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(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Relationship between Transformational and Transactional leadership styles with performance metrics: A study of medical representatives in select pharmaceutical companies in India

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Abstract

In today's competitive business environment, the function of leadership has changed significantly because it is now the leader's unique responsibility to encourage people to gain an impetus for development to harness synergies, and to increase operational efficiency, thereby directing them to make the best use of resources.

This study aims to assess the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles and the performance metrics of medical representatives in select pharmaceutical companies in India. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research collects quantitative data through structured surveys and qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with medical representatives and their managers.

Performance metrics such as sales targets, incentive earnings, bagging rewards, and taking regular initiatives are analyzed to evaluate the impact of different leadership styles. The study hypothesizes that transformational leadership is characterized by valuing all ideas and skills of team members, inspiring superior performance and motivation & trust, while transactional leadership focuses on structured task achievement and rewards and quick decision-making abilities.

Statistical analysis of the Spearman correlation matrix has been used, and the findings are that there exists a relationship between the Transformational and Transactional leadership styles and Performance metrics of Medical Representatives in select pharmaceutical companies in India.

Keywords: Transformational leadership style; Transactional leadership style; Employee performance; Performance Metrics; Pharmaceutical Industry India

1. Introduction

The Indian pharmaceutical industry not only plays an important role in the nation's economic health but also has a social commitment to the world which is producing world-class quality medicines at an affordable and low price which is why it is known as the "pharmacy of the world" (Department of Pharmaceuticals, 2020). It is the third largest globally in terms of volume and the fifteenth largest in terms of value (Department of Pharmaceuticals, 2020). It accounts for about 8% of all Indian exports of goods and about 2% of the GDP (Dutta & Gajbhiye, 2021). This was only possible due to the people who run the pharmaceutical industry in India and their leaders who have been continuously showing them the path to achieve organizational objectives year on year.

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The leader recognizes the importance of the technological revolution in living in a competitive setting, which is compounded by continuous shifts in the larger ecological gears. He provides his followers with unique practices in a wide range of technological situations, assisting them in developing the values, skills, and intellectual discipline necessary to maximize their potential. A modern-day leader is in charge of harmonizing and consolidating both human and material resources so that they are capable of manufacturing results or providing services effectively and efficiently, allowing individuals and businesses to improve their performance. Effective leadership involves influencing employee performance within an organization. Effective leadership is crucial for people to reach their full potential and contribute to a common goal with passion and integrity (Walia, 2020).

This research aims to identify and analyze how various leadership styles and attributes affect sales employees' (Medical representatives) performance in the Indian pharmaceutical industry in Eastern India. Performance-enhancing leadership is crucial for motivating employees and creating a more engaged workforce. Clear expectations, support, and advice from leaders are essential for fostering a productive workplace where staff members are inspired and engaged. Employees are more likely to be fruitful and do their best when treated with respect and feel like they have the tools and resources needed to succeed. Gallup (2017) discovered that organizations with employees who are highly engaged had 21% greater profit and 17% greater productivity compared to organizations with low employee engagement. Similarly, Oswald, Proto, and Sgroi (2015) of the University of Warwick found that a 10% improvement in employee engagement results in a 1.1% increase in productivity. Furthermore, McKinsey & Company (2015) found that organizations with effective leadership are more likely to have high-achieving people.

2. Literature review

This section explains the earlier studies conducted on employee performance and leadership styles. Additionally, it has explained the concept of Transformational and Transactional leadership styles and Employee performance in detail. It included the analysis of research done to look at how these leadership styles affect employee performance and concluded with a gap analysis (Walia, 2020).

2.1. Concept and definition of Transformational and Transactional leadership styles and Employee performance

- Leadership styles- Management functions include leadership, which affects both groups and individuals within an organization. The act of starting group activities to create and achieve goals is known as leadership (Sougui et al., 2015). While employee performance is needed for the business continuity of an organization, it requires able leadership that can show the right path to people to achieve the organizational objective. Leadership is defined as a process when one or more people persuade a group of others to take a particular action (Umar Ibrahim & Ogohi Daniel, 2019). Leadership is the practice of persuading others to work voluntarily and confidently toward an organizational objective (Umar Ibrahim & Ogohi Daniel, 2019). The art of encouraging others to work freely toward the accomplishment of group goals is the most common definition of leadership (Umar Ibrahim & Ogohi Daniel, 2019). A leader is crucial to an organization's success in accomplishing its objectives (Supratman et al., 2019). By overcoming obstacles including a decreased rate of staff turnover, maintaining coordination, and achieving objectives, some firms have expanded globally with the help of their leaders in this cutthroat environment (Bhatti, 2020). The leaders must stick to the right path, to stay inspired to succeed and to set an example for the other workers in the company (Bhatti, 2020). There are multiple leadership styles which have evolved based on the business environment. According to studies, the best leadership style may be a combination of several leadership styles like the combination of servant, transactional and transformative (Sougui et al., 2015).
- Transformational Leadership- A Transformational leader exerts influence over the expectations of their followers, shaping their values and beliefs, and propelling them towards higher levels of fulfillment (Gadot, 2007). This leadership style fosters innovation, productivity, effectiveness, and satisfaction among factions, as it fosters a shared sense of purpose and mutual trust and respect (Sougui et al., 2015). By empowering subordinates with both the opportunity and confidence to align their actions with the leader's vision, transformational leaders facilitate the attainment of organizational objectives (Anyango, 2015). They challenge employees to embrace innovative approaches when confronted with challenges, thus fostering a culture of adaptability and creativity (Heimerer, 2019). Engaging in collaborative efforts with their teams, transformational leaders identify the necessity for change and devise strategies for its implementation. Through inspiration and effective guidance, they enlist the commitment of their followers, who, in turn, collaborate with them and their team members to enact the desired change (Dastane, 2020). Moreover,

transformational leadership inspires individuals to strive for personal and professional growth, thereby enhancing their performance to unprecedented levels.

• Transactional Leadership- Enhancing the efficacy of performance, particularly within formal contexts amenable to precise evaluation and recognition, is achievable through the application of transactional leadership principles (Gadot, 2007). Transactional leadership, a distinct leadership paradigm, places significant emphasis on the interactive exchanges occurring between leaders and their followers (Anyango, 2015). By orchestrating a system of rewards in exchange for specific behaviors, transactional leadership effectively guides and motivates subordinates. These incentives are typically promised to individuals upon successful completion of assigned tasks, thereby catalyzing employee engagement (Anyango, 2015). Rooted in traditional bureaucratic legitimacy and authority structures, transactional leadership operates on the premise of rewarding followers for adhering to established directives. The leader-follower dynamic revolves around a series of implicit agreements, delineating roles, responsibilities, and task-oriented objectives. Consequently, transactional leaders prioritize task fulfillment and adherence to established protocols, relying on organizational rewards and sanctions to influence staff performance (Obasan & Banjo, 2014).

2.2. Employee Performance

Employee performance is non-negotiable for the existence of any organization. The prevailing business scenario, which is ever-changing, affects the overall performance of the organization thus challenging the status quo every moment. As such, continuous performance is the key to its survival, which its employees drive. Businesses today run in an environment that is dynamic and chaotic, needing the use of highly competent and adaptable personnel who can provide superior services and enjoy high levels of client retention (Brhane & Zewdie, 2018). Finding out what influences employee performance (EP) has been more important in recent years due to the phenomenon of growing competition between businesses and their need to adapt quickly to both external and internal requirements (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019).

Employee performance is the core of organizational performance which influences the existence of organizations. To achieve employee performance, a leader must manage several correlated managerial tasks from hiring, transitioning the new member into new culture, training, coaching and guiding him on expectations from his deliveries inorder to achieve organizational objectives, driving a culture of performance via execution and rewarding superior performance in terms of results achieved with right performance behaviour.

3. Methodical approach to the study

3.1. Research question

Is there any relationship that exists between Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership with Employee Performance?

3.2. Hypothesis of the study

- H₁₀ There exists no relationship between Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership with Employee Performance.
- H1₁ There exists a relationship between Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership with Employee Performance.

4. Research methodology

A survey was administered employing a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to examine the construct of Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership within the leadership domains and their impact on Employee Performance.

• Reliability Testing: The results indicate favourable values for the coefficients of Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω across all domains, including Inclusive Leadership and Employee Performance. These coefficients range from 0 to 1, with values exceeding 0.70 considered acceptable for reliability (Feißt et al., 2019). Furthermore, the minimal variation between Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω further supports the robustness of the reliability findings.

Table 1 Summary of values of Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω

Domain name	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω	
Transformational Leadership	0.880	0.884	
Transactional Leadership	0.850	0.854	
Employee Performance	0.726	0.744	

4.1. Test of Normality

In statistical analysis, normality refers to the distribution pattern of each metric variable and its alignment with the standard normal distribution. Skewness measures the symmetry of a data distribution, indicating whether deviations from the mean are more pronounced in one direction. Kurtosis, on the other hand, assesses whether the frequency distribution curve is more peaked or flattened compared to a normal distribution. Evaluating skewness and kurtosis is essential, as deviations from normality—whether in terms of symmetry or peakness—can impact the validity of statistical procedures that assume normality.

According to Kline (2011), Curran et al. (1996), Byrne (2010), and Hair et al. (2010), a skewness value within ± 2.0 and a kurtosis value within ± 7.0 are considered acceptable indicators of normality. However, as shown in Table (2), the skewness and kurtosis values for all attributes across both domains exceed these thresholds, indicating that the data does not conform to a normal distribution.

Table 2 Summary of values of Skewness and Kurtosis

Domain name	Statistics	Attribute 1	Attribute 2	Attribute 3	Attribute 4
Transformational Leadership	Skewness	-1.98	-2.37	-1.38	-1.71
	Kurtosis	4.61	6.82	3.44	3.72
Transactional Leadership	Skewness	-1.45	-1.48	-2.21	-1.32
	Kurtosis	2.36	2.55	6.24	1.85
Employee Performance	Skewness	-1.21	-1.05	-1.27	-2.31
	Kurtosis	1.83	1.22	1.46	7.66

4.2. Respondent's Demographic profile

The workforce is predominantly male (97.34%) and highly educated, with 51.33% holding degrees in science. The largest age group falls within 30-35 years (38.74%), closely followed by those aged 25-29 years (36.56%). A significant portion of employees have relatively short tenure in their current roles, with 27.12% having 1-2 years of experience, while a considerable number possess 5-10 years of total job experience (38.74%). Employees with over 10 years of tenure are relatively few, indicating that the workforce is young, experienced, and largely science educated.

4.3. Spearman correlation matrix

Concept- A Spearman correlation matrix is a square matrix that presents Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for all variable pairs within a dataset. The diagonal elements of the matrix are always equal to one, as each variable is perfectly correlated with itself. The primary objective of this analysis is to assess whether the Spearman correlation coefficient significantly differs from zero, thereby indicating a statistically significant monotonic relationship between the variables (De Winter, Gosling, & Potter, 2016).

Monotonicity is determined by the correlation coefficient, which reveals the direction of the monotonic connection (growing or decreasing), but not its exact shape (De Winter, Gosling, & Potter, 2016).

Interpretation: The values range from -1 to +1. Positive values interpret perfect positive monotonic relationships. Zero interprets no monotonic relationship and negative values, a Perfect negative monotonic relationship (De Winter, Gosling, & Potter, 2016).

Process- The first step was to create short names for all the attributes so that the correlation matrix can be populated in one page. Below is a table that can be referred to the change in name of all attributes.

Table 3 Attributes redefined

Domains	Attributes	Renamed		
	My manager values all the ideas and skills which I bring during meetings and joint field working.			
Transformational	My manager inspires me towards the achievement of the targets assigned in my division.	TRFLS A2		
Leadership	I have complete trust and faith in acts and decisions of my manager.	TRFLS A3		
	I feel encouraged and motivated to work when my manager supervises me.	TRFLS A4		
	My manager is highly task-oriented and focus on getting the job done.	TRSLS A1		
	My manager sets clear-cut targets and holds team members accountable for their performance.	TRSLS A2		
Transactional	My manager motivates team members to achieve targets by influencing us to earn rewards like incentives and Achiever's foreign trips.	TRSLS A3		
Leadership	My manager makes quick decisions when necessary and ensures continuity of work at any cost.	TRSLS A4		
	I am consistently achieving my sales targets in overall product basket.	EP A1		
	I am consistently achieving my sales target in new product basket.			
Employee Performance	I am consistently earning incentives and rewards from my organization.	EP A3		
Limployee remorniance	I am regularly taking initiatives in order to increase sales in my headquarter.	EP A4		

Table 4 Correlation Matrix of Employee Performance with Transformational Leadership

		TRFLS A1	TRFLS A2	TRFLS A3	TRFLS A4	EP A1	EP A2	EP A3	EP A4
TRFLS A1	Spearman's rho	_							
	p-value	_							
TRFLS A2	Spearman's rho	0.539	_						
	p-value	<.001	_						
TRFLS A3	Spearman's rho	0.593	0.533	_					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	_					
TRFLS A4	Spearman's rho	0.64	0.593	0.57	_				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	_				
EP A1	Spearman's rho	0.5	0.508	0.506	0.533	_			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	_			
EP A2	Spearman's rho	0.503	0.613	0.603	0.512	0.499			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	_		

EP A3	Spearman's rho	0.578	0.622	0.61	0.591	0.496	0.577	-	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		
EP A4	Spearman's rho	0.215	0.339	0.275	0.262	0.195	0.315	0.336	_
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	

All four attributes of the domain Transformational Leadership have Spearman's rho values as positive and p-values < 0.001. This indicates that this attribute of the domain Transformational Leadership style used by FLMs is positively and strongly correlated with all four attributes of (MR's) Employee performance in select pharmaceutical companies in India (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018), hence under this circumstances the null hypothesis " $\mathbf{H1_{0}}$ - There exists no relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance" is being rejected and alternate hypothesis " $\mathbf{H1_{1}}$ - There exists relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance has been accepted.

Table 5 Redefined attributes of transformational leadership style

Domains	Attributes	Renamed attributes		
Transformational Leadership	My manager values all the ideas and skills which I bring during meetings and joint field working.	TRFLS A1		
	My manager inspires me towards the achievement of the targets assigned in my division.	TRFLS A2		
	I have complete trust and faith in acts and decisions of my manager.			
	I feel encouraged and motivated to work when my manager supervises me.	TRFLS A4		

Table 6 Correlation Matrix of Employee Performance with Transactional Leadership

		TRSLS A1	TRSLS A2	TRSLS A3	TRSLS A4	EP A1	EP A2	EP A3	EP A4
TRSLS A1	Spearman's rho	_							
	p-value	_							
TRSLS A2	Spearman's rho	0.575	_						
	p-value	<.001	_						
TRSLS A3	Spearman's rho	0.628	0.653	_					
	p-value	<.001	<.001	_					
TRSLS A4	Spearman's rho	0.527	0.526	0.628	_				
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	_				
EP A1	Spearman's rho	0.477	0.597	0.548	0.425	_			
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	_			
EP A2	Spearman's rho	0.446	0.605	0.595	0.51	0.499	_		
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	_		
EP A3	Spearman's rho	0.543	0.635	0.643	0.636	0.496	0.577	_	
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	_	
EP A4	Spearman's rho	0.247	0.252	0.269	0.316	0.195	0.315	0.336	_
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	_

All four attributes of the domain Transactional Leadership have Spearman's rho values as positive and p-values < 0.001. This indicates that this attribute of the domain Transactional Leadership style used by FLMs is positively and strongly correlated with all four attributes of (MR's) Employee performance in select pharmaceutical companies in Eastern India (Schober, Boer, & Schwarte, 2018), hence under this circumstances the null hypothesis " **H1**₀- There exists no relationship between Transactional Leadership and Employee Performance" is being rejected and alternate hypothesis "**H1**₁- There exists relationship between Transactional Leadership and Employee Performance has been accepted.

Table 7 Redefined attributes of transformational leadership style

Domains	Attributes	Renamed attributes				
	My manager is highly task-oriented and focus on getting the job done.					
Transactional Leadership	My manager sets clear-cut targets and holds team members accountable for their performance.	TRSLS A2				
	My manager motivates team members to achieve targets by influencing us to earn rewards like incentives and Achiever's foreign trips.	TRSLS A3				
	My manager makes quick decisions when necessary and ensures continuity of work at any cost.	TRSLS A4				

5. Future scope of study

The effectiveness of any sales team is heavily influenced by the leadership style of the first-line managers, regardless of the industry or geographical area to which they cater. The pharmaceutical industry is no different. To drive the performance of the sales team, every manager/leader attached to the industry uses a leadership style of some form or the other, which is most dominant to his or her personality. However, there is limited study available on leadership styles used by first line managers of the sales department in India within the pharmaceutical industry and its impact on employee performance metrics like sales achievement and sales growth. These leaders are the bridge between the ground sales team and the senior management; their leadership skills are most important for the organization's long-term sustainability.

Secondly, most of the studies conducted on leadership styles and their impact on employee performance are focused on portraying the positive sides of the leadership styles; there is no significant study, which has portrayed the negative side of these leadership styles.

Thirdly, most studies on leadership and employee performance are qualitative, there is further scope to conduct quantitative studies, and a combination of both to deep dive into the subject.

Pharmaceutical firms in the region might benefit from leadership development programs that teach first-line managers how to adjust their leadership styles to the industry's changing needs. Future study should investigate the impact of leadership styles at various hierarchical levels and locations to have a more thorough knowledge of their impact on organizational success.

6. Conclusion

Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of first-line managers' leadership styles in molding performance indicators in select pharmaceutical companies in India. The findings show that transformational leadership, which is defined by valuing ideas, inspiration, trust, and motivation, is widely used along with Transactional leadership.

Moreover, both Transformational leadership and Transactional leadership styles of the First line managers have a positive correlation with the performance of Medical representatives and can be enhanced with superior Transformational leadership and Transactional leadership styles. Organizations may take note of it and train their first line managers for better organizational effectiveness.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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