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**THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN TRANSFORMING THE ATTITUDE OF  
SUBORDINATES – A STUDY CONDUCTED IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN**

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*Dr Aamir Firoz Shamsi*

*Rehana Kousar*

*Dr Nawaz Ahmad*

**ABSTRACT**

*The most common definition of Leadership is that leaders attempt to influence the behavior of their followers. While leaders influence their subordinates, it has been noted that leaders do so along with their perceived organization support. The research question of this paper aimed to find out the effect that leadership practices have on subordinate's perceived organizational support. The hypothesis of this research revolved around this research question testing the five leadership practices namely: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart. The survey instruments that were used to measure the effect of leadership practices on subordinate's perceived organizational support are: 1) Leadership Profile Inventory-other (LPIO) – This instrument was developed in the year 1988 by Kouzes and Posner. 2) Survey of Perceived organizational support (POS) – This instrument was developed in the year 1986 by Eiseberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa. The sampling technique chosen was convenience sampling. Further, the basis of this literature review were researches conducted in the related field, along with various leadership theories and practices including Kouzes and Posner leadership practices, perceived organizational support based on organizational support theory and social exchange theory. The results of the study identify a positive relationship between the five leadership practices and perceived organizational support. This research will help the organization's human resource and management to understand the role of leadership along with its importance to influence subordinates. Further, strategies can be devised to motivate and influence the behavior of subordinates for the benefit of the organization.*

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**Keywords:** Leadership, five leadership practices, organization support.

**INTRODUCTION**

According to the book Global leaders: The Next Generation by Marshall Goldsmith *et.al.*, (2003); In the past few years, the effectiveness of Leadership is becoming challenging and tough due to the rapid change in the operations, shape and size of the company, along with other

complexities. Leadership is noted as a factor to succeed in both management practices and academic excellence (Waymes, 2003).

The new trend in leadership involves charisma and vision (Khatri, Ng & Lee, 2001). According to Drucker, 1997; Kickul & Liao-Troth, 2003, the current business environment influences the employee expectations, perceptions, and employee obligations. Organizations today are not living-up to the employee obligations (Howard & Frink, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Turney & Feldman, 1998). The need for a more flexible leadership practice is most apparent at this point in time to cope with the changing organizational environment (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003; Bannis, 2001). Further, it has become a necessity to keep leaders effective and successful (Collins & Golton, 2003; Zehner & Holton, 2004; Casper, Martin, Buffardi & Erdwins, 2002). Leaders have the ability to shape the commitment of their subordinates (Fairholm & Fairholm 2000).

According to Komives, Lucas and McMahon (1998), and Taylor (2003), "Leadership is everyone's business", this implies that leadership is a skill that should be learned and practiced like any other skill. Leadership is said to be an integral factor to group effectiveness and organizational support (Bass, 1991; Yukl, 1989; Posner & Brodsky, 1993). Leadership is without any shadow of doubt a critical component in any organization's success. The only question being that what makes a successful leader? To answer this question, there have been several theories introduced, out of which the most successful is Kouzes and Barry Posner's Model of successful leaders. This model is also called the leadership practices model and will be further studied in this research.

#### **LEADERSHIP PRACTICES MODEL**

In the year 1988, Kouzes and Posner developed this model of successful leaders, the five major leadership practices in their model are: model the way, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, challenge the process and encourage the heart. They also developed an instrument that measures these five factors; the instrument is called LPIO which is made up of 30 questions in total. There have been numerous studies that have measured the validity and measurability of this instrument.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT, SATISFACTION & PERFORMANCE**

People tend to work hard for leaders who care about them and encourage them (James M. Kouzes, 1999). Organization commitment of subordinates is also related to the leadership style that leaders adopt

(Glisson & Duruck, 1988; Lowe & Barnes, 2002). Job satisfaction and job performance is also related to leadership style of the leader (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Page & Wiserman, 1993; Savery, 1994; Skinner, 1969; Dawson et al., 1972). Leadership is said to be a social process which cannot act alone, it is an exchange process between leaders and followers (Kouzes and Posner, 1990).

#### **ORGANIZATION SUPPORT THEORY**

The level of perceived organizational support- POS is based on the employee-organization relationship that employees perceive. The organization support theory states that organization's support is associated with supervisor's support in the eyes of employees (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986; Shore & Shore 1995). This theory further states that organizations that employees perceive as being cornered about them will have high organizational support. POS is said to be directly linked with job satisfaction, performance and organizational commitment (Allen 1992; Corpanzano *et.al.*, 1997; Eisenberger *et.al.*, 1990; Nye & Witt, 1993; Settoon *et.al.*, 1996; Wayne et al., 1997; Burke, 2003). A negative relation has been observed in POS and absenteeism, work depression, turnover intention (Allen, 2001; Behson, 2002; Bond *et.al.*, 2003; Frone *et.al.*, 1997; Kaufman *et.al.*, 2001; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson, 1999; Jahn, Kopelman & Protas, 2004).

#### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Allen (2001) leaders influence how employees perceive the organization environment. There exists a variation in what managers say they will do and what they actually do (Kouzes and Posner, 1993). Kelley (1992) has the following observations:

1. Subordinates are unhappy with their supervisor's behaviors.
2. 1 out of 7 leaders (Managers) are role model for their subordinates.
3. 2 out of 5 leaders (Managers) are said to have questionable abilities of a leader.
4. Less than half of the leaders (Managers) are trusted by their subordinates.

A survey conducted by Connell, Ferress & Travagoline (2003), found that subordinates do not trust their leaders (managers) completely. It was also found out that turnover rate is high because of the fact that employees believe that they are not being appreciated. Hence, it is becoming highly integral for human resource managers to understand the factors that transform the attitude of subordinates and the role that leaders play in transforming their attitude. Till date, the factors that result in perceived organization support is unknown; therefore, this study aimed to

seek the answer to this problem. According to Zehner & Holton (2004), leadership is said to be the most inspiring field of study. The basic purpose of the study was to extend the research that has already been done and come to a reasonable and measurable conclusion as to what factors of leadership lead to influence organizational support.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION**

This research question has examined using the leadership practices by Kouzes and Posner. The research question for this study is:

What leadership practices effect subordinate's perceived organizational support resulting in transforming their attitude?

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this research is to identify the leadership practices that influence subordinates perceived organizational support and help in transforming their attitude.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The authors examined the literature of perceived organization support and leadership along with identifying ways to bridge the gap between the concepts to improve the effectiveness of a leader in terms of employee's performance. There have been numerous researches conducted to investigate the effectiveness of a leader (Goldsmith, 2003; Bohn & Grafton, 2002; Tillman 2013; Dillion, 2014). There have also been studies to investigate the part of exchange process in companies (Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau & Parks, 1993). Nevertheless, researches have also been conducted to identify the role of leaders in impelling others (employees) in the organization along with identifying the level of support leaders give to employees (Perry & Mankin, 2004). In the last decade, leadership was also being studied as a part of organization behavior, strategy, psychology and sociology (Kedia *et.al.*, 2002). The motivation aspect of leadership has been one of the most studied topics (Koene *et.al.*, 1991; Roberts, 1985; Trice & Beyer, 1986). The models of leadership are now not just limited to transactional and simple model, rather they have been transformed into more complex models (Torpman, 2004); this is because organizations are now becoming flatter in structure (Homer, 1997).

### **LEADERSHIP**

The concept and role of a leader varies from organization to organization (Morin & Kirschling, 2004). According to Winston and Patterson (2006) a leader is an individual who not only identifies but also

trains and prepares followers' and supporters to chase the organization's objective and mission. Further, a leader also gives them freewill to choose whilst making sure that they choose to achieve the organization's objective and mission. A leader does this by delivering his vision of the future in order to support the belief and morals of his followers and supporters. Critical thinking is one of the key strengths of a leader, where he turns the uncertainty of his followers to clarity. Winston and Patterson, 2006, also stated that a leader practices ethical means to convince his followers to share the same vision.

In a study by Fry and Slocum Jr. (2008), he defined spiritual well-being in employees as a source of striving to achieve. This well-being is aroused by a leader which results in employees following the organization's mission and vision.

#### **LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF KOUZES AND POSNER**

According to Conger & Kanungo (1987), the behavior of a charismatic leader is a mere collection of its intertwined parts. Keeping in view all of the leadership practices used by leaders, Kouzes and Posner (1993) established 5 leadership practices along with 10 commitments of leadership. The five leadership practices by Kouzes and Posner (1993), are: Model the way, Inspire a shared vision, Challenge the process, Enable others to act, Encourage the heart. According to Bickelhaupt, 2003, leadership is an emerging topic for research as well as an integral key to success for organizations. The above mentioned 5 leadership practices are said to assist leaders to transform their organization positively (Kouzes & Posner, 1988, 1993). According to a research transformational leaders tend to inspire a new vision (Bums, 1978; Gabris & Ihrke, 2000).

#### **MODEL THE WAY**

According to Maierhofer, Griffin & Sheehan (2000), Yukl (1994), Ostroff, Shin and Kinicki (2005), leaders are said to be role model and hence, influence their subordinates by acting as a role model. Another study stated that leader's actions impact the organization and motivate the employees; therefore, leaders should model the way (Avolio, 1994; Finkelstein & Hambrick; 1996; Taylor, 2003). A cascading effect is said to take place in the organization from the leader's modeling behavior (Bass et.al., 1987). A crucial ingredient for a transformational leader is the follower and leader value similarity (Krishnan, 2002; Russell, 2001; Zhou, 2014). This similarity is inspired via motivation (Bums, 1978).

These days, organizations are screening leaders through their ability to act as role models (McCarthy, 2005).

### **INSPIRE A SHARED VISION**

A leader needs to be an effective visionary (Lashway, 2000; Barnett & McCormick, 2003; Covey, 2005). Vision is defined as the ability to foresee the future keeping in view the goals and dreams (Covey, 2005). Leaders are responsible for communicating the company's vision to employees; therefore, it is important for them to inspire a shared vision (Snee & Hoerl, 2004). When employees are uncertain about the future, a vision shared by a leader can bring positive changes (Waldman *et.al.*, 2001; Javidan & Waldman, 2003; Posner, 2014). A transformation leader persuades acceptance of the company's vision (Krishnan, 2002). Leaders need not to only focus on the future but they also need to motivate employees to own that vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2000; *et.al.*, 2004). Weymes (2003) stressed on the importance of leaders to understand the mission and motivate employees to be committed to it.

### **CHALLENGE THE PROCESS**

New ideas are induced by leaders (Tucker & Russell, 2004); in another research it was highlighted that leaders must always give their followers the opportunity to grow whilst growing their business (Zagorsek *et.al.*, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2000; Ochao, 2014). The followers of a successful leader also question the current ways of doing thing, they also take risk and have the zeal to bring change (Torpman, 2004; Zagorsek *et.al.*, 2004). Leaders have the power the convert a challenge as being meaningful to their followers even though it may be negative (Kibort, 2004). Leaders who are transformational have the tendency to critically rethink assumptions whilst promotion a non-conventional thinking process (Tucker & Russell, 2004), they also appreciate and practice continuous learning and exploring (Torpman, 2004).

### **ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT**

According to Weymes (2005) most successful organizations denote the skills of their employees as their prime asset, this is where a leader steps-in to acknowledge the fact that every individual has their own area of expertise and they need to be encouraged and motivated to act positive (Kibort, 2004). Encouraging the motivating individuals to bring about a positive change in the organization is known as enabling others to act (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). Enabling others to act also includes identifying

concrete yet creative solutions to tough problems and issues (Bass *et.al.*, 2003). Empowering employees is an effective technique to get employees motivated to utilize their skills and abilities for the betterment of the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Jung & Sosik, 2002). Effective leaders practice empowerment and hence empowerment is said to be an integral element of a successful leader (Mastrangelo *et.al.*, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2000). The benefit that leaders get from empowering their followers/employees is that they feel high about themselves and their leader and are motivated to make a difference in their company (Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian, 2001).

### **ENCOURAGE THE HEART**

Leaders tend to encourage the heart by satisfying the needs of development of employees (Popper & Zakkai, 1994), they also keep in consideration their employee's values and standards (Mink, 1992), for instance giving them respect and showing care towards them (Mastrangelo *et.al.*, 2004; Dixon, 1998). They impact the self-esteem of their employees by encouraging the heart (Javidan & Waldman, 2003), at times these leaders also celebrate their achievements to encourage the heart (Taylor, 2003). These caring and respectful acts make the employees feel that they are being valued and that the organization care about them (Wayne *et.al.*, 1997; Shore & Shore, 1995; Zagorsek *et.al.*, 2004). Having faith in employees is a must for a leader so that he can encourage their heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2000). Effective leaders understand the importance of trust and integrity in order to share an organization's vision (Weymes, 2003). It is always beneficial to identify and highlight the positive achievements of employees (Snee & Hoerl, 2004).

### **HYPOTHESIS**

H1: A significant relationship between the leadership practice of "Model the way" and subordinate perceived organization support exists.

H2: A significant relationship between the leadership practice of "Inspire a shared Vision" and subordinate perceived organization support exists.

H3: A significant relationship between the leadership practice of "Challenge the Process" and subordinate perceived organization support exists.



H4: A significant relationship between the leadership practices of “Enable others to act” and subordinate perceived organization support exists.

H5: A significant relationship between the leadership practice of “Encourage the heart” and subordinate perceived organization support exists.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The sample size chosen for this study is 315 out of which 300 responses completed. All the respondents were students from the various Universities of Karachi consisting of Bahria University, Szabist, University of Karachi, and IoBM. The respondents had been enrolled and were completing their Master’s Degree with sufficient work experience working in service private sector and manufacturing private sector. The respondents were both female and male with age ranging from 22–60 years. The data was collected personally through visiting the respective universities and getting the questionnaires filled manually. The data was analyzed using SPSS (Mean & Correlation). The Dependent Variable was Perceived Organization Support and Independent Variables were five leadership dimensions: Model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart. The ultimate aim was to find a relationship between the independent and dependent variable (If exists).

## **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The first part of questionnaire was comprised of 6 demographic questions including age, gender, position in organization, type of organization, years of service and education. Majority of the respondents were male being 55% of the total respondents and the remaining 45% were female. Majority of the respondents (64%) had completed few graduate courses, followed by 19% with a Master’s Degree and last but not least 17% had completed their bachelors. The reason why majority of the respondents had few graduate courses in because they were in the process of completing their Master’s and this study is focused more on the responses of those respondents. Out of the 300 respondents, 39% respondents were between the ages 20-29, 37% were between 30-39; whereas, 21% were 40-49 and only 3% were observed to be 50-59 years of age. Majority of the respondents were a part of the private sector with 47%, followed by 24% from the public sector, 17% from non-profit organizations and only 12% from government organizations. Out of which 50% were from the management and the remaining 50% were a



part of the non-management positions in their organization, all respondents belonged to the private sector with 70% from manufacturing sector and 30% from service sector. Among the sample 31% were associated with their organization for over 1 year but less than 3, 23% served their organization for over 3 years but less than 6, 17% were associated with their respective organizations for 1 year or less, 10% for over 10 years and only 5% for over 9 years less than 12 years.

The respondents were given a range of 1 – 10 to answer the questions. The means of all the leadership practices ranged from 6.46 to 7.58 where Model the way had maximum mean if 7.58, followed by Encourage the heart with 7.01, challenge the process with 6.91, enable others to act to 6.73 and last but not least inspire a shared vision with 6.46. The lowest standard deviation was of “Encourage the heart” with 2.10, followed by enable others to act with 2.15, inspire a shared vision with 2.22, model the way with 2.25 and challenge the process witnessed the highest standard deviation of 2.54.

#### **HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

All the hypotheses were tested using SPSS Pearson Correlation 2 tailed test with the following results:

Hypothesis 1: The correlation between perceived organization support and Model the way was found in analysis along with its Mean and Standard Deviation. A positive relationship is observed where  $r = .171$ ,  $p < 0.01$  so the positive mean closer to -1 to +1 indicates that H1 is supported and approved and H1o has been rejected.

Hypothesis 2: The correlation between perceived organization support and inspire a shared vision was found in analysis along with its Mean and Standard Deviation.

A positive relationship is observed where  $r = .129$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , hence H2 is accepted and H2o is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: The correlation between perceived organization support and Challenge the Process was found in analysis along with its Mean and Standard Deviation.

A positive relationship is observed where  $r = .112$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , hence H3 is accepted and H3o is rejected.

Hypothesis 4: The correlation between perceived organization support and enable others to act was found in analysis along with its Mean and Standard Deviation. A positive relationship is observed where  $r = .115$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , hence H4 is accepted and H4o is rejected.

Hypothesis 5: The correlation between perceived organization support and Encourage the heart was found in analysis along with its

Mean and Standard Deviation. A positive relationship is observed where  $r = .145$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , hence H5 is accepted and H5o is rejected.

The analysis of LPI and Survey of perceived organization support, the results indicated that there exists a positive relationship between all five leadership practices (Model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart), and perceived organization support.

## DISCUSSION

Modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart are the five leadership practices which deeply affect the performance of organization as well as employees. A constructive relationship between these practices and perceived organizational support is built and each hypothesis is supported in this study. A leader with perceived character and capability that build their worthiness and credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Covey 1991; Rahim, 1989) act as an ideal for employees and contributes to be one of the side-other being subordinates- of the universal relationship called leadership (Eagly *et.al.*, 2003).

Organizations with leaders who are “modeling the way” as established by this research are generally more profitable (Shaw & Barry, 2007), because such leaders become role model for other people and successfully earn their trust and inspiration. “Inspiring a shared vision” is the second quality that leaders are suggested to possess in this research. This holds so much importance because of its relationship with perceived organizational support and its contribution to an organization’s success. Having a shared vision and communicating it successfully to the employees them to organization and ignites the sense of belonging in them which enhances their performance (Bass *et.al.*, 2003). The next two leadership practices “challenging the process” and “enabling others to act” and their relationship with perceived organizational support hold the same significance in becoming a successful leader. An organization with enabling environment where subordinates are met by challenges and are enabled to deal with them using all their capacities is meant to perform well. In such kind of environment, a leader sets high expectations and helps the employees stand on those expectations (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1998), by being an inspiration for them (Grojean, *et.al.*, 2004).

As the employees are exposed to more and more challenges, they are not only given opportunity to build on their skills and try to work beyond their capacity but also provided with a platform where they can experiment on new ideas without fearing the outcomes. This dismissal of

fear, which otherwise restrict employees from trying new ways, inclines employees to experience the paths that they had never walked on before, think “out of the box” and make differences which increases their perceived support for the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998; Tucker & Russell, 2004). Leaders should welcome the diversity of ideas and let employees challenge the process (Bennis, 1999).

“Encouraging the heart” is the last leadership practice that is suggested by this study. This study and other studies consistently recommend that leaders need to encourage the employees in order to improve perceived organizational support. This encouragement makes employees to perform better in work groups because of the supportive environment that has been provided to them (House, 1971).

If, on one hand, these five leadership practices can improve organization’s effectiveness as said by Kouzes and Posner's (1987), then, on the other hand, not practicing these leadership skills can cost the organization in terms of performance (Dawson et al., 1972; Swanson & Johnson, 1975). There are leadership development programs arranged for those leaders who fail to practice these five leadership skills. Emphasis on these leadership practices is just due to its importance in development of one’s own organization. Have gaining trust and inspiration of workers by supporting them and encouraging their efforts will only help leader achieve extraordinary outcomes. In today’s highly competitive world, it is a “must” for an organization to achieve extraordinary outcomes to be on roll.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of this research exhibited a positive relationship between all five leadership practices and perceived organization support. The leadership practices were tested by the LPI designed by Kouzes and Posner, 2003; whereas, the perceived organization support was tested using the survey designed by Eisenberger, *et.al.*, 1994. A positive relationship was observed between the five leadership practices by Kouzes & Posner, 1988 (Model the way, Inspire a shared vision, Challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart). The strongest positive relationship was found in “Model the way” and the weakest was “inspire a shared vision”; however, all the leadership practices observed a positive and significant relationship.

## LIMITATIONS

The population of this study was restricted to MBA students of Karachi, Pakistan who were all working in private organizations, majority

of respondents were associated with private manufacturing sector and remaining 30% were involved with service private sector. Though this limitation was adequate but there is always a possibility that a larger population may have helped achieve better results. Since the observations during this study were made in only one point of time, the results are transversal, not longitudinal. Being cross-sectional, this study could not analyze the factors which otherwise would have been possible. For example, repeated examination of same people over long periods time would've enabled the researcher to investigate either changing statistical figures of number of years a person has worked, type of organization, position in the organization of the leaders etcetera have any link with perceived organizational support.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

As to remove the above limitations and increase the standards of further studies, following are some recommendations:

1. A larger population should be taken into consideration. This increase in the size of respondents will help researcher, observe the diversity existing between larger groups.
2. A time to time study i.e. longitudinal study should be done.
3. Various organizations, firms, companies ranging from government, nonprofit, private, and public sectors should be part of study.
4. The difference between genders of leaders and subordinates should also be kept in mind.
5. Different areas related to perceived organizational support such as perceived supervisor support, organizational citizenship behavior, and social exchange theories should be specifically considered while examining the leadership practices.
6. This research only develops relationship between strong leadership practices and its result "perceived organizational support" in the form of commitment, qualitative and efficient work from employees. Further studies should try to find if there exists any intermediary state between these two extremes that is input and output.
7. Researcher should study the influence of leaders on culture and surroundings of the organization and its relationship with perceived organizational support.
8. Leadership qualities, styles and traits that formulate a leader's behavior and attitude might have influence on perceived organizational support. Hence, further studies should try to find a link between these two. It would be interesting to see how these traits influence employees' work efficiency and how it benefits the organization.

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