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**THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: THE
MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Transformational Leadership, Occupational Stress, Emotional Intelligence, HEIs	The relationship between occupational stress and transformational leadership is mainly influenced by some factors wherein some contribute positively while some contributes negatively. From positive limits, the emotional intelligence is most effective factor which contribute in connection between occupational stress and transformational leadership. The researcher main contribution is the careful selection of the research variable and results that were based upon opinion of respondents concerning research variables. Both secondary and primary data were used to conduct, study where secondary data was collected from the related articles on variables and primary data was collected through questionnaires adapted from the previous studies. Through different tools of statistics (correlation, regression & mediation), collected data was analyzed to obtain answers to research questions (hypotheses). Results are significant and provide suitable information about the research variables to add values to existing research database.
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INTRODUCTION

In higher educational background, the leadership is vital in determining and ensuring the high-values tasks of imparting quality education to the present and future generations. It is the leadership who tries to ensure effectiveness in teaching and learning processes to guarantee the required outcomes aligned with needs and demands of stakeholders (Bakar & Mahmood, 2013). Effective leaderships are critical for managing institutional governance both from micro and macro perspectives. The higher education has been considered as effective driver social, academic and economic development and this role is possible only over dynamic leadership (Graham & Antony, 2017). The leadership has been considered as beacon of hope for promoting higher education in letters and spirits (Walter et al., 2020). The leadership is vital success factor for all originations however, its role is more effective

and phenomenal in the higher education context due to their active role in the social and economic development.

The leadership is also critical in managing the employees' abilities leading to psychological strength and confidence overwhelmed at emotional intelligence wherein the leaders try to nurture employees' behavior as per leaders' values and institutional standards (Oshagbemi & Grill, 2003). The emotional intelligence, in this regard, denotes intellectual capabilities of the employees at the workplaces in managing workplace apprehensions and undesirable eventualities that are critical for leadership and institutions in attaining desired standards (Perren & Burgoyne, 2001). The institutions need the effective leadership in managing the institutional affairs while leadership needs efficient employees in achieving institutional long-term objectives. Employee intelligence is important for higher education institutions in managing the unfavorable situations which is consequence of nepotism and favoritism in the institutions (Yvonne & Shelley, 2004). In this connection, these situations are mainly the outcomes of politics within institutions that undesirably affect the institutional smooth function and success.

The workforces' apprehension at workplace is critical phenomenon that needs additional focus from the leadership as these apprehensions are results of certain anxieties related to workplace and leading to the occupational stress (Gill et al., 2006). The occupational stress is leading issue that determines employees' behavior in undesirable manners that affects employees' motivation and performance. The stressed employees are likely to have lower performance and the lower outcomes as compared to the satisfied employees (Lyons & Schneider, 2009). In this drive, prime role of leadership is to eliminate workforces worried related with their jobs by inspiring them to show higher performance toward attainment of institutional objectives. The preceding studies show negative impact of the occupational stress on employees' job satisfaction and job performance (Harms et al., 2017). However, the concerned employees may cater undesirable situation through emotional intelligence at the workplaces.

The emotional intelligence represents the intellectual capabilities of employees to adjust themselves in recent times of uncertainties due to economic and technological changes. In this respect, numerous dynamic factors are responsible to maintain emotional balance of employees like trust in leadership, emotional contracts, information and communication technologies, performance management and eliminating employees' apprehensions at the workplaces (Yvonne & Shelley, 2004). Similarly, leading people in diverse situation needs the extraordinary abilities and skills from the leaders in making the employees emotional balanced, stable and intelligent. Emotionally intelligent employee is likely to have strong will towards institutional vision, readiness towards the institutional mission and dedication towards the attainment of the institutional objective more carefully and effectively (Uzair

et al., 2020). In this connection, emotional balance is likely to be affected through politics within the institutions.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this research study is related with the examination of mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting transformational leadership and occupational stress. The research context of this study comprises higher educational institutions wherein from the last few decades, varied experiences have been evident regarding the phenomena under considerations. This study aimed to examine relationships to produce new knowledge to contribute the existing research.

Research Hypotheses

- H₁:** There is a positive and significant association among the predictor, mediator and criterion variables on the study.
- H₂:** The predictor and mediator have significant impact on the criterion variable of the current study.
- H₃:** The emotional intelligence (mediator) significantly mediated relationship between transformational leadership (predictor) and occupational stress (criterion).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The leading motivation behind this study is to examine leadership phenomena in higher education institutions as these institutions are responsible to provide futuristic leadership to different sphered of the economies which can be possible only through dynamic and effective leadership in higher institutions. The concerned leadership will be able to realize milestone only when they are successful in ensuring conducive and stressless environment in the institutions. In this connection, to what extent, leadership through different styles in effective in managing stress is the main motivation and theme behind this study. Similarly, the intelligence within the institutions is also phenomenon of greater importance wherein leadership capabilities are needed to comprehend the situation (Yvonne & Shelley, 2004). Similarly, the emotionally intelligent leadership and employees are also significant assets of institutions (Shukla & Srivastava, 2016). Consequently, this study aimed at examining link between leaderships styles and occupational stress through organizational politics and emotional intelligence.

The role of leadership (head of departments) is critical in determining the teacher attitude towards involving in the teaching and administrative tasks by developing their capabilities and sense of responsibility to manage the assigned tasks effectively. In this connection, universities have been considered as the vital sector in contributing to the various sector by providing intellectuals to different sectors on the economies (Bakar & Mahmood, 2013). These intellectuals are the outcome of the effective role of teachers and the ultimate responsibility of leadership (Bryman & Lilley, 2009). Teachers as leaders are responsible in

nurturing the students' behavior and developing their capabilities to face the challenges in their academic and professional lives (Graham & Antony, 2017). Consequently, the role of teachers is as important as role of leadership in the universities as the ranking and success of the universities are dependent upon effective role of leadership supported by efficient role of the teachers.

Transformational Leadership

The transformational leaders' main characteristics are the fairness and integrity that acts as leading features of leaders that are used as critical determinantal factors for inspiring the employees towards the assigned responsibilities (Avolio & Bass, 1991). The leaders' inspiration and encouragement as the significant attributes for the employees to nurture their capabilities towards the assigned tasks leading to the higher achievements (Dvir et al., 2002). The self-confidence, trust, authority and strong belief are also counting for the leaders in order to maintain their effectiveness in their followers' minds (Silva & Mendis, 2017). Leaders' widely recognized attributes comprising idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation are leading qualities that are vital in determining workforces' attitude and behavior towards the higher tasks' achievement in diverse situations.

The transformational leadership is effective on focusing upon the follower emotions and the ultimate psychological intelligence which in turn helps them in attaining the desired purposes (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). The leaders inspire their subordinates to produce more outcomes thereby utilizing their own expertise to work improved for the promotion of the institutional vision thereby nurturing the emotional affection between the leaders and followers (Sharma & Singh, 2017). Efficiency and productivity are leading outcomes of transformational leaders as these leaders are always focused on the continuous and effective communication for sharing the knowledge and novel ideas (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). This leader is effective in producing desired outcomes by utilizing their effective and leading attributes for progress of institution which denote his/her main responsibility in complex situations.

Occupational Stress

The occupational stress need certain environment demands to make sure the conducive and supportive environment wherein the employees may be able to show their efforts and skills wholeheartedly to perform the assigned responsibilities effectively and to attain the assigned tasks efficiently (Cooper et al., 2001). The occupational stress not only influences physiological and psychological conditions of workforces but also influences institutional outcomes undesirably that leads toward lower achievements and frail institutional success (Dollard et al., 1999). The occupational stress has many varieties that the employees face in the institutions/organizations with the diverse input and output circumstances (Ongori, & Agolla, 2008). Still, occupational stress has been mainly categorized into the organizational

stress and operational stress which are critical in influencing the attitude and behavior of the concerned workforces.

The transformation is the most effective parameter that causes through the occupational stress that are basically outcome of various organizational eventualities like international and the domestic competition, downsizing, restructuring (Webb et al., 2005) changes in the structure of management and government cuts in funding which not only influences the institutional focus on workforces' wellbeing but also influences the institutional strategic development (Simons et al., 2019). Similarly, holistic competition characterized mergers and lay-offs due to increased technological growth and advancement that increased the expenditures of concerned institutions and thus reduces the focus on the workforces' development (Darabi et al., 2016). In this connection, stress at higher levels in instructions thus brings credibility of concerned institutions at stake where workforces are not feeling secured and satisfied.

Emotional Intelligence

The emotional intelligence has gained persistent popularity during the past decades due to its important role in nurturing the behavior of organizational members towards desired outcomes. The emotional intelligence has been defined by various researchers as ability to manage and control emotions more intelligently at workplace (Caruso et al., 2002). It has also considered as systematized mental approach and response to events that comprises experiential, physiological and cognitive characteristics (Coffey et al., 2003). The emotional intelligence has been designed to maintain the intelligence in diverse manners to bring the credibility of organizations in such manners that is critical in determining the desired objectives (Davies et al., 1998). In this connection, organizations also need the emotionally intelligent workforces at diverse levels to achieve desired objectives with desired standards in organizations.

The emotional intelligence is important for developing the teachers' capabilities relating to the successful presentation of the required skills and knowledge for the effective teaching and learning practices (Kafetsios, & Zampetakis, 2008). The teachers, who are emotionally intelligent and intellectually sound is measured as effective workforces toward attainment of desired capabilities (Shukla, & Srivastava, 2016). The skills and supporting knowledge with updating capabilities are critical for the determination of the institutional success in prolonged manners. Emotional intelligence inspires the teachers to show their intellectual capabilities to main their strong status in organizational standing towards achievement of desired outcomes and consequences. (Leon, & Tănăsescu, 2018). In this connection, the emotional intelligence is also critical for maintaining the desired standards in the desired criteria in the diverse situation towards leading aims which are aimed to achieve through teachers' capabilities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher offered different tools and techniques that are imperative for conducting the research study in order to find the answers of the research questions based upon the hints (assumptions, guidelines & tentative solutions) in reaching the desired conclusion of study more accurately, reliably and systematically. Study offered methods and procedures to systematically conduct the study by finding the possible solution to research issues to reach the conclusion.

Research Philosophy & Approach

The epistemological approach of current study rests upon positivism paradigm wherein the objective data has been recommended to collected the data to examine phenomena thereby developing generalization toward conclusion (Babbie, 2011). In this connection, the positivism approach rests upon objectivism wherein researcher accepts reality as social actors in external environment. Consistent with the positivism philosophy, researcher used methodology to collect measurable data that can be used for analyses. Survey approach is used to collect data from respondent and analyze to examine relationship among research variables under study.

Population & Sample

The social research is always based on exploring some realities in existing environment by examining views of respondents from population (Boyd et al., 1977). Without population, researcher will not be able to examine realities and to find he research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Population of study comprises teaching faculty from different universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, scholar selected 4 universities having 830 population, wherein the sample was drawn by using statistical procedures as access entire population is difficult and sometime no required to conduct the study. Thus, sample is the best option to analyze responses of the respondents with the aim to measure research variables and their interrelationship. In this connection, total 270 questionnaire were distributed wherein 254 were recollected.

Table 1 Formula (Sample-Size)

Formula Used	E	N (830)	Sample Size
$n = N/1 + Ne2$	0.05	$n = 830 / (1+830 (0.0025)) = n = 269.92$	270

Data Collection & Analysis

The data analysis is a significant part of the research that is used for decision making. The data analysis is prerequisite for systematic studies to make sure the scientific values of the research studies (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Data was screened carefully before analyzing to find and fix issues relating to missing values, identification of outliers, data normality, collinearity and multicollinearity in order to remove these issues from data to find better

results about questions in sustaining accuracy in results of study in reaching conclusion of study comprehensively.

Questionnaire Design

The design and measurement of questionnaire are important component of research used for primary data collection to conduct research studies in systematic manner. Researcher offered the approach of questionnaire for collecting the primary data from the population of study through sample. The questionnaire was adopted from the previous studies by bringing some desired changes as per requirement and context of study. For this drive, questionnaire for research variables was adapted from existing studies like leadership style (Bass & Avalio, 2004), occupational stress (Clark et al., 2014), and emotional intelligence (Li et al., 2012) used in different contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results have been discussed in light of existing studies results to compare and discuss the commonalities and differences in current study results and previous studies results to make the decisions. In this connection, the results and discussions help the audience to understand the study outcomes and understanding the study position in existing database of knowledge.

H₁: Predictors are Significantly & Positively Associated with Criterion Variable

Table 2 Correlation Analysis

		TRF	EMI
Emotional Intelligence (EMI)	Pearson Correlation	.427**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	254	
Occupational Stress (OPS)	Pearson Correlation	.565**	-.357**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	254	254

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation has been used to examine association among the research variables used in this study like predicting variable like the transformational leadership styles, mediating variables like emotional intelligence and criterion variable like occupational stress. The hypothesis # 1 examined the association among variables through correlation. The results show significant association among research variables likewise, transformational style and occupational stress (.565 & .000), emotional intelligence and occupational stress (-.357 & .000). Similarly, significant association is evident between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (.427 & .000). The correlation also provides significant information about the association among independent variables themselves and mediating variables themselves. In this connection, as per results from correlation, the hypothesis (H1) is thus

accepted and substantiated. The correlation provides significant information for moving towards the regression.

H₂: Predictors have Significant Impact on Criterion Variable of study

Table 3 Regression Analysis (Model Summary)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.450a	.723	.719	.68398

Table 4 Regression Analysis (ANOVA)

Model		Squares Sum	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	304.429	4	76.107	162.680	.000b
	Residual	116.491	249	.468		
Total		420.920	253			

Table 5 Regression Analysis (Coefficients)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.401	.233		-6.008	.000
	Transformational Leadership	.532	.058	.424	9.143	.000
	Emotional Intelligence	.263	.054	.212	4.837	.019

a. Predictors: Transformational, Intelligence & Politics

b. Criterion: Occupational Stress

The cause-&-effect relationships among predicting, criterion and mediating variables have been examined through regression that was hypothesized through H₂. Results of regression show that predictors are responsible in bringing 72% variation in the criterion variable of study. The results also confirmed significant impact on the criterion variable (occupational stress) over predicting variables like transformational leadership (.532 & .000), emotional intelligence (.263 & .019) towards criterion variable. Regression results provide significant information in deciding the cause-&-effect relationships among the predictors, mediators and criterion variables of the study. Therefore, from results, the H₂ about the prediction is thus accepted.

H₃: Emotional intelligence significant mediates linkages between the transformational leadership and occupational stress.

X = Transformational Leadership, M = Emotional Intelligence & Y = Occupational Stress

A. First Mediation Step (a)

Table 6 Model Summary

R	R-square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5468	.2990	.7590	107.4816	1.0000	252.0000	.0000

Table 7 Coefficient of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.3065	.2703	4.8332	.0000	.7741	1.8389
Transformational Leadership	.5528	.0533	10.3673	.0000	.4478	.6579

Predicting Variable: Transformational Leadership
 Criterion Variable: Emotional Intelligence

B. Second & Third Mediation Steps (b & c)

Table 8 Model Summary

R	R-square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.8169	.6673	.5579	251.7385	2.0000	251.0000	.0000

Table 9 Coefficient of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-.9988	.2423	-4.1228	.0001	-1.4759	-.5217
Transformational Leadership	.7271	.0546	13.3169	.0000	.6196	.8347
Emotional Intelligence	.4233	.0540	7.8387	.0000	.3170	.5297

Independent Variable: Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence
 Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

C. Fourth Mediation Step (c)

Table 10 Model Summary

R	R-square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.7654	.5859	.6917	356.5168	1.0000	252.0000	.0000

Table 11 Coefficient of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-.4457	.2581	-1.7270	.0854	-.9539	.0626
Transformational Leadership	.9612	.0509	18.8817	.0000	.8609	1.0614

Independent Variable: Transformational Leadership

Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

Table 12 Sobel Test

Effect	se	Z	p
.2419	.0259	7.9433	.0000

The mediation model offered significant information about mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting transformational leadership and occupational stress. The results showed the outcomes regarding four steps essential process wherein the first path shows the prediction of mediator (emotional intelligence) through predictor (transformational leadership) where 30% variance is evident along with Beta and p-value significance (.5528 & .000). Second and third paths of mediation confirmed outcomes concerning prediction of criterion variable (occupational stress) through predictors (transformational leadership & emotional intelligence) wherein 67% change is evident along with significant Beta and p-values (.7271 & .000 and .4233 & .000) respectively. Third mediation path showed 59% variance in stress due to transformational along with the sufficient Beta and significant p-values (.9612 & .000).

The mediation steps provide enough information in deciding mediation wherein decrease in coefficient values from (.9612) in the direct relationship (path = c) to (.7271) in indirect relationships (b & c) and wherein all p-values in all mediation paths remained significant which shows that mediator (emotional intelligence) partially mediated linking between transformational leadership and occupational stress (calculated also as difference between (c and c'). It means that in predicting occupational stress, both transformational leadership and emotional intelligence are effective. The mediation has also been confirmed by Sobel test wherein effect (.2419 greater than 0) and confidence level (.000 < 0.05) that confirmed the mediation. Therefore, from the results of first mediation model, as hypothesized (H3) is thus accepted and hence substantiated.

The relationships among leadership styles and emotional intelligence provided significant information wherein results show significant association between leadership styles and organizational politics which have been validated through the existing research studies that confirmed that leadership is dynamic in managing the politics within the institutions (Kaya et al., 2016; Ram & Prabhakar, 2010; Uzair et al., 2020). Likewise, this study confirmed

significant association between leadership styles and emotional intelligence in different contexts through diverse outcomes that validates results of the study (Harun et al., 2016; Brinia et al., 2014; Ingram & Cangemi, 2012). Existing research studies provides enough support in order to validate the current study results.

CONCLUSION

The study provides significant information from the results in reaching the conclusion. The first hypothesis confirmed existence of association and thus accepted. Second hypothesis was about the impact (cause-&-effect) relationship that was extracted from the theoretical framework in order to predict occupational stress through leadership styles and emotional intelligence. The results from regression thus confirmed the predictability of occupational stress through transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence thereby offering significant information in deciding relationship. The hypothesis from the regression results was accepted based upon the significant coefficient and significant p-values. However, the results confirmed that transformational leadership is effective in predicting occupational stress due to higher coefficient values and p-values and thus the relationships (cause-&-effect) has therefore validated and substantiated. The thirds hypothesis about mediating role of emotional intelligence in the transformational leadership and occupational stress is also accepted. Study provides significant information to policy makers and stakeholders of higher institutions to understand research concepts under considerations in this research study comprehensively.

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