






# Impact of Leadership style on Employee Commitment in Public Sector

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**Abstract.** Workers tend to experience higher levels of contentment and dedication to their organizations when their leaders exhibit the courage to communicate a clear vision and articulate the mission within a friendly and pleasant working environment. It is advisable for leaders to embrace an open-door policy, fostering an atmosphere where employees feel encouraged to engage in discussions about work-related matters and other issues hindering their optimal performance. This research seeks to explore the correlation between leadership styles and organizational commitment, while accounting for the job satisfaction of frontline staff at Southern Railway's Chennai Division. The study focuses on a sample size of 775 participants, utilizing Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and leadership style while controlling for frontline staff's job satisfaction. Employees consistently desire leaders who excel at problem-solving, provide guidance, serve as role models through inspirational motivation and team spirit—essential elements for task accomplishment. This approach not only enhances extrinsic job satisfaction but also fosters active organizational commitment, positively impacting employee turnover. The study's findings indicate a positive partial correlation between organizational commitment and leadership style when factoring in the job satisfaction of frontline staff at Southern Railway.

**Keywords:** Leadership style, Organizational commitment, Job satisfaction.

## 1 Introduction

Leadership style encompasses the overall pattern of a leader's explicit and implicit actions as perceived by employees. This includes a sequence of managerial attitudes, behaviors, characteristics, and skills shaped by individual and organizational values, leadership preferences, and employee trust across diverse situations. The utilization of power by a leader is a defining factor in establishing their leadership style, which can be autocratic, delegative, or participative. Encouraging an open-door policy is crucial for leaders, fostering interactions with employees on work-related matters and obstacles hindering optimal performance.

This approach not only enhances extrinsic job satisfaction but also cultivates active organizational commitment, contributing positively to employee retention. Leadership development programs play a pivotal role in enhancing individual competencies essential for dynamic leadership behavior [2]. Participative leadership involves decentralizing authority, treating the leader and the group as a cohesive social unit. Employees are informed about job-related conditions and are empowered to express ideas, make suggestions, and take actions.

Different leadership styles can be broadly categorized. Autocratic leadership involves the leader independently solving problems or making decisions, often due to a lack of trust in subordinates' capabilities. Participative leadership seeks input from subordinates before decisions are made. Laissez-faire leadership grants employees authority in determining goals, with minimal managerial direction. Delegative leadership permits group members to make decisions, particularly suitable when relying on qualified employees. Directive leadership sets clear expectations and provides specific directions, emphasizing adherence to rules and regulations. Described as autocratic, task-oriented, persuasive, and manipulative, directive leadership style ensures adherence to established guidelines. Transformational leadership emphasizes mentorship and coaching, fostering change, innovation, and staff development within the organization.

## 2 Need for The Study

### 2.1 Transformational Leadership style and Organizational Commitment:

Elevated degrees of transformational leadership are essential to yield a favorable influence on both employee motivation and performance. The intricate integration and interdependencies demanded by the contemporary work milieu necessitate leadership surpassing the rudimentary transactional approach, instead embracing styles characterized by intellectual stimulation, inspiration, and charisma. Drawing on existing evidence, it is anticipated that such leadership will foster heightened levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, and subsequently, elevated motivation and performance within the organizational context. The five elements of transformational leadership styles, such as Idealized Influence (charisma) depict leaders who serve as exemplary role models for their followers. These leaders evoke deep admiration, respect, and trust, fostering a

strong identification with the leaders' goals, interests, and values. Inspirational Motivation involves leaders inspiring and motivating their teams by presenting challenges and imbuing their work with purpose. This cultivates emotional commitment and enthusiasm among followers for a shared mission. Intellectual Stimulation encourages creativity and innovation, as transformational leaders guide others to rethink established problems and continually challenge and develop their own beliefs and values. In practical terms, transformational leaders facilitate a shift in thinking about longstanding issues and encourage continuous questioning and personal growth, reinforcing the organizational commitment of their followers. Individualized Consideration entails comprehending and sharing the concerns and developmental needs of others, treating each follower as a unique individual. Leaders, in the role of coaches and advisors, not only address current needs but also strive to broaden and elevate these needs, aiding followers in achieving their full potential.

## **2.2 Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction:**

Supervisors who employ nonverbal immediacy, friendliness, and maintain open lines of communication are more likely to receive positive feedback and foster high job satisfaction among their subordinates. The qualities expected of a supervisor include achieving corporate goals, recognizing high performance, acknowledging excellent service, ensuring equal treatment, promoting socialized power and team spirit, and utilizing development inspection methods to monitor each employee's work. Employees tend to be more efficient when they experience favorable interactions with their supervisors. The presence of honesty and trust contributes to a balanced relationship between subordinates and supervisors, as emphasized by [6]. Additionally, [1] study highlights a significant correlation between the use of leadership behaviors and both employee and job satisfaction.

## **2.3 Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction:**

Organizational commitment, job involvement, and the fulfilment of higher-order needs play crucial roles in motivating employees. Satisfaction with various aspects such as work, pay, promotion, contingent rewards, co-workers, and supervision significantly influences employees' commitment to their jobs and their contributions to organizational development. It has been observed that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are key factors influencing turnover behaviours, potentially leading to the loss of valuable knowledge to competitors. Additionally, high turnover can result in increased labour procurement costs and reduced company profitability, as new hires often require training resources and may be less productive immediately after recruitment. The inter-relativity among leadership style, organisational commitment and job satisfaction emphasis on its significance and further expedition in this aspect.

### 3 Review of Literature

Organizational commitment stands out as a crucial determinant for the success of public sector organizations. Scholars, such as Rogers et al. (2020), have consistently highlighted the positive correlation between leadership style and employee commitment. Blau's research indicates that bureaucratic work practices often result in diminished employee commitment, whereas a supportive work environment fosters greater dedication and involvement among employees (Dick & Metcalfe, 2007). Notably, limited attention has been directed towards exploring the nexus of leadership styles and organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda [9].

[10] affirmed the connection between employee engagement and organizational performance in the public sector in Zimbabwe. [11] offers valuable insights into leadership styles and organizational culture in the public sector, particularly concerning performance.

Collectively, the literature indicates the substantial role played by leadership styles in shaping employee commitment in the public sector. Numerous scholars emphasize the pivotal influence of supportive work environments and illuminate the adverse effects of bureaucratic practices on employee commitment [2]. Nevertheless, a research gap persists, specifically in examining the impact of leadership styles and organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda, including the potential influence of job satisfaction on this relationship [9].

Consequently, further research is warranted to bridge this gap and enhance our understanding of the intricate dynamics among leadership style, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in the public sector. These findings challenge previous research suggesting a consistent positive relationship between leadership styles, organizational cultures, and employee commitment [1]. [11] underscored the importance of leadership styles conducive to employee commitment for successful strategy implementation, goal attainment, and competitive advantage [9].

Despite the prevailing notion of a positive relationship between leadership styles, organizational cultures, and employee commitment, some surprising findings emerge [1]. Certain studies suggest that autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles may not exert a significant impact on employee commitment, while others identify a positive relationship. The literature underscores the significant influence of leadership styles on employee commitment in the public sector, emphasizing the importance of supportive work environments and cautioning against the negative repercussions of bureaucratic practices.

Notably, these findings affirm that organizational commitment serves as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership styles and work performance [8]. However, there remains mixed evidence regarding the impact of leadership styles on employee commitment in the public sector. Some studies posit that autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles may not significantly affect employee commitment, while others identify a positive correlation.

## 4 Research Design

### 4.1 Objectives of The Study

- To study the concepts and inter relativity among leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction
- To examine the correlation between leadership style and organizational commitment, with a consideration for the influence of job satisfaction among frontline staff.

### 4.2 Data Collection and Research Methodology

- **Sampling Design:** Random sampling method was used to collect the primary data, from the front-line staff of Southern Railway working in Chennai Division. Frontline staff chosen for this study includes ticket examiners, commercial clerks, station masters, station superintendent and reservation clerks as they come in direct contact with passengers.
- **Methods of Data Collection:** Primary data were collected from the front-line staff of Southern Railway working in Chennai Division in person through a well-structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from journals, research papers, manuals, books, magazines, articles, newspapers and online portals.
- **Questionnaire Design:** The researcher devised a self-constructed questionnaire aimed at gauging organizational commitment, leadership style, and job satisfaction among front-line staff. The questionnaire utilized Likert's five-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), to assess statements related to factors influencing employee empowerment and job satisfaction within the Southern Railway, Chennai Division. The study's sample size was limited to 775 participants.
- **Analysis of Data and Statistical tools:** The gathered primary data undergo analysis through the utilization of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The examination involves employing Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation to ascertain the connection between organizational commitment and leadership style, with consideration given to the job satisfaction levels of frontline staff.

## 5 Data Analysis And Interpretation

The details of sample chosen for the study based on the demographic variables are given below

**Table 1.** Demographic attributes of population

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	19 - 39 yrs	518	65.2%
	40 - 60 yrs	277	34.8%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
	Male	311	39.1%

<b>Gender</b>	Female	484	60.9%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Education</b>	Non-graduates	397	49.9%
	Graduates	398	50.1%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Marital status</b>	Unmarried	252	31.7%
	Married	543	68.3%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Income</b>	<35000	617	77.6%
	>35000	178	22.4%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Geographical location</b>	Urban	316	39.7%
	Suburban	479	60.3%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Experience</b>	<10 yrs	515	64.8%
	>10 yrs	280	35.2%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Level of management</b>	Junior	457	57.5%
	Middle	338	42.5%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %
<b>Department</b>	Operating	399	50.2%
	Commercial	396	49.8%
<b>Total</b>		795	100 %

Table 1 represents demographic characteristics of frontline staff working in Southern Railway, Chennai Division. It is observed that the majority of frontline staff are in the age group of 19-39 years (65%) followed by 40-60 years (35%). Female frontline staff (61%) are more compared to male frontline staff (39%). Both non-graduates and graduates are equal in number (50%). Married frontline staff are more in number compared to unmarried with (68%) and (32%) respectively. Frontline staff earning below Rs.35,000 is (78%) and earning above Rs.35,000 is (22%). Frontline staff residing in suburban area constitute (60%) and urban constitute (40%). Frontline staff is having less than 10 years of experience (65%) and more than 10 years of experience (35%). Junior level frontline staff forms (58%) and middle- level forms (42%). Both operating and commercial frontline staff are equal in number (50%).

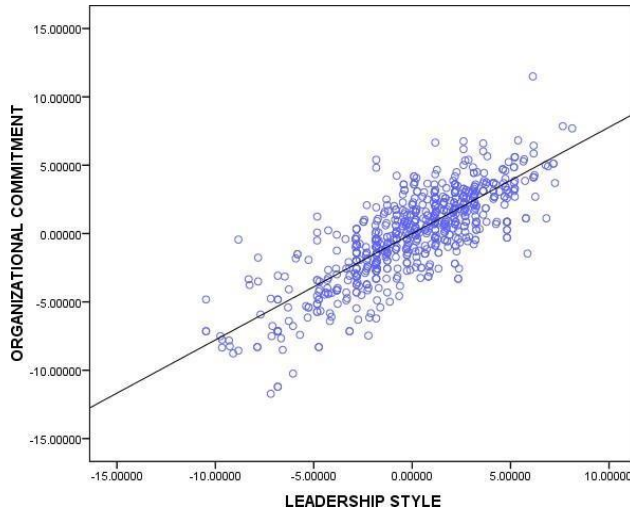
**HYPOTHESIS:** There will be no significant relationship between organisational commitment and leadership style

**Table 2.** Partial Correlation Organisational Commitment and Leadership Style While Controlling for Job Satisfaction

Control variable	Residual		Organisational commitment	Leadership style
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	Organisational commitment	Pearson correlation Sig(2-tailed) N	1	0.34 0.000 795
	Leadership style	Pearson correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	0.34 0.000 795	1

**Source : Primary Data**

First order partial correlation was used to evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between organisational commitment and leadership style while controlling for job satisfaction of frontline staff (N=795). There was significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis “There will be no significant relationship between organisational commitment and leadership style while controlling for job satisfaction of frontline staff” and conclude that there is a positive partial correlation between organisational commitment and leadership style while controlling for job satisfaction ( $r=0.34$ ,  $N=795$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).



**Fig. 1.** Scatter Plot of Organisational Commitment versus Leadership Style

The above scatterplot shows the relationship between organisational commitment and leadership style. While accounting for job satisfaction among frontline staff, an evident positive linear correlation emerges between organizational commitment (depicted on the "y" axis) and leadership style (represented on the "x" axis). The clearly defined line of best fit underscores the close proximity of observations, signifying an excellent relationship between the variables. This suggests that as organizational commitment increases, so does the leadership style within frontline staff. This correlation may stem from effective leaders' proactive efforts to comprehend the organization's current dynamics, express their perspectives, analyze conditions, and engage in discussions with subordinates as integral members of the firm. By empathizing with subordinates and fostering an atmosphere of equality, these leaders cultivate a conducive environment for long-term organizational commitment. Leaders employing intellectual stimulation actively infuse innovation into their teams, motivating employees to explore novel problem-solving techniques and discover innovative approaches to task completion. This approach contributes to the organization's resilience and enhances its competitive standing. The majority of employees anticipate leaders who encourage their participation and the sharing of thoughts in collective decision-making processes.

## 6 Suggestions and Conclusion

As organizations progress towards flattening their structures and eliminating numerous middle-level management positions, there emerges a clear imperative for enhanced leadership at all levels. Whether at the managerial or leadership echelons, individuals



within an organization can shape an ideological vision and foster employee engagement in decision-making processes, thereby motivating continuous skills and knowledge development. This approach intensifies employees' sense of responsibility. Transformational leaders play a pivotal role in empowering employees by delineating clear organizational future goals, instilling enthusiasm for meaningful objectives, and setting high-performance expectations. Additionally, leadership often involves the implementation of performance-based rewards, which serve to recognize and reinforce employee competencies and active participation.

## 7 Scope for Further Research

Future research should consider exploring additional sectors such as industrial, retail, and other service industries, rather than solely concentrating on central government organizations. While the current study illuminates the connection between factors of employee empowerment while accounting for the job satisfaction of front-line staff, broadening the scope could involve conducting in-depth research on staff working in back-office roles and examining employee empowerment from an administrative perspective. To enhance the generalizability of facts and findings, future studies might benefit from incorporating a larger sample size and including diverse demographic variables such as education, family type, and location.

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