional management, the leadership style of early managers paid more attention to the achievement of work tasks and goals, and emphasized the use of authority and system to coordinate and control the work of subordinates, who often acted as passive recipients of instructions or orders from the supervisor. Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson (2003) pointed out that today's organizations are facing rapid changes, resulting in managers having to have more adaptive and flexible leadership capabilities. Transformational leadership, also known as adaptive leadership, is the most popular leadership theory recently (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders work with their followers and help them understand problems, face challenges and adapt to them, provide creative solutions to complex problems, and develop leadership responsibilities that address broader issues (Bennis, 2001).

In addition, organizational commitment is one of the widely discussed dependent variables of organizational behavior. Organizational commitment is a firm belief in the organization's goals and values and a willingness to make significant efforts for the organization (Porter et al., 1974). At present, the business environment is changing rapidly and staff turnover rate is high. Therefore, it is important to strengthen employees' sense of identity and make them willing to make positive contributions to the organization. The theory of human resource management has clearly revealed that the supervisor is the most important role directly engaged in human resource management, and the supervisor's leadership style will have a decisive impact on the work attitude and behavior of subordinates. Job satisfaction is a kind of generalized personal reaction formed through work experience, which is a subjective feeling of personal inner psychology to the working environment, and leadership style is one of the important factors for employees to evaluate job satisfaction (Comm and Mathaisel, 2000). At the same time, many previous studies have confirmed that job satisfaction is an important determinant of organizational commitment (e.g., Young, Worchel & Woehr, 1998; Testa, 2001). To sum up, this study will explore the direct impact of transformational leadership on organizational commitment from the perspective of transformational leadership. Secondly, employee satisfaction is also included in this study to explore whether employee satisfaction has a mediating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

A. *The impact of transformational leadership on organizational commitment*

The concept of transformational leadership was proposed by Burns (1978), who believed that transformational leadership is a process of mutual influence between leaders and members. By making employees aware of the significance and responsibility of the tasks they undertake, leaders stimulate high-level demands of subordinates, so that employees can work for the collective interests beyond their personal interests. Many scholars further explore the

transformational leadership later, such as Bennis and Nanus (1985) defined transformational leadership as a leading subordinate and cultivate their ability to become a leader, it can promote employees to change the willingness and ability, make employees can respond to changes in the environment, and puts forward a future vision, inspire the motivation of employees. Yukl (2002) argues that transformational leaders build a cooperative relationship between their confidence in themselves and the confidence of their subordinates, and promote their subordinates to change their attitudes and develop their abilities by emphasizing their future vision and core organizational values.

Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999) and Antonakis (2001) used the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X; Avolio and Bass, 2002), and determined that the composition of transformational leadership includes four factors: first, idealized influence: leaders make subordinates feel admiration, respect and trust, and want to imitate leaders. Second, inspirational motivation: assign meaningful and challenging tasks to subordinates, and inspire and motivate the enthusiasm and optimism of individuals and teams. Third, intellectual stimulation: leaders stimulate innovation and creativity in their subordinates by questioning assumptions, redefining problems, and proactively giving new ideas and new ways of doing things. Fourth, individualized consideration: leaders care for employees' personal development needs and realize their potential based on their individual abilities.

Organizational commitment refers to the relative strength of organizational members' recognition of the organization, willingness to contribute to the organization and their desire to stay in the organization (Mowday et al., 1982), which shows that organizational members have emotional attachment to the organization. Previous studies have shown that when subordinates work with transformational leaders, they have more participation, satisfaction, empowerment, motivation and loyalty to the organization in the interaction process, and they are less likely to shrink back (eg: Bono and Judge, 2003; Walumbwa and Lawler, 2003; Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler, and Shi, 2004). Therefore, this study predicts that transformational leadership has a positive effect on organizational commitment of subordinates. For example, when a leader can gain the trust, respect and recognition of his subordinates, he also treats the supervisor as a role model, so as to promote his subordinates to accept the goals and values of the organization and devote more efforts to the organization. In addition, when leaders share their vision and strategies to inspire enthusiasm and optimism in individuals and teams, they increase their subordinates' commitment to the organization to accomplish challenging work tasks (Bass and Riggio, 2006). When leaders care about the personal development needs of their subordinates and tap their potential based on their personal abilities, they are more willing to contribute and expect to stay in the company. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis H1: Transformational leadership has a significant impact on value commitment.

- H1-1: Spiritual inspiration has a significant positive effect on value commitment.
- H1-2: Intellectual inspiration has a significant positive effect on value commitment.
- H1-3: The influence of idealization has a significant positive effect on value commitment.
- H1-4: Individualized consideration has a significant positive effect on value commitment.

Hypothesis H2: Transformational leadership has a significant impact on effort commitment.

- H2-1: Spiritual inspiration has a significant positive impact on effort commitment.
- H2-2: Intellectual inspiration has a significant positive impact on effort commitment.
- H2-3: Intellectual stimulation has a significant positive effect on effort commitment.
- H2-4: Individualized consideration has a significant positive impact on effort commitment.

Hypothesis H3: Transformational leadership has a significant impact on retention commitment.

- H3-1: Inspiration has a significant positive effect on retention commitment.
- H3-2: Intelligence inspiration has significant positive effect on retention commitment.
- H3-3: The influence of idealization has a significant positive effect on retention commitment.
- H3-4: Individualized consideration had a significant positive effect on retention commitment.

B. The mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment

Job satisfaction refers to the pleasant or positive emotional state obtained from work experience (Nelson and Quick, 2009). In general, the job satisfaction can be divided into intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction. Herzberg (1966) called intrinsic job satisfaction as motivation factors, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth and the work itself. Factors of extrinsic job satisfaction are considered hygiene factors, including supervision, working conditions, co-worker relationship, pay, business policies and procedures, job security, status and personal life.

Previous studies have pointed out that job satisfaction largely depends on the leadership style of managers (Barling et al., 2002). In view of the great differences in subordinates' personality traits and work demands, managers face great challenges in ensuring their subordinates' satisfaction, which also makes managers pay more attention to employees' job satisfaction than before. Employees who are more satisfied are more loyal to the organization, have a more positive

attitude towards their work, and are more efficient in their work (Haque and Aston, 2016). Many previous studies have shown that job satisfaction has also been proved to be an important antecedent variable of organizational commitment (eg, Young, Worchel & Woehr, 1998; Testa, 2001). In other words, employees with higher job satisfaction have stronger identification and sense of belonging to the organization. The authors believe that when managers adopt a transformational leadership style, they will first positively affect the internal and external satisfaction of their subordinates, and then the subordinates will identify with the organization, contribute to the organization, make greater efforts for work, and have stronger expectations to stay in the organization. Accordingly, the following hypotheses to be verified are proposed:

Hypothesis H4: Intrinsic job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership style and value commitment.

- H4-1-H4-4: Intrinsic job satisfaction mediates between (spiritual stimulation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration) and value commitment.

Hypothesis H5: Intrinsic job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership style and effort commitment.

- H5-1-H5-4: Intrinsic job satisfaction mediates between (inspiration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration) and effort commitment.

Hypothesis H6: Intrinsic job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership style and retention commitment.

- H6-1-H6-4: Intrinsic job satisfaction mediates between (spiritual stimulation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration) and retention commitment.

Hypothesis H7: Extrinsic job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership style and value commitment.

- H7-1-H7-4: Extrinsic job satisfaction mediates between (spiritual stimulation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration) and value commitment.

Hypothesis H8: Extrinsic job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership style and effort commitment.

- H8-1-H8-4: External satisfaction mediates between (spiritual stimulation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration) and effort commitment.

Hypothesis H9: Extrinsic job satisfaction mediates between transformational leadership style and retention commitment.

- H9-1-H9-4: Extrinsic job satisfaction mediates between (spiritual stimulation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration) and retention commitment.

III. METHOD

A. Sample and procedures

In this study, X Property Management Services Co., Ltd. was taken as the object of investigation. A total of 200 questionnaires were sent out, and 162 questionnaires were actually recovered, with a recovery rate of 81%. 10 invalid questionnaires were removed, and 152 valid questionnaires were returned, with an effective recovery rate of 76%. 52.0% of the samples were male and 48.0% were female. In terms of age, the majority of employees are 21-30 years old, 74.3% are 21-30 years old, and 17.8% are 31-40 years old.

B. Measures

Transformational leadership style is based on Bass's MLQ scale (1995) and developed by referring to Hou's (2014) scale. It is divided into four dimensions: first, spiritual inspiration, 4 questions in total, $\alpha = 0.784$; second, intelligence enlightenment, 4 questions in total, $\alpha = 0.739$; third, idealized influence, 4 questions, $\alpha = 0.821$; fourth, individualized consideration, 4 questions, $\alpha = 0.804$.

The measurement of organizational commitment is the organizational commitment inventory (OCI) developed by referring to Porter et al.'s perspective of organizational commitment (1974), and the revised scale of Hou (2014), which divides organizational commitment into three dimensions: first, value commitment, 5 questions in total, $\alpha = 0.742$; second, effort commitment, 4 questions in total, $\alpha = 0.778$; third, retention commitment, 5 questions in total, $\alpha = 0.723$.

Job Satisfaction is developed by referring to the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) and the revision of Chang (2015) paper scale. Job Satisfaction is divided into two dimensions: first, intrinsic job satisfaction, 12 questions, $\alpha = 0.882$; second, extrinsic job satisfaction, 6 questions, $\alpha = 0.780$.

In addition, in order to make the survey results of this study more stable, four control variables such as gender, age, education level and years of working in the company were also added.

C. Analysis

This study used multiple regression to verify the impact of transformational leadership on organizational commitment (H1-1--H3-4), and hierarchical regression to analyze the mediating effect of job satisfaction between transformational leadership and organizational commitment (H4-1—H9-4).

In addition, the questionnaires in this study were all completed by students. Therefore, after the questionnaires were recovered, Hannan's one-factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) was used to detect

whether common method variance was possible. In this study, factor analysis was performed on all scale items, and 9 factors could be extracted without axis rotation, which also did not contain comprehensive factors, while the explanatory variance of the first factor only accounted for 17.78%. Therefore, no serious common method variation problem occurred.

IV. RESULTS

Firstly, correlation analysis was conducted in this study. As shown in "Table I", all variables in this study were significantly positively correlated (.371-.666).

TABLE I. MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND INTERCORRELATIONS OF MAJOR VARIABLES

		Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1.	Gender	1.48	.50												
2.	Age	2.10	.49	-.06											
3.	Education	3.10	.72	.29**	-.08										
4.	Tenure	1.43	.49	-.03	-.12	.01									
5.	Inspirational motivation	3.20	.69	-.01	.01	-.15	.16*								
6.	Intellectual stimulation	3.40	.71	.03	-.07	-.03	.13	.60**							
7.	Idealized influence	3.34	.76	.06	-.11	-.19*	.24**	.59**	.53**						
8.	Individualized consideration	3.36	.74	-.03	-.10	-.13	.18*	.61**	.62**	.74**					
9.	Intrinsic job satisfaction	3.37	.63	.04	-.03	-.12	.21**	.64**	.65**	.73**	.80**				
10.	Extrinsic job satisfaction	3.41	.64	.01	-.09	-.12	.24**	.57**	.58**	.61**	.68**	.76**			
11.	Value commitment	3.45	.63	.05	-.09	-.06	.15	.57**	.54**	.67**	.63**	.78**	.75**		
12.	Effort commitment	3.49	.72	.01	-.03	-.15	.16	.57**	.58**	.63**	.66**	.75**	.70**	.71**	
13.	Retention commitment	3.50	.62	-.04	-.08	-.12	.26**	.44**	.37**	.55**	.60**	.64**	.67**	.63**	.67**

^a * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Then, the impact of transformational leadership on organizational commitment is verified. The results of multiple regression in "Table II" show that the influences of inspiration and idealization have a significant positive effect on value commitment ($\beta = .19$; $p < .05$; $\beta = .38$; $p < .01$). Intellectual inspiration, idealization and individualization

have significant positive effects on effort commitment ($\beta = .20$; $p < .05$; $\beta = .24$; $p < .05$; $\beta = .27$; $p < .01$). Individualized care has a significant positive effect on retention commitment ($\beta = .42$; $p < .001$). (H1-1, H1-3; H2-2, H2-3, H2-4; H3-4 established)

TABLE II. HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG VARIABLES IN THIS STUDY

DV→ β(p)	Organizational Commitment									
	Value Commitment					Effort Commitment				
IV↓	Model 1-1	Model 1-2	Model 1-3	Model 1-4	Model 1-5	Model 2-1	Model 2-2	Model 2-3	Model 2-4	Model 2-5
Gender	.08	-.01	-.01	-.00		.06	.00	.01	-.00	
Age	-.08	-.03	-.05	-.00		-.02	.05	.01	.05	
Education	-.09	.09	.07	.09		-.17*	-.05	.05	-.04	
Tenure	.14	-.03	-.05	-.07		.16	.01	-.01	-.03	
Inspirational motivation		.29***	.11	.12						
Intellectual stimulation							.25**	.14	.25**	
Idealized influence		.52***	.20**	.32***			.28**	.14	.22**	
Individualized consideration							.30**	.06	.14	
Intrinsic job satisfaction			.58***		.38***			.51***		.32***
Extrinsic job satisfaction				.51***	.51***				.40***	.51***
F	1.39	24.45**	35.93**	37.63**	48.26**	2.02	22.29**	26.09**	25.98**	37.39**
R ²	.04	.50	.64	.65	.67	.05	.52	.59	.59	.51
ΔR ²		.47	.13	.14			.47	.07	.07	

^a * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Based on Baron and Kenny's mediating influence confirmation condition (1986), this study examines whether the mediating condition of internal satisfaction and external satisfaction is true in order. Model 5 in "Table III" respectively show that idealized influence and individualized care have significant positive influence on intrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = .17$; $p < .01$; $\beta = .24$; $p < .01$; $\beta = .44$; $p < .001$). Intelligence inspiration and individualized care in model 6 had significant positive effects on extrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = .18$; $p < .01$; $\beta = .38$; $p < .001$). Secondly, it can be seen from the models 1-5, 2-5 and 3-5 in "Table III" that internal satisfaction has a significant positive impact on

the value commitment, effort commitment and retention commitment in organizational commitment ($\beta = .38$; $p < .001$; $\beta = .32$; $p < .001$; $\beta = .42$; $p < .001$). In addition, external satisfaction has a significant positive impact on value commitment, effort commitment and retention commitment ($\beta = .50$; $p < .001$; $\beta = .51$; $p < .001$; $\beta = .30$; $p < .001$). After confirming the above prerequisites for validating intermediary influence, the mediating effect of intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction between transformational leadership and organizational commitment was verified.

TABLE III. HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG VARIABLES IN THIS STUDY(CONT'D)

DV→ β(p)	Organizational Commitment					IJS	EJS
	Retention Commitment						
IV↓	Model 3-1	Model 3-2	Model 3-3	Model 3-4	Model 3-5	Model 5	Model 6
Gender	-0.00	-0.01	-0.05	-0.03		.04	.02
Age	-0.07	-0.01	-0.04	-0.01		.06	-.02
Education	-0.13	-0.07	-0.03	-0.02		.00	-.03
Tenure	.26**	.20*	.13	.10		.04	.09
Inspirational motivation						.17**	.18**
Intellectual stimulation						.24**	.11
Idealized influence						.44***	.38**
Individualized consideration		.56***	.22*	.25*			
Intrinsic job satisfaction			.44***		.42***		
Extrinsic job satisfaction				.48***	.30***		
F	3.52**	18.20***	19.89***	24.21***	24.79***	46.07***	21.43***
R ²	.01	.38	.45	.50	.51	0.71	0.52
ΔR ²		.30	.07	.12			

^a * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 ***p<0.001

The comparison of the models in "Table III" shows that intrinsic satisfaction has a completely mediated effect on the relationship between motivation and value commitment ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < .001 \rightarrow \beta = 0.11$, $p > .05$); Intrinsic satisfaction has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between idealized influence and value commitment ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < .001 \rightarrow \beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$) (H4-1, H4-3 are true); external satisfaction has a completely mediating effect on the relationship between spiritual stimulation and value commitment ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < .001 \rightarrow \beta = 0.12$, $p > .05$); external satisfaction has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between idealized influence and value commitment (H7-1,

H7-3 holds). Secondly, intrinsic satisfaction has a completely mediating effect on the relationship between intellectual inspiration, idealized influence, individualized care and effort commitment ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < .001 \rightarrow \beta = 0.14$, $p > .05$; $\beta = 0.28$, $p < .01 \rightarrow \beta = 0.14$, $p > .05$; $\beta = 0.30$, $p < .01 \rightarrow \beta = 0.063$, $p > .05$) (H5-1, H5-3, H5-4 hold); and external satisfaction has a partially mediated effect on the relationship between intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and effort commitment ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < .01 \rightarrow \beta = 0.25$, $p < .05$; $\beta = 0.28$, $p < .01 \rightarrow \beta = 0.22$, $p < .05$). In addition, external satisfaction had a fully mediated effect on the relationship between individual care and effort commitment

($\beta=0.30$, $p < .01 \rightarrow \beta=0.06$, $p > .05$) (H8-1, H8-3, H8-4 established). Finally, intrinsic satisfaction has a partially mediated effect on the relationship between individualized consideration and retention commitments ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < .01 \rightarrow \beta = 0.22$, $p < .05$) (H6-4 holds). External satisfaction also partially mediates the relationship between individualized consideration and retention commitments ($\beta=0.56$, $p < .001 \rightarrow \beta=0.25$, $p < .01$) (H9-4 is established).

V. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment and to verify the mediating effect of job satisfaction between the two. The results show that leaders are more receptive to organizational goals and values when they assign meaningful and challenging tasks to their subordinates, inspire and motivate their subordinates' enthusiasm and optimism, and set an example for their subordinates to follow. Secondly, when managers can guide subordinates to think from different perspectives and deal with things in innovative ways, leaders can make subordinates feel admiration, respect and trust, care about their personal development needs, and tap their potential according to their personal abilities, which can prompt subordinates to invest more efforts in the organization. At the same time, individualized care can also stimulate subordinates' sense of belonging and make them more willing to stay in the organization. Secondly, internal and external satisfaction mediates the relationship between partial transformational leadership and organizational commitment. This result reminds managers that they must pay attention to the needs of subordinates' health care factors and incentive factors, so as to strengthen the organization's identity, willingness to contribute to the organization and the sense of belonging that they want to stay in the organization.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study are affected by at least several limitations. First, the object of this study is limited to X Property Management Services Co., Ltd., and the results may only be applicable to employees of this company, so there are relatively large limitations in external validity. Secondly, in the process of data collection, some subjects may hold a defensive mentality when answering certain questions, and there may be arbitrary answers on the questionnaire, which may cause errors in the analysis results of this study. In the future, different industries can be analyzed and compared. On the one hand, it can establish the validity of the research on the attitude and behavior of the leadership style towards employees, and it can also better understand the problems and differences.

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