
Investigating the role of transformation leadership on Public sector employee's job satisfaction during Covid-19: The mediating role of employee Empowerment

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Abstract: The global economy is suffering as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of the health and psychosocial issues, both private and public sector organizations are impacted. Leaders and employees must be committed, engaged, and supportive during this crucial process. To ensure that the overall process runs smoothly, leaders should act and energize on the same page and same attitudes, i.e., transformational leadership styles. Hence, this study attempted to examine the effect of transformational leadership on employee satisfaction during Covid-19, along with the mediating role of employee empowerment between the transformational leadership and employee satisfaction of employees working in public sector organizations. The results of this study revealed the positive association between characteristics of transformational leadership such as coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, and supporting teamwork, with job satisfaction. Moreover, the mediating results of this study show that employee empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, and job satisfaction. The current study validates that the characteristics of transformational leadership have a strong effect on job satisfaction among public sector employees. Therefore, the role of transformational leaders during increased healthcare and psychosocial challenges is highly influential. The limitations and future recommendations are also conveyed in this study.

Keywords: Covid-19, Transformational Leadership, Employee empowerment, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic era has changed the face of the world economy. Various corporate strategic plans that have been carefully designed in a strict timeline underwent drastic changes. However, in today's unstable and unpredictable environment, strategic and robust leadership helps face everyday challenges. To this end, Salau, Oludayo et al. (2018) stress the value of effective and strong leaders and agree that leadership is a crucial determinant for capacity building and business growth, addressing organizational obstacles to maintain their businesses worldwide. Successful leadership is well able to motivate subordinates, as stated by (Eliyana and Ma'arif 2019). Leaders have such attributes and characteristics, that they are distinct from others. Integrity, compatibility, compassion, teamwork, and others are some of the main features which help toward the achievement of the objectives and tasks. However, leaders have many abilities to motivate and inspire their subordinates to meet their organizational objectives. Leaders should ultimately have personalities, attitudes, habits and other properties in place to motivate team members to accomplish organizational goals (Dappa, Bhatti et al. 2019). Here we can assume an important relationship between the personality of a leader and objective success. Several researchers attribute quality leadership achievement to goals that have unique features that reflect all facets of the organizational goal (Buil, Martínez et al. 2019).

For this reason, the current organizational leadership literature considers various management styles as an important way to achieve desired objectives. Comprehensive leadership theories often take on various leadership styles as realistic and useful for understanding the situation, supporting workers, and improving the working environment (Buil, Martínez et al. 2019). Innovation, teamwork, exchange of views, and tackling crises

are welcomed, for example, in the transformational leadership style. In contrast with pragmatic leadership, the transformational leadership style is adaptable, empowering, and trustworthy in the views of employees (Eliyana and Ma'arif 2019). Therefore, many conclude that transformational leadership is a valuable resume of organizational operations with the help of staff and corporate initiatives in the global health crisis in Covid-19 (Eliyana and Ma'arif 2019). As the job becomes more complicated during emergencies, comparatively more resources are needed and communication challenges often impede operations, it can only be tackled by transformative leaders. Essentially, the mindset of transformational leaders affects even employee trust and job satisfaction when organizations are closed and work interruptedly, as during Covid-19 (Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020).

As a matter of concept, transformational leaders have highly strategic attributes that promote employees at all levels and help them resolve any possible obstacle to meeting current challenges (Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020). Therefore, by keeping in view the current organizational challenges during Covid-19, the present study explores the characteristics of transformational leadership and its consequences, such as work satisfaction of employees working in public sector organization, and of possible transformational leadership properties (Dappa, Bhatti et al. 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication Effectiveness & Job Satisfaction

Communication is an art, which, according to (Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020), is created to communicate and achieve the desired objectives. If leaders and employees communicate effectively, they can understand the needs and requests of each other. Communication is a fundamental determinant of shared understanding and satisfaction particularly in an organization where there are many employees in departments. In this connection, Proctor (2014) explored the association between bidirectional communications between managers, workers and supervisors in Utah. Findings showed that respondents were pleased and satisfied with their senior colleagues' contact. Their opinion can be shared, the decision-making process can be taken with them and the senior management and leaders can express their needs. Similarly, Abubakar and Obansa (2020) investigated the correlation between work satisfaction and communication in telecommunication employees in Iran, not only ensuring satisfaction at the job, but also encouraging workers to perform effectively to achieve organizational goals. Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020), also authenticated when they analyzed the impacts of communication on work satisfaction among higher education employees.

The researchers concluded that they feel happy when the workers interact with the senior management and that their job performance is affected positively. Besides, Abdullah and Hui (2014) studied the proposed correlation between job satisfaction and communication in Malaysia's temporary projects. Findings found that the relationship between work satisfaction and communication is good and positive. In order to enhance employee loyalty and improved performance among workers, the researchers suggested establishing good communication with all employees of the organization. The impacts of communication on employee satisfaction and work performance were also examined by Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020) they emphasized that successful communication increases employee satisfaction and job performance. They argued that communication is a vital mechanism to ensure clarification of responsibilities, equal opportunities, enhanced working atmosphere and appreciation of job satisfaction. Therefore, on the past literature this study assumes that effective communication will positively affect the employee satisfaction. Hence, the hypothesis offered as:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between effective communication and job satisfaction.

Coping with Uncertainty, Ambiguity & Job Satisfaction

Today, the business approaches develop tactics that are more versatile in cope with the uncertainty and role ambiguity of the workforce. Focusing more on leadership forms is more important for this reason, particularly concerning transformative leadership. Different articles have seen positive leadership as flexible and competent for handling the employee and uncertainties effectively Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020). In order to determine this, transformational leadership has been analyzed as a source of ambiguity, reduction, and uncertainty (Riaz and Haider 2010). A descriptive quantitative approach was used by the researchers and an n= 240 sample of researchers from different organizations in Islamabad, Pakistan were chosen. Results indicate a favorable relationship between the employees with transformational leadership, the uncertainty reduction, ambiguity reduction, and higher work satisfaction. According to the participants, including all the other explanations, their work satisfaction is highly conditioned on transformational leaders because they admit the abilities of employees and direct them if employees face any difficulty or misunderstanding.

Further, Kimura (2012) explored the link between ambiguities within the organization with employees about transformative leadership attitude and satisfaction for jobs by using the method for the case study analysis by employees working with the public sector organizations working in Japan. Findings proved for workplace politics have been adverse repercussions on the productivity of workers. Furthermore, respondents expressed

high hope about transformational leaders as successful treatment of uncertainty and ambiguity. Also, they affirmed that transformational leadership plays a critical role between job satisfaction of workers and a reduction of uncertainty in public and private sector organizations. As these leaders have enough abilities to handle employee uncertainty by directing workers and strengthening their morality, thereby enhancing their organizational commitment and reducing any current uncertainty around positions, roles and responsibilities Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020).

This illustrates the efficacy of transformational leadership as coping with the uncertainty of staff and any current ambiguities that can impact their work efficiency. Due to the uncertainty and trust of the role, it impacts not only on the competence of the workers but also its mental wellbeing adversely. Transformation leaders may advance workers by providing their employees with preparation directions and guidance for their professional activity Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020). In the same direction, Xian, Li et al. (2020) analyzed the link between transformational leadership and the reduction of job uncertainties and ambiguities. Researchers used a descriptive and quantitative methodology and chosen by several public sector organizations in China n= 542 questionnaires. Results showed a clear correlation between transformational leadership and the reduction in employee uncertainty. In comparison, the findings revealed supervisor engagement to improve the morale of workers as a beneficial factor in decreasing uncertainty.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity, and job satisfaction.

Guidance and Support & Job Satisfaction

Organizational success often depends on the level of efficiency and performance. Yet work satisfaction is an integral element in this situation that defines enhanced perspective. Most research allocates jobs to support from the top directorship and leadership. If the workers are well treated, they can be pleased with their job, and hence it allows them to perform better Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020). According to Alkhateri, Abuelhassan et al. (2018), one of the most important building blocks of business performance is vitality but is the impact. Offering cooperative leaders takes the particular concern to management. As managers guidance by their parents, most workers depend on leaders who support management and resources are included. This support is tailored for the treatment of psychological and emotional aspects, task ambiguity, workplace needs, uncertainty etc.

In this context, Gkolia, Belias et al. (2014) have attributed that there is a significant connection between leadership, work satisfaction, and employee support. Their research concluded that job satisfaction is important for effective and meaningful administrative operations. If staff are unhappy, the managers assist and accompany them with this. Research by Nwokolo and Anyamene (2016) examined the connection between work satisfaction, job engagement, and the role of leadership in the school sector in Nigeria. Study participants reported greater work satisfaction and loyalty to the company due to superior supervisory supervisors and school administration. There was a greater impact on mentors and students in this approach. For companies to achieve targets, it is important to take employees' happiness into consideration.

Job satisfaction is directly linked to leadership level as the critical determinant. Getting support and advice while working would boost your job performance and prolong your job tenure (Nwokolo and Anyamene 2016). "Later, in Qureshi, Ab Hamid et al. (2018)'s research review, the author examine the relationship between job satisfaction and supervisor support in medical staff members." The researchers used the case study approach and tried to collect data from a group of 620 healthcare workers in Sindh. Observed results showed a clear positive relationship between supervisor help and productivity gains. The evaluation concluded that leadership support will assist managers to achieve the targets.

H₃: There is a positive relationship between guidance and Support & job satisfaction.

The relationship between Risk Management & Job Satisfaction

Leadership is a two-way mechanism where the leader gives greater priority to subordinates and reciprocates better outcomes. A good leader makes the most of his staff to be most successful. Being good at what he does stimulates other workers with rewards and infusing enthusiasm for work Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020). Researchers conclude that an individual's leadership can improve a person's job satisfaction. A role model for subordinates is the key element in achieving performance at a managerial level. When staff has faith in the supervisors, it will affect their satisfaction and high organizational commitment Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020). Latest studies indicate that transformational leadership is widely accepted because of its workers' focused approach. Risk management is an essential aspect of job satisfaction in the workplace. The researchers e.g., Belias and Koustelios (2014) furthermore investigated the role of transformational leadership in risk reduction for employee job satisfaction by choosing analysis methods from 41 published research articles. Findings revealed that amid the recession, across the globe, governmental employees' morale continues to rise. Job satisfaction includes various factors mentioned in other theories; however, some of these theories often discuss a leader as a role model to achieve job satisfaction for the employees. As workers see their supervisors

as professional and competent, they trust in them as their superiors, which eliminates workplace insecurity, imparts self-assurance, and alleviates a lack of job satisfaction.

Also favorably discussed by Tepret and Tuna (2015), as they examine the impacts of various styles of leadership on the telecommunication employee's job satisfaction. In their study, researchers used an empirical study design and an analysis of 102 samples from Turkey, which shows the high degree of commitment of the workers in their work. The researchers have established that leadership is positively linked to employees' success and wellbeing and also their sense of commitment. Dias-Silveira, Teixeira-de-Bessa et al. (2017) explores the relationship between leadership, risk management skills, and job satisfaction among nursing professionals. They picked a group of 239 nursing staff members from a Brazilian university. This project successfully collected evidence demonstrating that one of the components of effective leadership is a strong working relationship with employees. Therefore, improved quality is a necessary consequence of increased competition, increasing demand for goods and services, and related consequences. For top leaders, it is important to cope with risks. This is one big factor to improve employee engagement and performance (Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020).

H₄: There is a positive relationship between risk management and job satisfaction.

Supporting Teamwork & Job Satisfaction

There is a symbolically important connection between job satisfaction and teamwork. However, for collaborative efforts, transformational leaders are necessary. If a leader is inefficient in leading with teamwork, they cannot meet obstacles. As transformational leadership can be a set of optimistic attitudes and actions, these leaders are able to take full advantage of the subordinates and any possible roadblocks Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. (2020). Working in teamwork depends on the way an organization views the importance of bosses, managers, and leaders. For instance, there are competent personnel policies to boost teamwork spirit in various Indonesian factories, such as cigarettes. Power is in control of managers, which they can use to inspire people and work well in making organizational targets. Researchers believe that teamwork makes workers happier as it allows each worker to raise his or her morale, which in turn encourages employees to be loyal.

To address the challenges of employee happiness, companies need to concentrate on leadership, which plays an important role in sustaining employee teamwork. Dias-Silveira, Teixeira-de-Bessa et al. (2017) explored the impact of teamwork on job satisfaction. The research occurred in South Africa using a group of 250. The teamwork revealed that leadership can help reduce the skills gap between colleagues and affect job satisfaction. In this way, a good motivator would be a good role model. Barasa and Kariuki (2020), addressed the relationship between teamwork, leadership, and job satisfaction in the workplace. The researcher used a quantitative approach and sampled the data of 52 employees from the Kenya Power Pension Fund. It was found that having a significant effect, teamwork is closely linked to leadership, and job satisfaction. When participants were tested, they felt that if they took collective acts, they would have higher job satisfaction. A leader recognizes the value of teamwork for organizational success.

Leaders of tremendous potential consider workers' talents and delegate work accordingly. When individuals feel valued and appreciated in the decision-making, they perform better and complete their tasks well (Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020). Musinguzi, Rutebemberwa et al. (2017), analyzed the leadership's effect on the teamwork of the workplace results. The researcher used a representative sample that included 564 respondents from West Nile and Rwenzori Uganda. According to the findings, transition leaders had a good relationship with teamwork and job satisfaction. Survey findings revealed that majority of respondents like transformational leadership for their leader.

H₅: There is a positive relationship between supporting teamwork and job satisfaction.

Relationship between transformational leadership and empowerment

One of the ways to facilitate employee growth is empowerment. Two studies conducted by Bass (1990) have shown that the four traits of transformational leaders serve as antecedents to employee empowerment in organizations (Ashforth, Harrison et al. 2008). Transformational leaders are extremely convincing and willing to impart a beneficial effect to workers (Epitropaki and Martin 2005). Charismatic features are an indication of empowerment. According to previous works by professional scholars, charismatic leaders intensify employee empowerment programs by providing vision, team building, and an enhanced sense of job ownership (Ashforth, Harrison et al. 2008).

Often, active and charismatic leaders motivate workers to engage in the decision-making process so that their expertise and abilities will be constantly improved. This intensifies the workers' sense of duty. More would be self-assured for workers. These factors are important to inducing work satisfaction for workers in efficient firms. Charismatic leaders provide workers with a sense of psychological identification with the company. These transformational leaders also demand that workers be well educated. In order to promote innovation among workers, giving employees decision-making power is a wise concept (Vecchio, Justin et al. 2010). The

delegation of authority gives workers a feeling that they are respected and cherished by their organizations. Employees who take excellent care of their leaders will build good leadership relationships. A similar assertion can be detected not only in the theoretical literature but also in the empirical literature. Studies indicate that the effect of transformational leadership is positive on employee empowerment (Ashforth, Harrison et al. 2008). We should also take into account the workers' needs by promoting their participation (Jabnoun and Rasasi 2005). The workers are more driven to perform their duties when they get responsive leadership.

Empowerment improves work satisfaction and minimizes stress levels in workers (Zhang and Bartol 2010). When workers were granted decision-making rights, the emotion and employees' acceptance of the company boosted. Greatly encouraged workers would build a sense of confidence with their managers and be more creative and inventive. Empowerment will nurture critical thinking, which can inevitably contribute to staff working at a higher level. Employee empowerment increases workers' quality of life. Employees in the medical sector believe that their job is difficult (Nielsen, Yarker et al. 2009). Work stress can cause fatigue and decrease job satisfaction. Employee empowerment is an organizational initiative to offer workers control in order to reduce feelings of powerlessness and eradicate conventional administrative patterns (Conger and Kanungo 1988). A person should be quick, inclusive, and efficient in responding to the client. Encouraging the organizations to share the decision-making process with their workers would minimize the needless workplace worries (Taderera, Hendricks et al. 2016). This proposition leads to the following hypotheses:

- H₆:** Employee empowerment has a positive impact on job satisfaction
- H₇:** Empowerment mediates the relationship between Effective Communication and job satisfaction
- H₈:** Empowerment mediates the relationship between Coping with Uncertainty & Ambiguity and job satisfaction
- H₉:** Empowerment mediates the relationship between Guidance & Support and job satisfaction
- H₁₀:** Empowerment mediates the relationship between Risk Management and job satisfaction
- H₁₁:** Empowerment mediates the relationship between Supporting Teamwork and job satisfaction

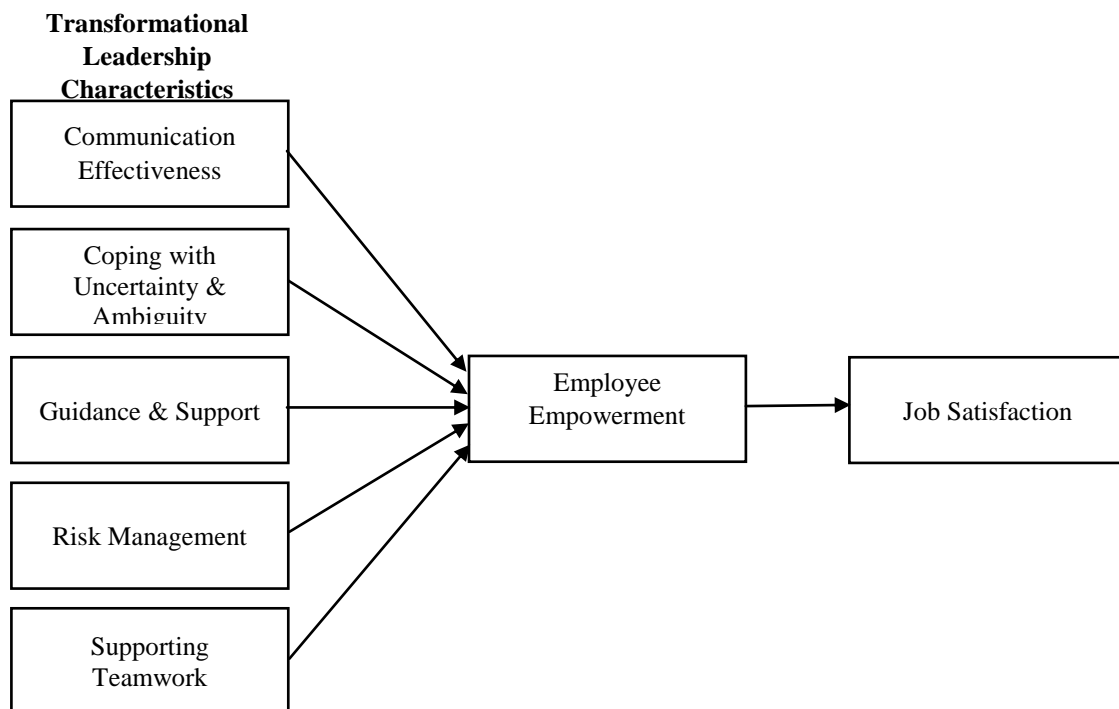


Fig.1: Research Model of the study

Methodology

The study aims to find the relationship between the various transformational leadership characteristics such as (communication effectiveness, coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, supporting teamwork) and job satisfaction while taking the mediating role of employee empowerment into account. This research is studied in the public sector organizations in Pakistan. 480 questionnaires were distributed among employees of the public sector organizations. Every employee provided the questionnaires. 335 questionnaires have been returned after three weeks and 312 of them have been chosen for the analysis. The constructs used for data collection were all relevant for the study and were taken as per the variables. Besides,

the measures were viable and taken from previous research (Choi, Goh et al. 2016, Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020). For all measures, different items were used to examine the results of characteristics of transformational leadership. for instance, communication effectiveness measured with 3 items, coping with uncertainty and ambiguity with 3 items, guidance, and support with 5 items, risk management with 3 items, supporting teamwork with 3 items, job satisfaction with 3 items, and employee empowerment with 5 items. The questionnaire of the study was measured by using a five point Likert Scale that was ranged from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. This is in line with previous studies that had also used in their study five point Likert Scale (Ahmad, Bin Mohammad et al. 2019, AHMED, RIAZ et al. 2021).

Analysis and Results

This study employed the PLS-SEM technique to analyze the proposed model of this study as suggested by the previous researchers (Ahmad, Farhan et al. 2019, Bhatti, Farhan et al. 2019, Ahmad, Ahmad et al. 2020). Researchers (Arshad, Ahmad et al. 2020, Arshad, Meirun et al. 2020) further suggested that it is important that all elements of a research document structure are strongly correlated. The inferential statistics have been applied to stimulate the analysis of the proposed measurement model and done to evaluate the reliability of the items by using smart-PLS 3. Table 1 showed the convergent validity of the research with the CA value which is in the range of 0.74 to 0.88 and more than 0.70 to confirm the significant reliability of the items (Chin, 1998). However, the value of AVE also higher than the 0.5 and above indicated a latent variable can explain more the half of the indicators' average variance (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009; Hair et al., 2013). Table 1 indicates that the score of Composite reliability (CA) for each construct as the reliability of the composite for all the construct is more than 0.7 (Lam, 2012). According to the results, this is presumed to have obtained convergent validity and to explain the distinction between each construct.

Table 1: Measurement model results

Variable Name	Items	Loading	Reliability	CR	AVE
Communication Effectiveness	CE1	0.820	0.706	0.836	0.630
	CE2	0.785			
	CE3	0.776			
Coping with Uncertainty & Ambiguity	CUA1	0.876	0.837	0.902	0.754
	CUA2	0.868			
	CUA3	0.862			
Employee Empowerment	EE1	0.848	0.885	0.916	0.685
	EE2	0.843			
	EE3	0.846			
	EE4	0.853			
	EE5	0.743			
Guidance & Support	GS1	0.795	0.897	0.924	0.710
	GS2	0.856			
	GS3	0.838			
	GS4	0.856			
	GS5	0.865			
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.877	0.836	0.902	0.754
	JS2	0.846			
	JS3	0.880			
Risk Management	RM1	0.819	0.707	0.836	0.630
	RM2	0.769			
	RM3	0.792			
Supporting Teamwork	ST1	0.865	0.852	0.910	0.772
	ST2	0.887			
	ST3	0.884			

To further validate the model, the discriminant validity of all the constructs was also assessed discriminant validity assessed to address the similarities between the constructs and the number of measures described by only one construct (Hair et al., 2013). Discriminant validity was assessed by applying Fornell & Larcker's criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) which suggests latent indicator would have a load greater than the loads of all other latent variables which shows in Table 2, that all the values of this analysis are as per the established criteria. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) criteria given by (Henseler, Ringle et al. 2015) was also employed to confirm the Discriminant validity. It is the estimation tool to assess the correlation of the factors (Henseler, Ringle et al. 2015, Pittino, Martínez et al. 2018). The HTMT is a newly developed method for the PLS-SEM to assess discriminant validity, which is one of the key building blocks of model validation. Though, a cutoff of 0.90 is considered as a threshold (Teo, Srivastava et al. 2008). Table 4 representing the results for all the constructs, the inter-construct ratio' values were below 0.85 and the confidence intervals contain no value of 1.0 (Henseler, Ringle et al. 2015).

Table 2 :Discriminant Validity (FL)

	CE	CUA	EE	GS	JS	RM	ST
CE	0.794						
CUA	0.245	0.869					
EE	0.306	0.615	0.828				
GS	0.254	0.589	0.637	0.842			
JS	0.272	0.655	0.733	0.700	0.868		
RM	0.089	0.405	0.517	0.527	0.544	0.794	
ST	0.263	0.571	0.618	0.547	0.640	0.449	0.879

Table 3:Discriminant validity (HTMT)

	CE	CUA	EE	GS	JS	RM	ST
CE							
CUA	0.319						
EE	0.383	0.712					
GS	0.323	0.679	0.709				
JS	0.354	0.782	0.847	0.808			
RM	0.121	0.526	0.651	0.659	0.705		
ST	0.339	0.676	0.709	0.626	0.759	0.577	

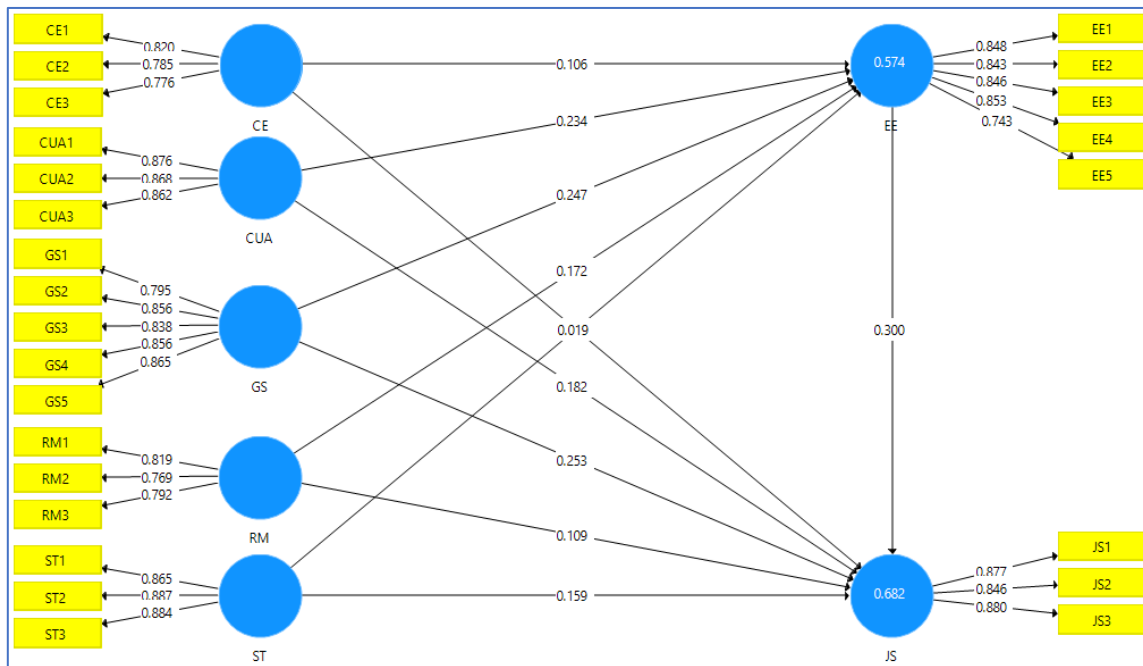


Fig.2: Measurement Model

Structural Model

To test the proposed hypotheses, the researcher conducted SEM analysis by using Smart-PLS 3. With 500 subsampling, bootstrapping produced the findings after assessing the measurement model by suggesting by Hair (2013). In order to access the statistical significance using the t-test and p-value of each hypothesis. Table 5 below contains the details of the Hypothesis findings. The results revealed that out of six direct hypotheses five (H2, H3, H4, H5, H6) were accepted. As shown in Table 5 it is found that there is a strong association amongst coping with uncertainty and ambiguity (b= 0.182, t= 3.986, p= 0.000), which shown that one of the transformational leadership characteristics, such as coping with uncertainty and ambiguity have a strong influence on the job satisfaction during covid-19. Hence the H2 is supported. Similarly, the results show that guidance and support are also strongly correlated with job satisfaction as (b= 0.253, t= 4.932, p= 0.000), inferring the strong impact on employee satisfaction which shows H3 is supported. Correspondingly, results also revealed that risk management is also positively correlated with job satisfaction (b= 0.109, t= 2.783, p= 0.006) which shows H4 is also supported. Moreover, the results show that there is a positive connection between supporting teamwork and job satisfaction as (b= 0.159, t= 3.083, p= 0.002) inferring that H5 is supported. likewise, the relationship between Employee Empowerment and job satisfaction was found positively correlated to each other as (b= 0.300, t= 4.945, p= 0.000) concluding that H6 is also supported. However, one hypothesis H1 did not found a significant relationship between communication effectiveness and job satisfaction (b= 0.019 t= 0.528, p= 0.598), which shows the H1 is not supported.

Table 4 :R2 of the latent constructs

Variable Name	R Square
Employee Empowerment	0.574
Job satisfaction	0.682

Table 5:Direct Relationship Results

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	(STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1	CE -> JS	0.019	0.036	0.528	0.598	Not Supported
H2	CUA -> JS	0.182	0.046	3.986	0.000	Supported
H3	GS -> JS	0.253	0.051	4.932	0.000	Supported
H4	RM -> JS	0.109	0.039	2.783	0.006	Supported
H5	ST -> JS	0.159	0.051	3.083	0.002	Supported
H6	EE -> JS	0.300	0.061	4.945	0.000	Supported

As one of the objectives of this study to test the mediating role of employee empowerment between transformational leadership such as (communication effectiveness, coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, supporting teamwork) and job satisfaction. This study utilized the bootstrapping method by using the PLS-SEM to test the mediation hypothesis and results revealed that out of five, four mediation hypotheses were accepted. As shown in table 6 results revealed the relationship between coping with uncertainty and ambiguity and job satisfaction significantly mediated by the employee empowerment as ($b = 0.070$, $t = 3.132$, $p = 0.002$) which claims that H8 is supported. Similarly, the results show that the relationship between guidance and support and job satisfaction is mediated by employee empowerment as ($b = 0.074$, $t = 3.391$, $p = 0.001$) which shows that H9 is also accepted. Likewise, the relationship between risk management and job satisfaction is mediated by employee empowerment as ($b = 0.052$, $t = 2.967$, $p = 0.003$) inferring that H10 is also supported. Moreover, similar findings revealed regarding the mediation role of employee empowerment between the relationship of supporting teamwork and job satisfaction as ($b = 0.073$, $t = 3.062$, $p = 0.002$) concluded that H11 is also supported in this study. However, the results of H7 were not supported.

Table 6:Mediation Results

Hypotheses	Path	Beta	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H7	CE -> EE -> JS	0.032	0.017	1.922	0.055	Not Supported
H8	CUA -> EE -> JS	0.070	0.022	3.132	0.002	Supported
H9	GS -> EE -> JS	0.074	0.022	3.391	0.001	Supported
H10	RM -> EE -> JS	0.052	0.017	2.967	0.003	Supported
H11	ST -> EE -> JS	0.073	0.024	3.062	0.002	Supported

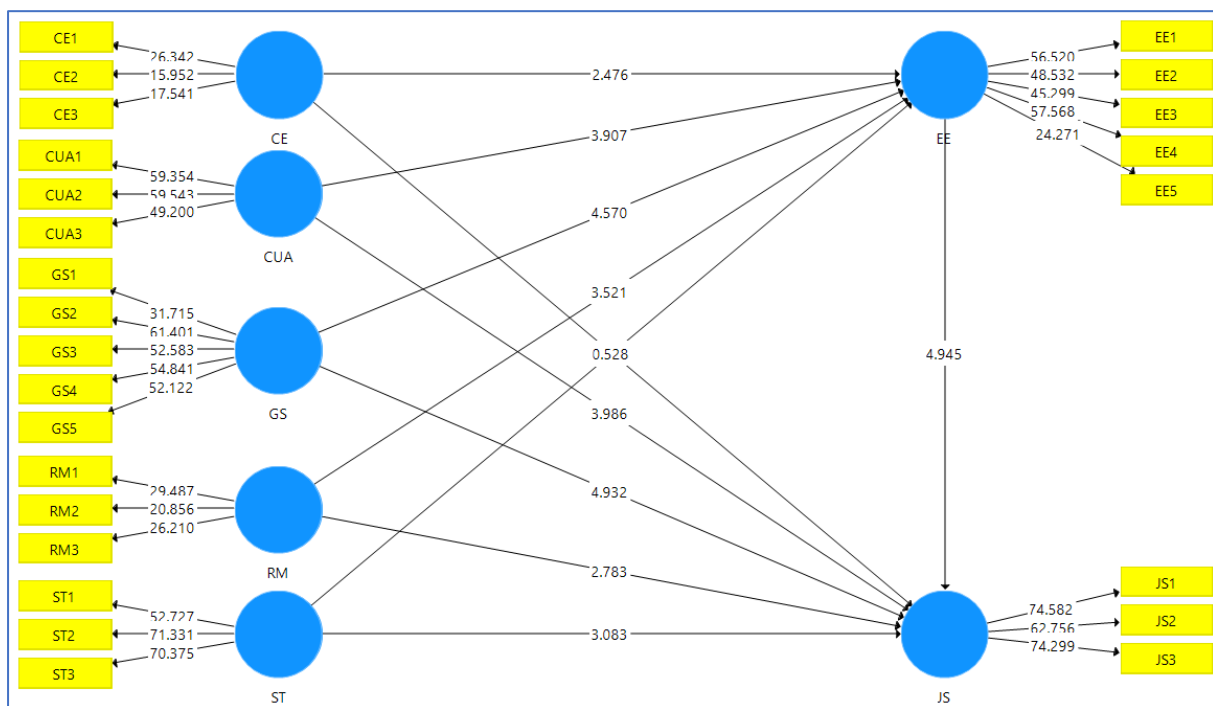


Fig.3: Structural Model

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was intended to investigate the effect of transformational leadership characteristics such as (communication effectiveness, coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, supporting teamwork) and job satisfaction. along with the mediating role of employee empowerment in the public sector organizations of Pakistan. The results of this revealed that the four characteristics of transformation leadership such as (coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, supporting teamwork) are directly and positively correlated with job satisfaction even in the covid-19 situation. These results are aligned with the previous studies such as (Boamah, Laschinger et al. 2018,

Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020). However, the one characteristic of transformational leadership, such as communication effectiveness did not found significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Additionally, this study attempted to investigate the mediating role of employee empowerment between transformational leadership characteristics and job satisfaction. The results of the mediation analysis show that employee empowerment significantly mediates the relationship between coping with uncertainty and ambiguity, guidance and support, risk management, supporting teamwork, and job satisfaction. However, the relationship between communication effectiveness and job satisfaction is not mediated by employee empowerment.

As recent studies observed that due to the current outbreak of Covid-19, both public and private sector organizations are facing tremendous functional challenges. These challenges are equally problematic for small, medium, and large size firms around the world. The majority of organizations reported an explicit reduction of work activity and production during Covid-19 (Almohtaseb, Almahameed et al. 2020). A snapshot survey conducted by Fcca, (2020) in China and Mainland highlighted the issues concerning Covid-19 and their impacts. To deal with relevant organizational challenges, it is the core responsibility of organizational managers and leaders to confront the challenges and cope effectively with them. For this purpose, especially government sectors organization have to resume their activities to further save the national economy from the massive decline (Arif, 2018). Adopting the transformational leadership due to its distant characteristics and properties Hay, (2006), proved fruitful as it immensely helped employees to work effectively and avail job satisfaction (Yildiz & Şimşek, 2016). The current study also validated the proposed relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among employees. Therefore, the role of transformational leaders during increased healthcare and psychosocial challenges is highly influential. There are communicating effectively with their subordinates, Support and guide them, alleviate their uncertainties and encourage teamwork to keep the organizational environment disciplined. Due to these vigorous characteristics, we found a strong, significant, and positive correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among public sector organization's employees in Pakistan (Habes et al., 2018).

Limitations and Future Research

This research involves a convenient sampling method which is one of the necessary study limitations. In future studies, researchers can use probability sampling to get more deep insight into the model. Moreover, there are other leadership styles, that can also play a vital role to nullify the impacts of Covid-19. Thus, examining the role of only transformational leadership style in the public sector organizations further narrows down the scope of the current study. Future studies can broader the scope of the research by including the private sector organizations as well. Moreover, the researcher made every possible effort to bring clarity in conducting the research and recommends more studies on leadership during emergencies like Covid-19. Especially to further highlight the role of transformational leadership, other more aspects and characteristics should be investigated.

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