

## **DELVING DEEPER INTO A WIDER PERSPECTIVE: HOW TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ENHANCE EMPLOYEE MISSION VALENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the current date, when it has become difficult for the organizations to provide high monetary rewards to the employees, it has become a point of concern for the organizations as to how to motivate employees using ways that are economical, low-cost as well as satisfactory. On the other hand, organizational goals cannot be achieved until the employees are not motivated to achieve them. This study aims to identify employees' perceptions, individually, about how transformational leadership, solely and with the help of organizational goal clarity (OGC), performance management (PM), public service motivation (PSM), leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support (POS) can increase mission valence among public sector employees. This research is based upon data collected through survey from 377 employees of public sector organizations of Lahore, Pakistan. The findings of this study endorse the mediations of organizational goal clarity, performance management and public service motivation in the relationship among transformational leadership and mission valence as suggested by prior studies. Additionally, the findings of the current study confirm the mediations of newly introduced variables, leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support, in the relationship amid transformational leadership and mission valence. This study further contributes to the literature on transformational leadership and mission valence. Particularly, leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support are newly investigated in this study with regards to the relationship between transformational leadership and mission valence.

Moreover, the study has also discussed its theoretical contributions and practical implications in public sector organizations.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, mission valence, organizational goal clarity, performance management, public service motivation, leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support

## Introduction

Leadership is a process of establishing objectives for one or more individuals and induces them to proceed through together with the leader in the particular direction with full determination and competence (Jaques & Clement, 1994). Among several leadership styles, for example, transactional leadership, Charismatic leadership, visionary leadership and culture-based leadership, transformational leadership holds paramount importance (Bass, 1985; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Sashkin, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1987; Yukl, 1994). Transformational leaders inspire the workers' efforts by making them aware about the significance of the agency's values and outcomes, and in their efforts of doing so, they stimulate the higher-order needs of their workers and motivate them to prioritize the organization and its clients by surpassing their self-interest. Such leaders also emphasize the significance of the organizational mission (mission valence) being a fruitful source of increasing public employee motivation (Wright et al., 2012). The importance of mission valence is emphasized by transformational leadership as such leaders inspire the employees by exhibiting the importance of organization's mission through their own actions and efforts (Pasha et al., 2017).

An organization's performance is increased with an increase in the level of mission valence. Utilizing transformational leadership style, organizational leaders have used organizational goal clarity, performance management and public service motivation, and need to explore two distinctive concepts, 'leader-member exchange' and 'perceived organizational support' for the purpose of attracting employees towards organizational mission (mission valence) and achieve them (Pasha et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2012). At another point, researchers have argued that by clarifying and studying what a firm struggles for and in what ways these aspirations serve the society (Wright et al., 2012), public sector organizations will not just make employees aware of firm's objectives and values but also reinforce the association amid firm's

dogma and values of employees (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010) which eventually could motivate the workers to help in maximizing the firm's social influence (Vandenabeele, 2014). The assumed capacity of salient missions to evoke passion, diligence and commitment (Goodsell, 2010) raises the question that how public serving firms can establish a mission-centered culture and enhance the perception of attractiveness of the mission.

Transformational leadership has been a question of concern for scholarly research since a long period of time. Earlier, scholars mostly concentrated their research to define transformational leadership (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999), whereas in a more recent context, scholars have examined its influence to increase PSM (Caillier, 2014; Wright et al., 2012), organizational goal clarity, performance management, POS and the significance of organization's mission in the public sector (Bellè, 2013; Oberfield, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Pasha et al., 2017), as well as its correlation with leader-member exchange (Zare & Crawford, 2017).

Building from the research model and limitations of Pasha et al. (2017), the present study analyzes the role of transformational leadership in the augmentation of mission valence through the mediating effect of organizational goal clarity, performance management, and public service motivation and by introducing LMX and POS as two more mediating mechanisms between the said relationship. Furthermore, this study will be helpful for managers as they may enhance mission valence among the employees of public sector by providing them with transformational leadership and they can harness the influence of aforementioned mediators for the purpose. This study will also be helpful for the public serving organizations in their future recruitment and hiring decisions. Moreover, many authors of public management have highlighted that public sector firms probably performs more effectively if marked by higher degree of mission valence (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2018).

## **Literature Review**

### **Transformational Leadership**

A political scientist, James Burns (1978), initially conceived transformational leadership along with transactional leadership. It was done while documenting the attributes of the leaders of the world. The leaders, who are transformational, hold the capacity to transform a subject (Burns,

2003) in such a way that the modified form completely varies in character from the prior shape. Such leaders attain this considerable change with the help of four behaviors (Bass, 1985), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration. Suggested by Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), transformational leaders, at first, stimulate *inspirational motivation (IM)* between the follower individuals by imparting goals and visions offering challenge and purpose to the work of both the firm and the employees. Secondly, they motivate followers through their *idealized influence (II)*, strengthening organizational vision by showcasing such behavior to be taken as role models (Pasha et al. 2017). Third, by providing *intellectual stimulation (IS)*, transformational leaders invigorate followers to look for perspectives that are unconventional, to solve problems by discovering innovative solutions and to revise and polish ideas through the application of intelligence, creativity and logic (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Lastly, they spend time with adherents and deliver mentoring, coaching and provide further growth opportunities to which is known as *individual consideration (IC)* (Avolio et al., 1991).

Transformational leaders intent to sustain, encourage and motivate the workers (Caniëls et al., 2018). Such leaders stimulate employee efforts by making the significance of organization's values and outcomes a point of awareness for them. By using this leadership style, the leaders trigger their employees' higher-order requirements and needs and motivate employees to place the organization and its clientage above their self-interest (Wright et al., 2012). According to Yukl (1999), transformational leadership (TFL) is a leadership style that inspires subordinates to ascend their individual interest and benefits for the firm's betterment and its objectives. Individuals with transformational leadership work hard for the establishment of a clear and comprehensible organizational vision (Wright, 2007).

The theory of transformational leadership is responsible for articulating clear vision and mission (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Hughes, 2014). Transformational leadership has several benefits as proposed by a recent study in public administration. Oberfield (2012), in his longitudinal research upon U.S federal government workers, found that transformational style of leadership firmly anticipates employees' satisfaction and recognition about the quality of work. Furthermore, a number of studies (Jensen, 2018; Paarlberg and Lavigna, 2010; Trottier et al., 2008) have associated transformational leadership with PSM and goal clarity.

## Mission Valence

The notion of mission valence was established by Rainey and Steinbauer (1999), who extracted it from expectancy theory of Vroom (1964). Expectancy theory suggests that a worker's motivation depends upon, firstly, the extent to which they desire for a reward, valence; secondly expectancy, which means that worker's greater efforts will take them to the performance expected from them; thirdly instrumentality, that higher level of performance will lead towards reward (Caillier, 2014).

Mission valence can be referred (Wright et al., 2012) to as the thoughts and perceptions about the significance of a firm's objectives or its ability to contribute in the society. Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) refers mission valence to the point of significance placed by the workers in the mission of their organization. They also propose that when the workers are attracted towards the importance of the mission of their organization (mission valence), they tend to perform well. In simpler words, the level of employees' motivation grows higher with an increase in the level of attractiveness of their organization's mission. Goodsell (2012) and Wright (2007) have highlighted the expectation that the significance of a firm's mission can influence its ability to recruit, motivate and retain the workers. Furthermore, many authors of public management stressed that public sector firms probably performs more effectively if marked by higher degree of mission valence (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2018).

## Leader-Member Exchange

Schriesheim et al. (1999) described leader-member exchange (LMX) as the quality and level of exchange amid a follower and a leader. The theory of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) proposes that not a same strategy is utilized by the leaders to deal with their followers or subordinates, rather, a different kind of exchange or relationship is developed by them for each follower (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen Novak & Sommerkamp, 1982; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Graen, 1980). Such relationships extend from low LMX, often called *out-group* (strictly based upon contracts of employment) to high LMX, often called *in-group* (relationships identified by liking, respect, reciprocal influence, mutual trust) (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). LMX is defined as an effective and quality work relationship that a leader establishes with his/her followers on individual basis (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995). The concept of LMX is based upon the dyadic relationships amid followers and the

leaders within a firm's work environment. The relationships between a leader and a follower can vary from low to high-quality, as suggested by the concept of LMX (Casimir et al., 2014; Wayne & Green, 1993). The perception of a leader about his/her follower determines the quality of a leader-follower relationship. According to a study, when leaders generate high-quality relationships with employees, it positively affects the work environment as a whole (Graen & Scandura, 1987).

According to a number of studies, employees are found to be confident, successful (Murphy & Ensher, 1999; Schyns et al., 2005), empowered and significantly participating in the processes of decision-making when they are provided with high-quality LMXs as compared to those having low-quality LMXs (Yukl & Fu, 1999). Leaders also tend to communicate in a more supportive way with the employees having high-quality LMXs (Michael et al., 2015). The quality of LMX, unsurprisingly, holds a positive influence upon employee's outcomes related to work (Casimir et al., 2014). Since a long period of time, high-quality LMXs have been regarded as key precursor of the effective employee performance. LMX should not be ignored or underestimated as it is concerned with the outcomes that are advantageous for a firm (Krishnan, 2005).

The concept of LMX is established upon the basis of the leader-member relationship (Asgari et al., 2008). The caliber of this relationship is said to be influencing the leader's behavior with the workers. LMX with a high quality includes support, loyalty and mutual respect through which the levels of bidirectional effects and mutual attractiveness increase. A research proposed that LMX, to a greater extent, is based upon the exchange of values among the leaders and followers (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Zare & Crawford, 2017).

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Organizational Support Theory (OST) suggests that the workers' capacity to assign the firm anthropomorphic aspects encourages the evolution of POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to OST, POS should reinforce workers' faith that the firm recognizes their contributions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). OST suggests that workers develop POS according to the treatment of the organization towards them. When a firm shows appropriate or inappropriate treatment to its employees, the employees try to figure out the reason why the firm treated them in such a manner. Employees who perceive the treatment of the firm as well and appropriate,

because it sincerely cares for their well-being, are the employees who probably establish high degree of POS (Kirkland, 2017).

Perceived Organizational Support is described as universal perspectives or global beliefs generated by the workers regarding the degree to which a firm admires, values and appreciates their efforts as well as concerned with their well-being and prosperity (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Researchers, through the lens of social exchange theory, argues that such global beliefs are based upon workers' interpretations of their firm's commitment towards them (POS), which in return promotes workers' commitment towards their firms. Following the rule of reciprocation, it is suggested by POS that the workers show better performance when they believe that their firm is providing them with higher levels of support. According to the literature on POS, a positive correlation is found among the employees' work-related attitudes and POS and the reason for such an outcome is that employees feel it as their obligation to care about the firm and therefore helping the firm in achieving its objectives by portraying positive behaviors and attitudes towards the firm (Altunoğlu & Gürel, 2015; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Trybou et al., 2014; Zheng & Wu, 2018).

Following an action of transference, the firms are personified as a significant element in the lives of their workers (Levinson, 1965). Thus, the workers establish relationships with their firms on the basis of social exchanges, and their belief about the extent to which a firm is committed to them shapes their own level of commitment towards the firm (Shore & Tetrick, 1991) and this is typically accordant with reciprocity (Wayne et al., 1997). Employees tend to perform well when they find that their contributions are appreciated and valued by their firms and also that their firms are concerned about their prosperity (Shore & Wayne, 1993).

## **Hypotheses Development**

### **Transformational leadership & Mission Valence**

According to Pasha et al. (2017), transformational leaders demonstrate the importance of an organization's mission through their own actions and thus they are viewed as role models for the employees. Such leaders approach the individual identities of their employees or followers through their ability of being effective mentors, which help the employees to see their contribution as a part of the agency's broader mission. This realization emphasizes the followers'



responsibility that they have towards both the agency and the society (Shamir & Howell, 1999). Transformational leaders bridge a connection between the tasks of the employees and the organizational goals which motivates them to perform well. Such leaders make organization's mission a part of their behavior and lay their stress upon its significance through their actions, determination and decisions to which it is also referred to as "walk the talk" (Pasha et al., 2017). In a recent context, research has suggested that the perception of the employees about transformational leadership has a positive correspondence towards their perception of the organization's mission attractiveness (Jensen et al., 2018). Thus, there is a direct and positive influence of transformational leadership over mission valence. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

**Hypothesis 1:** Transformational leadership will directly and positively lead to employee mission valence.

### **Transformational leadership, Mission Valence & Organizational Goal Clarity**

Suggested by Weiss & Piderit (1999), organizational goals, that are clear, have the capacity to increase how workers apprehend mission valence as such goals communicate and elucidate the contribution of the organization to a broader arena of policy as well as how the organization is unique. Wright and Pandey (2011) recently discovered that when the organizational mission is clear, distinguished and comprehensible, employee mission valence is increased. Researchers have found that TFL increased workers' apprehension about organizational goal clarity (Park and Rainey, 2008). Therefore, the transformational leadership theory, predictably, stresses the significance of clear and effective articulation of organizational goals in the process of motivating and inspiring the workers. To simplify the phenomenon, it can be said that the organizational mission can only have its influence on those employees who are aware of its existence and recognize its significance (Wright et al., 2012). Moreover, studies (Pasha et al., 2017; Wright et al., 2012) have provided evidence of an empirical correlation among TFL, organizational goal clarity and employee mission valence. Therefore, the researcher hypothesizes that:

**Hypothesis 2:** Transformational leadership will be indirectly and positively linked with employee mission valence through the mediating effect of organizational goal clarity.



### **Transformational Leadership, Mission Valence & Performance Management**

Performance management (PM) is another aspect for leaders to buttress the significance of organizational mission. Transformational leaders need to connect short-term organizational and individual achievements to the accomplishment of the larger agency's goals as well, evaluated through performance indicators (Pasha et al., 2017). These leaders can help employees to link their tasks to the organization's broader mission by using performance indicators. Such leaders can also use performance indicators to let employees apprehend that the society and the firm both can be influenced by bringing a change in performance. These leaders may also use performance management to nurture organizational objectives by setting targets and encouraging employees to attain those targets. It is perceived that performance management is a mechanism that can be utilized to ameliorate the performance of both the organization and the employee considering its learning-inducing and motivational capabilities. Therefore, it should be a valuable tool for transformational leadership (Pasha et al., 2017). Thus, transformational leaders will likely utilize performance management for the purpose of stimulating mission valence amid workers.

**Hypothesis 3:** Transformational leadership will be indirectly and positively linked with employee mission valence through the mediating effect of performance management.

### **Transformational Leadership, Mission Valence & PSM-Public Service Motivation**

PSM - Public service motivation can be distinctly relevant to mission valence. PSM theory proposes that the public sector workers tend to see public organizational missions as significant then the private sector employees. Perry and Hondeghem (2008) and Perry and Wise (1990) suggested that the reason behind this is the overlap and similarity amid their personal values and these objectives. Weiss & Piderit (1999) believes that the overlapping of organizational objectives and employees' values motivates them to see those objectives as personally significant and to amalgamate agency's objectives with their own idea of distinctiveness. According to Caillier (2014), individuals with a sense of PSM have an inclination towards serving the interests of the community and society as a whole. Since public serving organizations follow community-oriented missions, the supporters of the theory of PSM have asserted that people having higher

PSM level probably consider public-sector organization's missions to be significant as their values and goals imbricate with those of the firm (Wright et al., 2012). The significance of organizational outcomes and mission being emphasized, public and non-profit organizations can utilize TFL because of their dynamic service and community-centered ambitions. Making it simple, for public sector firms, transformational leaders are constructive and valuable as they proceed in the directions that can augment PSM and what is referred to as employee mission valence (Park & Rainey, 2008; Rainey & Steinbauer, 1999; Vandenabeele, 2008). According to Wright et al. (2012), TFL and PSM have a positive correlation. Transformational leadership is significant in public sector as it aligns appropriately and effectively with PSM (Jensen et al., 2018). Moreover, TFL and PSM positively correspond with each other (Wright et al., 2012) which makes PSM a mechanism that can help transformational leadership in indirectly influencing organization's end results. Thus, the hypothesis is developed:

**Hypothesis 4:** Transformational leadership will be indirectly and positively linked with mission valence through the mediating impact of public service motivation.

### **Transformational leadership, Mission Valence & Leader-Member Exchange**

Parallel to LMX, Transformational Leadership is also based upon the relationship amid the leader and the follower (Zare & Crawford, 2017). Researchers (Basu & Green, 1997) contends that individualized consideration, one of transformational leadership dimensions, satisfies the social needs of the followers which particularly requires empathy, acceptance and human interaction that are, to a larger extent, parallel to the domain of LMX. Followers, when provided with transformational leadership, establish trust and faith in the competence of their leader and feel proud to be affiliated with him/her. Such behaviors need a quality relationship among leaders and followers (Zare & Crawford, 2017). On the other side, LMX comprises trust and reciprocal respect and is therefore aligned with transformational leadership (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Transformational leadership satisfies the social needs of the individuals (Basu & Green, 1997), and in doing so, it stimulates their higher-order needs and motivate them to consider the firm and its mission above their personal interest (Wright et al., 2012). Transformational leaders perform this action by utilizing LMX, i-e, they approach the higher-order needs of people by interacting, empathizing and building quality relationships with them (Basu & Green 1997). Leaders, who are transformational, showcase such behaviors after building quality relationships

with employees or followers (LMX) which eventually increases the sense of mission valence among them. Moreover, it has been under argument that the results linked with TFL are the outcomes of individualized dyadic relation among a leader and a follower (Deluga, 1992). According to a research, it requires a leader to establish a relationship in order to make sense of the future of followers through which they may relate with the vision of their leader (Avolio et al., 2003). On the other hand, the vision of a transformational leader is actually the vision of the agency itself. That is why, transformational leaders can utilize LMX to enhance employees' significance level towards organization's broader mission. Thus, leader-member exchange acts as a significant mechanism in the relation among TFL and mission valence.

**Hypothesis 5:** Transformational leadership will be indirectly and positively linked with mission valence through its impact on leader-member exchange.

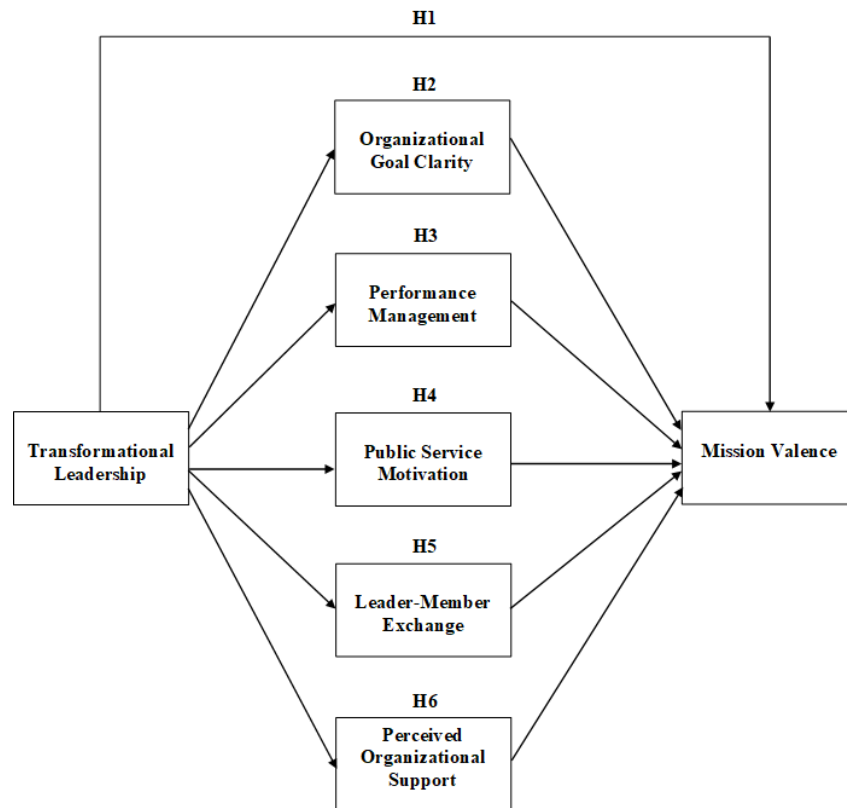
### **Transformational leadership, Mission Valence & Perceived Organizational Support**

The employees' perceptions regarding the degree to which a firm values their contribution and cares for their welfare, is referred to as perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Established upon the fulfillment of emotional needs of employees (Armeli et al., 1998) and norms of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), perceived organizational support would lead to desirable organizational outcomes. The advancement of POS is rendered by the employees' natural propensity to incarnate their agency by attributing to it human-like aspects. Based upon this personification about an organization, the way organization treats its employees would be perceived by them as a manifestation if it favors them or not. A leader who embraces the traits of TFL provide his/her employees/followers with coaching and mentoring; let them flourish in an encouraging environment and reach out to their individual needs. The leader, through the manifestation of such actions, clearly conveys the followers that their concerns are cared about. Transformational leadership increases followers' personal well-being by employing one of its dimensions, individualized consideration, which is concerned with the needs of the followers (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Moreover, employees perform better when they see their firm valuing their efforts and contributions (Shore & Wayne, 1993). Transformational leadership, by utilizing its dimension, inspirational motivation, reach out to the individual identities of the employees which let them to see their contributions as a part of the firm's broader mission (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Pasha et al., 2017). It gives them efficacy and purpose, hence communicating that their

contributions hold positive valuation for the organization. The impacts of transformational leadership upon employees’ POS, i-e, caring for the employees’ individual needs and well-being and allowing them to see their contributions playing significant role in the organization’s broader objectives, in turn, increases the sense of reciprocity norm among employees. This reciprocity results in the employees signifying organizational objectives as emphasized by transformational leaders. In this way, such leaders positively influence POS among employees and make use of this positive effect on POS to increase mission valence among them by helping them to see their contributions playing a vital role in the firm’s mission as a whole. Thus, transformational leadership will likely use POS to increase employee mission valence.

**Hypothesis 6:** Transformational leadership will be indirectly and positively linked with mission valence through the mediating effect of perceived organizational support.

**Figure 1: Hypothesized Model**



**Methodology**

**Sample and Method**

The survey is utilized for the purpose of empirical testing of the study variables. For data collection, the employees of public sector organizations of Lahore, Pakistan, were targeted as the present study was aimed to identify the role of TFL, alone and with the help of the mediating effects of OGC, PM, PSM, LMX & POS, in increasing mission valence among the public sector employees. In order to obtain a representative and effective sample for the survey, 2 public sector organizations were selected, considering their mission as providing the most valuable public service in Lahore, Pakistan. 450 questionnaires were distributed in total, out of which a total of 377 filled survey questionnaires was acquired determining 83% response rate.

### **Measures**

The variables were tested on a 5-point Likert Scale, having a range from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'. Transformational leadership was measured through an established instrument, i-e, MLQ - Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999) containing 4 dimensions: II - Idealized Influence, IM - Inspirational Motivation, IS - Intellectual Stimulation & IC - Individualized Consideration that were measured through the items that focused the leader emphasizing the significance of having a collective sense of mission. Mission valence was measured through items that focused whether the organization provides valuable public service or not (Wright & Pandey, 2011). Similarly, organizational goal clarity (Pandey & Wright, 2006), performance management (Pasha et al., 2017) and public service motivation (Perry, 1996) were also measured through established instruments with PSM having four dimensions: Commitment to the Public Interest, Attraction to Policy Making, Self-Sacrifice & Compassion that were measured through the items. Following Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), leader-member exchange was measured through the items focusing upon the perception of the employees regarding their leader understanding their problems and needs. Perceived organizational support was measured through items focusing upon the employees' perceptions about their organization really caring for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Process mediation analysis (Hayes, 2013) were used to test hypotheses. The Process mediation analysis is a statistical procedure that uses bootstrapping to explain how X-independent variable connects with Y-dependent variable. The mediation route provides an explanation that a mediating variable (M) is located amid X-

independent and Y-dependent variable, as the influence of independent variable is carried onto the dependent variable through the mediator (Hayes, 2013).

## Results

Table 1 shows that the correlation among transformational leadership and mission valence, as independent and dependent variables respectively, was highly significant (coefficient = 0.669,  $p < 0.05$ ). The relationships among TFL and other variables were positive and highly significant. The correlation of leader-member exchange with transformational leadership (coefficient = 0.705,  $p < 0.05$ ) and mission valence (coefficient = 0.606,  $p < 0.05$ ) exhibited positive and highly significant relationships. The correlation of perceived organizational support with transformational leadership (coefficient = 0.687,  $p < 0.05$ ) and mission valence (coefficient = 0.757,  $p < 0.05$ ) also showed positive and highly significant relationships. Hence, the variables added as the main contribution of the study were in hypothesized direction. Furthermore, the remaining variables (mediators) also showed positive and significant relationship with TFL and MV. Thus, the correlation results confirmed the intended direction of the relationship among variables, also shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Bi-Variate Pearson Correlation**

Variables	TL	MV	OGC	PM	PSM	LMX	POS
TL	(0.91)						
MV	.669	(0.67)					
OGC	.559	.500	(0.80)				
PM	.529	.519	.508	(0.81)			
PSM	.687	.725	.525	.466	(0.82)		
LMX	.705	.606	.551	.592	.633	(0.89)	
POS	.687	.757	.504	.521	.802	.699	(0.82)

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in parentheses  
All correlations statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis testing provides empirical validation of hypotheses of a research. In the current study, hypothesis testing was conducted to empirically test and validate the claims of the proposed theoretical model. There were six hypotheses in total. The **first** hypothesis proposed that TFL leads to mission valence. The regression analysis of the relationship among transformational leadership and mission valence was positive and statistically significant

( $\beta = 0.827$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The Process mediation analysis (Hayes, 2013) was used to test the **second** hypothesis proposing that transformational leadership increases employee mission valence through the mediating effect of organizational goal clarity (OGC). The results proposed a **partial mediation** with the direct effect path being statistically significant between transformational leadership and mission valence ( $\beta = 0.7013$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 0.8159 - 0.5867). A 95% confidence interval indicated that the indirect effect path between transformational leadership, organizational goal clarity and mission valence was entirely above zero (CI = 0.2048 - 0.0518), resulting in statistically significant partial mediation ( $\beta = 0.1261$ ) (Kane & Ashbaugh, 2017). The **third** hypothesis was also tested through the mediation analysis that proposes the indirect influence of transformational leadership on mission valence through the mediating effect of performance management (PM). The direct relationship was found statistically significant between transformational leadership and mission valence ( $\beta = 0.6777$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and CI = 0.7881 - 0.5673). The indirect effect amid TFL, performance management and mission valence showed significant results ( $\beta = 0.1497$ , CI = 0.2194 - 0.0794) with **partial mediation**. The **fourth** hypothesis was tested suggesting that transformational leadership indirectly impacts mission valence through public service motivation (PSM). The direct effect of TFL upon MV was significant ( $\beta = 0.4005$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 0.5169 - 0.2842) and the mediation analysis showed **partial mediation** between TFL, PSM and MV ( $\beta = 0.4269$ , CI = 0.5129 - 0.3468). The **fifth** hypothesis proposes the mediating effect of leader-member exchange (LMX) upon the relationship among transformational leadership and mission valence. The results for the direct effect of transformational leadership on mission valence indicated statistical significance ( $\beta = 0.5941$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 0.7263 - 0.4619). Simultaneously, the indirect effect between TFL, LMX and MV was significant resulting in **partial mediation** ( $\beta = 0.2333$ , CI = 0.3366 - 0.1056). The **sixth** hypothesis suggests that transformational leadership indirectly effects mission valence through the mediating effect of perceived organizational support (POS). The results for the direct effect of TFL upon MV depicted statistical significance ( $\beta = 0.3486$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , CI = 0.2372 - 0.4600) and according to the results, **partial mediation** occurred as the indirect effect was statistical significance and confidence intervals were fairly above zero ( $\beta = 0.4788$ , CI = 0.5735 - 0.3891). The findings of the analysis, conducted to test hypotheses, demonstrated that all the hypotheses were supported.

## Discussion and Conclusion



The research was conducted to empirically test the correlation among transformational leadership and mission valence (Pasha et al., 2017). Previous researchers have studied transformational leadership with organizational goal clarity, performance management and public service motivation (Bellè, 2013; Caillier, 2014; Oberfield, 2012; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Pasha et al., 2017; Wright, Moynihan & Pandey, 2012) in order to increase employee mission valence and suggested the role of leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support to be explored with respect to the aforementioned relationship (Pasha et al., 2017).

The result of the *first* hypothesis showed that there is a positive correlation amid transformational leadership and mission valence as proposed in the current study. TFL inspires the followers to surpass their personal benefits for the betterment of the firm and its goals. It is the aim of transformational leadership to encourage, motivate and sustain the employees (Caniëls et al., 2018). Transformational leaders signify organizational values and goals as of paramount importance and thus motivate employee efforts towards them. On the other hand, mission valence identifies the level of significance that the employees place towards the objectives of their organization. Transformational leadership helps the employees to see their contribution as a part of the firm's broader mission by approaching their individual identities and providing them with mentorship.

The results of the *second* hypothesis showed that transformational leadership is significantly and positively linked with mission valence through the mediating effect of organizational goal clarity. When organizational goals are clearly articulated, they tend to communicate the uniqueness of the organization which in turn increases the workers' understanding of mission valence (Weiss & Piderit, 1999). Transformational leaders clearly convey the goals and mission of the organization to the employees which successively motivates them to attain organization's mission.

The *third* hypothesis results indicated that transformational leadership is significantly and positively linked with mission valence through the mediating effect of performance management. Performance management reinforces the importance of organizational mission. Transformational leaders utilize performance indicators to let the employees realize that changing the performance can influence both the firm as well as the society. Such leaders set targets and motivate

employees to meet those targets and hence utilize performance management to promote organizational objectives.

The findings of the *fourth* hypothesis showed that transformational leadership is indirectly and positively linked with mission valence through the significant mediating impact of public service motivation. Transformational leaders use PSM by highlighting the relationship amid the values and the performance of employees with those of the firm. Such leaders motivate the individuals, having a sense of PSM, to surpass their self-interest and achieve the community-oriented mission of the organization. Since individuals with PSM seek to serve public and public sector organization have public serving missions, transformational leaders let such employees to see the connection between their values and organizational mission (Pasha et al., 2017, Wright, 2007; Wright & Pandey, 2008, 2011; Wright, Moynihan & Pandey, 2012).

The statistical results of the *fifth* hypothesis demonstrated that leader-member exchange positively and significantly mediates the relationship among transformational leadership and mission valence. LMX is the quality and level of exchange among a follower and a leader (Schriesheim et al., 1999). Transformational leadership aligns with LMX because of its emphasis upon building quality relationships with employees. Transformational leadership provides recognition, empathy and human interaction that is parallel to LMX. In order to align employees' beliefs, attitudes and values with firm's mission, leaders need to build quality relationships with employees, which is possible through LMX. The characteristic of transformation of a developed LMX relationship takes place with a shift in followers' motivation from an inclination towards satisfying self-interests to satisfying organizational collective and broader interests (Wang et al., 2005). Through LMX, leaders may convince their followers that the mission of their organization deserves to be significant. The literature upon leader-member exchange shows that it can play a vital role in connecting TFL and mission valence. The results of the present study confirm the significant mediating role of LMX in the relationship amid TFL and employee mission valence.

The results for the *sixth* hypothesis signified that transformational leadership is indirectly and positively linked to mission valence through its influence on perceived organizational support (POS). The concept of POS grows from the perceptions of workers regarding the degree to which a firm values, appreciates and admires their efforts and care for their prosperity and

well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Transformational leaders communicate and empathize with the employees and make them believe that firm cares for their well-being. Such leaders reach out to the individual identities of the employees which let them to see their contributions as a part of the firm's broader mission (Kurtessis et al., 2017). When employees feel that their concerns are being cared about and their contributions being a part of organization's broader mission, the sense of reciprocity is increased among them. Consequently, employees signify organizational objectives as emphasized by transformational leaders. The concept of POS suggests that it can be of great significant for transformational leaders to use POS in order to increase mission valence. The statistical results of the current study affirm that TFL indirectly and positively affects mission valence through the mediating effect of perceived organizational support.

Transformational leadership is useful for the development and success of the organizations. It is a strong determinant of organizational success because of its quality of helping the firms to attain their objectives and goals. It is becoming significant to understand the concept of transformational leadership, preferably by the organizations. This study contributes in the growing evidence that transformational leadership carries paramount importance in improving the performance of public sector firms through the augmentation of the sense of mission valence amid workers.

Previous literature has confirmed the mediations of organizational goal clarity, performance management and public service motivation in the relationship among transformational leadership and mission valence. The present study also affirms the aforementioned relationships. In order to positively link with mission valence, transformational leadership increases organizational goal clarity among employees; uses performance management to engage employees in challenging tasks and increases PSM of employees. The findings of this study further endorse these relationships.

Building from the research model and limitations of Pasha et al. (2017), the present study analyzed the role of transformational leadership in the augmentation of mission valence by introducing LMX and POS as two more mediating mechanisms between the said relationship. The findings of the current study validate the mediations of LMX and POS in the relationship amid transformational leadership and mission valence.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

Since public sector organizations have community and service-oriented objectives, the public management scholars have emphasized that the missions of the public sector firms have the potential and capacity of being one of their most valuable asset. While a wealth of studies have explored the concept of transformational leadership, however, little literature do we have that explored the idea of mission valence. The concepts of TFL and mission valence have been separately linked to desirable work-outcomes, but a little empirical research has investigated how TFL and MV work together to help public sector organizations in achieving their missions. After Pasha et al. (2017) empirically explored the relationship among TFL and mission valence, directly and indirectly through the help of various mechanisms, they further highlighted the need to study other factors that can help transformational leaders to improve and increase mission valence. Therefore, this study further contributes to the literature on TFL and mission valence, and how OGC, PM, PSM, LMX and POS can act as mediating mechanisms in the said relationship.

Furthermore, the current study collectively contributes to the discipline of *organizational behavior* and *HRM practices* by exploring different factors and mechanisms that can positively influence work-related behaviors of the employees and how the employees of public sector can be engaged and motivated to achieve organizational missions.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations to this study. First, this study did not analyze the impact of employee demographic attributes, for example, gender, age, tenure and education that could probably have the potential to influence employee perceptions about the degree to which their leaders are transformational and the mission of their organization is salient. Moreover, methodological strategy of future studies can be qualitative and longitudinal. Another limitation to the current study is that the data was collected through convenience sampling technique because of which the results cannot be generalized. Furthermore, data collection can be done through interviews instead of questionnaires.

Future research can also assess the role of leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support as moderating mechanisms upon the relationship among transformational leadership and mission valence. Also, transformational leadership can use perceived organizational support as mediating mechanism to influence employee job commitment, job

satisfaction and turnover intentions (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003) in public and private sector. The influence of other leadership styles, for example, ethical leadership, transactional leadership and authentic leadership, with regards to mission valence should also be explored.

### **Practical Implications**

Furthermore, this study will be helpful for managers as they may enhance mission valence among the employees of public sector by providing them with transformational leadership and they can harness the influence of aforementioned mediators for the purpose. This study will also be helpful for the public serving organizations in their future recruitment and hiring decisions. Moreover, many authors of public management have highlighted that public sector firms probably performs more effectively if marked by higher degree of mission valence (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2018).

If public sector organizations wish to increase the sense of mission valence amid their employees, they need to establish a culture that supports, motivate and engage employees and in which employees feel cared and valued. Public sector organizations need to recruit individuals with transformational leadership skills or they can develop programs to train their current managers or supervisors. The programs/trainings should focus on developing transformational leadership skills among the leaders/managers/supervisors. Such trainings will teach the leaders/managers/supervisor how to intrinsically motivate employees to work beyond their personal interests towards achieving the organizational mission. The findings of this study suggest that the steps taken by organization's agents have a direct influence upon its performance and progress. Therefore, the practicing leaders or managers need to adopt transformational leadership and must utilize organizational goal clarity, performance management, public service motivation, leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support to increase mission valence.

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