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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<b>LOGISTICS CAPABILITIES EFFECT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM TAIWANESE LOGISTICS PROVIDERS</b> <i>GHI-FENG YEN, PENG JIANG, YI-CHUNG HU &amp; CHANG-MING AI</i>	1
2.	<b>TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION</b> <i>DR. DAVID IRUNGU NJOROGE, DR. JOHN WEKESA WANJALA &amp; DR. BULITIA GODRICK MATHEWS</i>	6
3.	<b>AN ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE OF INDIAN BANKS W.R.T. NON-PERFORMING ASSETS (NPAs)</b> <i>DR. ASHA NAGENDRA, ABHISHEK SINGH &amp; ANURAG SINGH</i>	11
4.	<b>AGGREGATE IMPORT DEMAND AND EXPENDITURE COMPONENTS IN INDIA</b> <i>DR. AMAL SARKAR</i>	14
5.	<b>TO STUDY THE CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS BEER OF MOHAN MEAKINS LTD.</b> <i>ABHISHEK VASHISHTH &amp; DR. NISHI TRIPATHI</i>	20
6.	<b>UNDERSTANDING BRAND INDIA CAMPAIGN AND ITS IMPACT OVER SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES</b> <i>DR. SURYA RASHMI RAWAT, NAYAN MITTAL, AYUSH CHOWDHURY, DIVYANSH GAUTAM, SANJAY NARAYANDAS &amp; RAM KUMAR</i>	26
7.	<b>IMPACT OF FACULTY TURNOVER ON STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BANGALORE</b> <i>DR. NILOFER HUSSAINI &amp; SYED RAJEENA</i>	32
8.	<b>HUMAN CAPITAL: A VITAL COMPONENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS</b> <i>SIMRAN SAINI</i>	36
9.	<b>LUXURY FASHION AND INDIAN ADAPTABILITY: ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES</b> <i>SUDHANSHU GUPTA</i>	40
10.	<b>A STUDY ON QUALITY OF LIFE OF MIGRANT WORKERS EMPLOYED IN GARMENT INDUSTRIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUPUR DISTRICT</b> <i>V. DHIVYA KEERTHIGA</i>	43
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	46

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## TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was aimed at determining the effect of transactional leadership style on organizational commitment as moderated by employee participation in technical institutions in Kenya. This study was conducted in 47 technical institutions in Kenya. The population comprised of 3114 lecturers while 343 respondents made up the sample. The sampling techniques used to get the sample were multistage sampling, stratified sampling and simple random sampling. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The results indicated that transactional leadership style had a significant effect on organizational commitment and its three dimensions. In addition, the results showed that employee participation did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment and its dimensions.*

### KEYWORDS

employee participation, organizational commitment, transactional leadership.

### INTRODUCTION

Human resource gives an organization competitive advantage and is a key asset in any organization. The success of an organization is dependent upon a committed workforce. Organizations therefore strive to acquire, develop, maintain and retain the best workforce as this is a vital success factor. Organizations today pay great attention to employees' organizational commitment as it is a priority (Dairush *et al.*, 2016). Committed employees are not likely to be sluggish and are rarely absent from work (Davenport, 2010). Cases of turnover are also lower among committed employees.

A manager's leadership style is another important factor of an organization's success. According to Shastri, Shashi, Mishra & Sinha (2010), leadership is the relationship between an individual and a group built around something common. The leader directs the behavior of the group. Many leadership styles have been advanced. This study focused only on transactional leadership style.

Transactional leadership style is an exchange between leaders and followers (Ivey & Kline, 2010). Bass (1985) advanced two characteristics of transactional leadership: the use of contingent rewards and management by exception. Contingent reward refers to the reward that the leader will give to the follower upon achieving goals that were earlier agreed on. A leader can use rewards to inspire commitment and loyalty. The two sub-divisions of management by exception are active management by exception and passive management by exception.

### OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study was to determine the effect of transactional leadership style on organizational commitment as moderated by employee participation. The specific objectives were to: find out the effect of transactional leadership style on affective commitment, find out the effect of transactional leadership style on continuance commitment, find out the effect of transactional leadership style on normative commitment and establish the moderating effect of employee participation on the relationship between transactional leadership and organizational commitment.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

According to Bass and Avolio (1990), transactional leadership refers to an understanding of employee needs, providing for those needs to reward employee contributions and hard work and committing to giving those rewards after employees complete assigned work duties. Transactional leadership involves a person connecting with others with the aim of exchanging valued things that could either be economic or political or psychological in nature (Burns, 1978). Transactional leaders are thought to trade money, jobs and security for compliance (Armstrong, 2012). The exchange between transactional leaders and the followers is aimed at advancing both parties' requirements (Ivey & Kline, 2010). Transactional leadership requires establishment of relations between the leader and the employees who work under the leader's supervision (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2012). Transactional leadership provides benefit when goals have been achieved and penalties when targets have not been achieved. The leader therefore uses "reward and punishment" as the best source of motivation for the followers (Hafeez, Rizvi, Hasnain & Mariam, 2012).

According to Hellriegel and Slocum (2006), transactional leadership is based on three primary components; contingent rewards, active management by exception and passive management by exception. Under contingent rewards, the leader clarifies the tasks that must be achieved and use rewards to satisfy to achieve results (Rehman *et al.*, 2012). In active management by exception, the leader ensures that followers meet predetermined standards. The leader monitors the followers and looks out for deviances, mistakes and errors and takes corrective action when they appear (Bass, Jung, Avolio & Berson, 2003). In passive management by exception, the leader intervenes only after the appearance of behaviors or mistakes against the requirements. Followers get contingent punishment due to obvious

discrepancies from the standard performance. A leader may also take no action at all. Such passive leaders avoid specifying agreements, clarifying expectations and providing goals and standards to be achieved by followers (Bass *et al.*, 2003). Under active management by exception and passive management by exception, the leader tries to attain the expected standards of performance by preventing or correcting individual mistakes (Wei *et al.*, 2010).

**ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Employees’ organizational commitment influences their work attitudes and behaviors (Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014). Commitment has an impact on several work-related attributes, such as intention to stay (Chew & Chan, 2008) and job satisfaction (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Organizations with committed employees can avoid the cost associated with high turnover rate and absenteeism. Committed employees are more likely to have higher work motivation, as well as higher job performance (Chen *et al.*, 2006).

Organizational commitment reflects an employees’ loyalty to their organization and is a continuous process through which employees express their concern for the organization and its success (Luthans, 2007). Organizational commitment is related to an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organization (Armstrong, 2012). Meyer and Allen (1991) identified the following three components of organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. According to Allen & Meyer (1990), affective commitment (AC) involves an acceptance and internalization of organizational goals and values. It also entails an emotional attachment to the organization.

Continuance commitment (CC) has to do with being aware of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Followers ranking high in continuance commitment remain with their organizations as the costs of leaving are too much and have a lot of time (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Normative commitment (NC) is related to being obligated to maintain employment memberships and relationships. Employees ranking high in normative commitment feel indebted to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

**TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

A study by Bass and Riggio (2006) showed that transactional leadership has a positive relationship with affective commitment and commitment to keep working with the organization. Aboodi *et al.* (2013) in an Iranian study found a significant negative relationship between transactional behavior of supervisors and organizational commitment of their subordinates. In a Nigerian study by Soieb, Zairy, Othman and D’Silva (2013), transactional leadership style was found to have a significant influence on commitment of lecturers of State Universities.

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on organizational commitment in technical institutions in Kenya.

H<sub>01a</sub>: There is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on affective commitment in technical institutions in Kenya.

H<sub>01b</sub>: There is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on continuance commitment in technical institutions in Kenya.

H<sub>01c</sub>: There is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on normative commitment in technical institutions in Kenya.

**EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION**

An organization’s ability to innovate and successful implementation of business strategy and achievement of competitive advantage is to a large extent dependent on the level of employee involvement (Organ, Podsakoff & McKenzie, 2005). Employees are a key asset and the future of any organization depends on more participation of employees in order to generate new ideas (Singh, 2009). This has therefore led the great need and importance for employee participation. Robbins and Judge (2009) define employee participation as the participative process through which the input of employees is used to increase employees’ commitment to the organization’s success. The success of employee participation largely depends on the leader (Buciuniene & Skudiene, 2008). Busck *et al.* (2010) observed that the increased participation leads to employees having more control at work.

A number of studies have been conducted on the relationship between employee participation and organizational commitment. In a study conducted by Topolnytsky *et al.* (2002), a strong positive correlation was found between affective commitment and employees’ job involvement. Torka (2003) found that employee involvement leads to more affective and normative commitment to the department as well as to the organization. In a South African study by Raymond and Mjoli (2013), the correlation coefficient between job involvement and organizational commitment was found to be significant and positively correlated. Kirmizi and Deniz (2009) reported that the participation of employees in the decision-making process and involving them in organizational plans and goals setting has a positive impact on the employees’ commitment towards the organization.

Based on the literature reviewed above, employee participation is thought to moderate the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment.

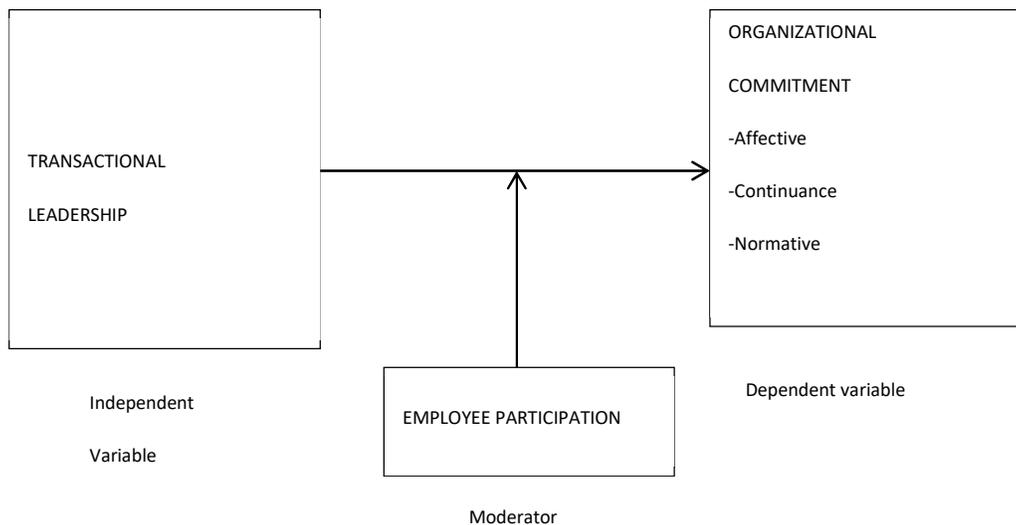
Hence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no moderating effect of employee participation on the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment in technical institutions in Kenya.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The various variables under study are conceptualized to be related as shown below:

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3114 lecturers in the 47 technical institutions in Kenya formed the study population. Technical institutions were chosen because of the critical role they are expected to play in the realization of vision 2030. Survey research design was adopted. Questionnaires were distributed to 343 respondents. 278 respondents completed the questionnaires giving a response rate of 81.05%. The sampling techniques employed were multistage, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Multistage sampling design was employed to help in getting the clusters from which to get the sample from. Stratified sampling was used to ensure that each gender is included in the sample. Simple random sampling was adopted because the population constitutes a homogeneous group (Kothari, 2004). Simple random sampling was employed to get sixteen institutions from a total of 47. Twenty-two gender-based members were then selected from each institution. The main instrument of data collection for the study was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”. The questionnaire had three sections. Section one helped in obtaining information on name of institution, demographic data on gender, religion, marital status, age bracket, family size, education, job title, job group and number of years of service in the institution and under current supervisor. Section two solicited information on transactional leadership style. A modified and improved version of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass (1985) was used to generate data on leadership style. Section three was concerned with information on organizational commitment. An instrument by Meyer and Allen (1997) was modified to obtain data on organizational commitment. Section four solicited information on employee participation. A modified questionnaire by Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) was used. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to test the instrument’s reliability. The reliability coefficients for the variables were: transactional leadership (0.753), employee participation (0.883) and organizational commitment (0.880). Therefore, all the variables met the minimum threshold. Data was analyzed using descriptive analysis and correlation analysis. Multiple regression was then applied in order to analyze the influence of transactional leadership style on organizational commitment as moderated by employee participation.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Transactional leadership and organizational commitment**

The model to be tested was

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Organizational commitment
- $\beta_0$  = level of organizational commitment in the absence of transactional leadership
- $\beta_1$  = intercept for the independent variable
- $X_1$  = Transactional leadership
- $\epsilon$  = Error term

The model was found to be valid (F (1,274) =49.615, p-value<0.001) as shown in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: REGRESSION RESULTS OF TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	14.972	1	14.972	49.615	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	82.687	274	.302		
Total	97.659	275			
R=0.392 R <sup>2</sup> =0.153		▲ R <sup>2</sup> =0.150			
a. Predictors: (Constant), X <sub>1</sub>					
b. Dependent Variable: Y					

The fitted model equation is  $Y = 0.392X_1$  with the predictors explaining 15.3% of the variation in organizational commitment. Details of the model are shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.390	.233		5.969	.000
Transactional leadership	.504	.072	.392	7.044	.000

The model equation shows that standardized organizational commitment (OC) will increase by 0.392 units with one-unit increase in standardized transactional leadership style. The model shows that transactional leadership ( $X_1$ ) is significantly explaining the variation in organizational commitment. As such, hypothesis  $H_{01}$ : there is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on organizational commitment is rejected and conclude that transactional leadership style has a significant effect on organizational commitment.

The regression results of transactional leadership on the dimensions of organizational commitment are shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Dimension	F	Sig.	Beta	R	R <sup>2</sup>	▲ R <sup>2</sup>
Affective commitment	40.852	.000	0.360	0.360	0.130	0.127
Continuance commitment	35.119	.000	0.337	0.337	0.114	0.110
Normative commitment	24.665	.000	0.287	0.287	0.083	0.079

**Transactional leadership and affective commitment**

The model to be tested was

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- $Y_1$  = Affective commitment
- $\beta_0$  = level of affective commitment in the absence of transactional leadership
- $\beta_1$  = intercept for the independent variable
- $X_1$  = Transactional leadership
- $\epsilon$  = Error term

The model was found to be valid (F(1,274) = 40.852, p-value<0.001) as indicated in Table 3.

The fitted model equation is  $Y_1 = 0.360X_1$  with the predictors explaining 13.0 % of variation in affective commitment. The model equation indicates that standardized affective commitment (AC) will increase by 0.360 units with one-unit increase in standardized transactional leadership style. The model shows that transactional

leadership is significantly explaining the variation in affective commitment. Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>01a</sub>: there is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on affective commitment is rejected and conclude that transactional leadership style has a significant effect on affective commitment.

#### Transactional leadership and continuance commitment

The model to be tested was

$$Y_2 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

$Y_2$	= Continuance commitment
$\beta_0$	= level of continuance commitment in the absence of transactional leadership
$\beta_2$	= intercept for the independent variable
$X_1$	= Transactional leadership
$\epsilon$	= Error term

Under the model  $Y_2 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ , the model was found to be valid ( $F(1, 274) = 35.119$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ) as indicated in Table 3.

The fitted model equation is  $Y_2 = 0.337X_1$ . This shows that standardized continuance commitment (CC) will increase by 0.337 units with one-unit increase in standardized transactional leadership style. The model shows that transactional leadership is significantly explaining the variation in the dependent variable (continuance commitment). Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>01b</sub>: there is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on continuance commitment is rejected and conclude that transactional leadership style has a significant effect on continuance commitment.

In a study by Saeed *et al.* (2013), transactional leadership was found to be significantly related with organizational commitment dimensions. This is in agreement with the findings of this study. Some studies have reported contrasting findings. Teshome (2011) in an Ethiopian study reported that transactional leadership has no statistically significant correlation with continuance commitment. Aghashahi *et al.* (2013) did not find transactional leadership to be a significant predictor of continuance commitment.

#### Transactional leadership and normative commitment

The model to be tested was

$$Y_3 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

$Y_3$	= Normative commitment
$\beta_0$	= level of normative commitment in the absence of transactional leadership
$\beta_1$	= intercept for the independent variable
$X_1$	= Transactional leadership
$\epsilon$	= Error term

The model was found to be valid ( $F(1, 274) = 24.665$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ) as indicated in Table 3.

The fitted model equation is  $Y_3 = 0.287X_1$ . This shows that standardized normative commitment (NC) will increase by 0.287 units with one-unit increase in standardized transactional leadership style. The model shows that transactional leadership is significantly explaining the variation in normative commitment. As such, hypothesis H<sub>01c</sub>: there is no significant effect of transactional leadership style on normative commitment is rejected and conclude that transactional leadership style has a significant effect on normative commitment. The findings are in agreement with the findings of Wiza and Hlanganipai (2014).

#### The moderating effect of employee participation on the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment

The findings showed that there was no moderating effect of employee participation on the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment and its dimensions. Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>02</sub>: there is no moderating effect of employee participation on the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment and its dimensions is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that transactional leadership style has a significant effect on organizational commitment. It is also concluded that transactional leadership style has a significant effect on affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

It is further concluded that there is no moderating effect of employee participation on the relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational commitment and its dimensions.

## RECOMMENDATION

In order to increase organizational commitment, leaders should employ transactional leadership style.

## FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

Research should be conducted on effect of the components of transactional leadership styles on organizational commitment. The components of organizational commitment were investigated in this study whereas the components of transactional leadership were not considered.

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