

The Impacts of Leadership Style on Innovative Work Behaviour During Covid-19 Pandemic in Oman

Ali Bakhit Ali Fadhil

Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University, Selangor, Malaysia

Jalan Zirkon A7/A, Seksyen 7, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

E-mail: alifadhil2009@gmail.com

Mokana Muthu Kumarasamy

Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University, Selangor, Malaysia

Jalan Zirkon A7/A, Seksyen 7, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Zaharuzaman Jamaluddin

Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University, Selangor, Malaysia

Jalan Zirkon A7/A, Seksyen 7, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Samah M. A. Mubarak

Graduate School of management, international Islamic university -Malaysia

Jalan Gombak, 53100, Selangor

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Abstract

Pandemics present different challenges for leaders, organizations, and subordinates. During the Covid19 pandemic, all organizations faced challenges, including constant regulatory changes, for social, business, and economic conversions to protection and safety. The important challenge highlighted by the pandemic is how leaders can inspire and retain creative work behaviour when all employees work from home, and what leadership style will help the company succeed and survive. On the other hand, the researcher looks to be in a

unique position to explore the influence of the Covid19 pandemic on leadership style and innovative work behaviour. In the meanwhile, the earlier research explored the significant role of leadership on innovativeness and sustainability.

By hiring managers from several industries across the Sultanate of Oman, this study explores the influence of leadership style on innovative work behaviour during the covid19 epidemic. For data collection, a quantitative method was adopted, with a structured questionnaire sent out through email to a randomly chosen sample of managers in two large cities. The researchers employed descriptive statistics and statistical inference to analyze the correlation and multiple regression using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25.0. The key results of the research were that transformational leadership has a considerable beneficial influence on employee innovative work behaviour, but transactional leadership has no such effect.

Keywords: Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Innovative Work Behaviour, Covid19

1. Introduction

The looming problem of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the Sultanate's progress in all areas. Consumer spending decreased at the local level, and at the global level, travel, tourism, aviation, and many vital sectors were affected. Economic activities such as transportation and shopping were affected by pandemics, which led to decreased demand and consumption and the availability of liquidity at the level of the economic sector system.

The pandemic has had the greatest effect on the hotel, tourism, transport, warehouse, both wholesale and retail (especially long-lasting and luxurious goods) Small companies and the self-employed workers have been especially notable heavily struck. Such enterprises also need personal engagement (i.e. Face-to-face meetings) with their consumers; as a result of the border closure, they have seen a fall in both domestic demand and interest from tourists and business travelers. Despite the large deficit in financial, logistical, and training help provided to faculty members, the education sector has not been spared from the Corona pandemic e-teaching approaches, student assessment methodologies, and improving students' e-learning abilities without enough assistance Crop production methods, transportation routes, and global food security have all been impacted. The whole food supply chain, including producers, processors, and transportation companies, has been affected by a lack of workers and difficulty importing and exporting agricultural items. Agricultural and dairy goods were reported damaged owing to farmers' or dealers' inability to transport them to local marketplaces or industrial centers. The considerable decline in demand in wealthy nations has affected essential goods, exporting countries hard On the other hand, the tourism sector is one of the most prominent sources of income that the Sultanate of Oman focuses on, as this sector witnessed a significant impact of the pandemic due to the suspension of the aviation sector greatly, which led to the blocking of borders and the halt of tourists' movement.

This lingering problem has sparked severe worries, such as what economic consequences may we anticipate from this universal pandemic? What economic, social, educational, tourist,

aviation, and environmental implications? What are Omani organizations' best practices for dealing with the epidemic's effects? Many academics in this subject highlight particular economic estimations, concepts, and proposals provided by well-known researchers from many disciplines to solve such issues.

Where crises are among the most prominent, check the actual preparation of the national economy, including organizations, the real test of the leadership, administrative system, and innovative systems. Thus, this stage requires real leaders to manage the crisis effectively and also needs creative national competencies and enthusiasm for creativity appropriate to recover from crises. The emphasis of this research is to examine the Influence of Style of leadership on innovative work behaviour in Oman during the Pandemic of Covid-19.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transformational Leadership Style

This research looked at the transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership, describes a leader who can change each subordinate according to the new situation. The central aspect of the transformation leadership style obtained. Intellectual stimulation explained as a condition where leaders motivate their subordinates to throw inspired by improving values and beliefs. Furthermore, intellectual stimulation is stated in the situation where people are encouraged to define the problem and try new methods to solve this problem (Erden & Yaşlıoğlu, 2020). Secondly, vision, a leader who has idealized influence (charisma) can lead to the right thing due to standards of ethics and morals that conduct the right things (Megheirkouni et al., 2018). Third, Inspirational Communication and motivation are integrated as a positive aspect of the transformational style Megheirkouni et al. (2018) mentioned that leaders with inspiring motivation could express higher expectations to their followers and encourage them to become more vision and be a part of the organization through motivation. Bass (1995) identified that when leaders develop a connection with subordinates and individual consideration takes place to obtain the private needs. Thus, Supportive leadership involves the subordinates' needs to provide suitable support. To ensure practical support, with potential employees, leaders ensure that they have a robust communication strategy in place. (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018) However, supportive leadership is obtained as a crucial component of a transformational leader who is concerned about the personal needs of subordinates.

Transformational leadership usually focuses on confidence, partnership, and team learning. Yukl (2010) mentioned, "Transformation leadership is a leadership style that appeals to supporters' moral ideals to raise awareness of ethical problems and harness their energy and resources to change institutions. "Thus transformational leaders aim to establish relationships that increase the motivation and morale of leaders and followers (Buil et al., 2019).

2.2 Transactional Leadership Style

The transaction management process represents several characteristics of leadership (Yukl 2010) First, relevant awards (contingent reward), such as explanation of job to qualify for awards and incentives for their encouragement Second, proactive in recognizing errors and

executing preventative strategies are Exception Management. Third, extraordinary managerial zeal usually necessitates using effective ways for identifying inefficiencies in the efficiency standard. Transactional leadership is defined by Robbins and Judge as "leadership that guides or pushes supporters to achieve goals by clarifying roles and job criteria" Koesmono, H. T. (1999). Accordingly, Burns' (1978) presented the transactional management process by appealing to their interests (Yukl 2010) Furthermore, Yukl described transactional leadership as "a framework for trade that can commit to mission objectives vigorously" (Yukl, 2010) Transactional leadership usually focuses on interpersonal communications, which affect an exchange between leaders and subordinates.

2.3 Employee Innovative Work Behaviour

Recently the organization has focused on the capability to innovate products, services, and job processes constantly, and there has been a greater emphasis on innovation as a topic of interest obtained in organizations, workgroups, and individuals (Park et al., 2021). Individual innovation is critical for continuous improvement Janssen (2005, 2000) defined innovative behaviour as a set of actions consistent to idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization for new products, services, and technologies, (Helmy et al., 2019; Qi et al., 2019; Karatepe et al., 2020).

The innovation work behaviour was defined as a human trait aimed at introducing new and beneficial ideas, products, and processes to people, groups, and organizations. (Bin Saeed et al., 2019). In addition, Yi and other academics described innovative work behaviour as "individuals' behaviour aimed at the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group, or organization) of new and useful ideas, processes, products, or procedures". Therefore, innovative work behaviour is the production of useful products, processes, or services as a consequence of identifying problems and generating ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994) On the other hand, creative work behaviour reflects the creation of new approaches for various products (Spreitzer, 1995).

Innovative work behaviour, according to Janssen (2000, 2005), is a multifaceted process of idea generation, concept promotion, and idea realization. To begin, idea generation entails the creation of novel and excellent concepts (Amabile et al., 2018). Second, idea promotion seeks potential allies to help promote the developed concept (Al-Omari et al., 2019). Finally, the innovation model established and used in businesses is referred to as idea realization. As a result, innovative work behaviour is a three-stage process that begins with the production of new ideas and concludes with their implementation (Muninger et al., 2019). According to Yidong and Xinxin (2013). Individuals might participate in any activity or a mix of various behaviours at different stages and periods.

2.4 Relationship Between Leadership Style and Employee Innovative Work Behaviour

Innovative work behaviour is connected with new change or the design and deployment of new product, services, and ways (Khan et al., 2020). The launch of new ideas obtains the result of Inventiveness, and it is partially dependent on the organization's goals and strategies. However, due to globalization, all modern organizations have had to deal with multi-cultural

issues. EIWB is required for all organizations to sustain a competitive advantage to develop the struggle of the modern era and achieve the global competition Faraz et al (2018).

The existence of IWB establishes by innovative thinking, which creates new knowledge, skills, and technology through effective leadership (khan et al., 2020). The capacity to think creatively relies on a person's experience and knowledge, as well as talent and competence in solving new challenges. Previous research has shown that leadership predicts both inbound and outbound innovation. The researcher further explained that leaders should generate a vibrant organizational vision to change cultural standards and imitate innovation. Consequently, the link between the various leadership styles and IWB must be investigated. (Naqshbandi et al., 2019).

The transformational leadership approach was deemed more successful in fostering workers' comprehension and creativity. Influential leaders seek to improve the capability of their followers and inspire them to generate new ideas and solutions via intellectual stimulation and a thorough examination of the organization's current challenges. Influential leaders aid their subordinates in enhancing their performance and personal skills via the use of inspiring motivation. Finally, followers accomplish the lofty objectives set by their individual leaders (Khan et al., 2020).

Previous study has shown that transformational leadership has a major effect on innovative work behaviour (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Pradhan & Jena., 2019). Accordingly, Transactional leadership affected IWB negatively due to being task-oriented (Miller & Miller, 2020) Alheet et al. (2021) the disadvantageous relationship between transactional leadership and creative work behaviour was examined, but other academics explain how transactional leaders encourage innovative work behaviour just as well as transformational leaders (Ma & Jiang,2018) Furthermore, some scientists conclude that there are no substantial distinctions between the two leadership types and identify how both leadership styles favorably affect IWB. 2020 (Khan et al.) Based on the aforementioned research, we hypothesize

H1: Transformational leadership positively and significantly affects innovative work behaviour.

H2; Transactional leadership has a positive and significant effect on innovative work behaviour

3. Theoretical Framework

This study's structure or framework was built on prior research and dissection. Figure 1 illustrates the link between the independent variables (transformational and transactional leadership) and the dependent variable (innovative work behaviour)

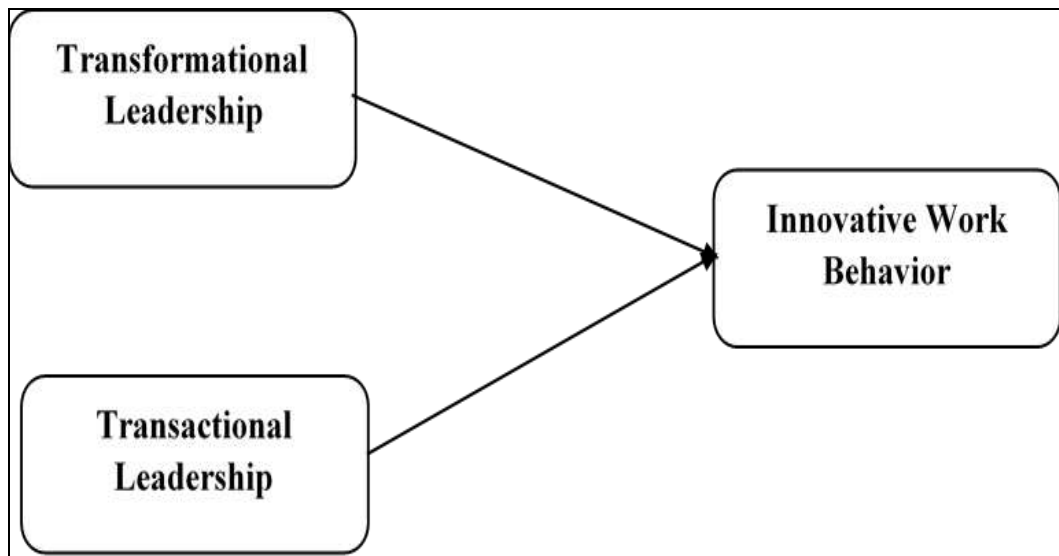


Figure1. A conceptual framework

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Unit of Analysis

Individual managers are the analysis unit of this study, which chose from different sectors based in Salalah and Masqat cities in Oman. This organization provides different kinds of services. The respondents of this study obtained from three levels of management (top, middle and technical) were asked to fill out the questionnaire that they would administer to themselves.

4.2 Methods of Sampling and the Collection of Data

For data collection, convenience sampling as a social science research method was used due to employee information availability constraints, budget, and time. Thus, only those employees who agreed to complete the self-administered questionnaire were contacted (Eisel et al., 2022). A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure employees' responses with a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 7 indicating strong agreement.

4.3 Development of the Instrument

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the measuring scales that were utilized by earlier researchers in an earlier era may be used to establish a very good questionnaire with such a Cronbach Alpha reliability exceeded seven, which was desirable to adopt. This research will be presented in the form of a paper (Pallant, 2013). Transformational leadership based on vision (3 questions), supportive leadership (3 questions), and inspiring communication (3 questions) adopted from House (1998). On the other hand, intellectual simulations (3 questions) and personal recognition (3 questions) will be adopted from Podsakoff et al., 1990). Furthermore, transactional leadership is measured through contingent rewards (5 questions), management exception-active (4 questions), and management exception-passive (4 questions), adopted from Bass (1995).

The IWB questionnaire was adapted from Janssen's (2000). This scale has nine elements that are divided into three categories: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. The previous researcher reported a Cronbach's Alpha reliability score of more than .95 for innovative work behaviour. (Botha & Steyn, 2020).

5. Results

To put this study's theory to the test, 100 individuals were communicated. The respondents' ages varied from 25 to 55 years old or older, and they came from a variety of industries. The hypothesis was tested using IBM SPSS software and correlation and regression analysis.

5.1 Statistics of a Descriptive Nature

The character of the information made clear via the values means such as minimum, maximum, and standard deviation values was explored in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis (n=120)

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	STD. Deviation
Transformational leadership	1	7	4.72	1.63
Transactional leadership	1	7	4.26	1.34
Innovative work behaviour	1	7	4.43	1.73

5.2 Reliability Analysis

The reliability test for all scales was obtained through Cronbach's Alpha. Table 2 shows the study's reliability for each variable. Nonetheless; reliability analysis indicates a high level of reliability for each scale exceeding .8 and validates the reliability results of previous research (Botha & Steyn, 2020).

Table 2. Reliability analysis (n=100)

Variables	Total Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformational leadership	12	0.97
Transactional leadership	13	0.89
Innovative work behaviour	9	0.98

5.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 shows Person correlation analysis. Transformational leadership was positively

associated with an innovative work behaviour ($r = .217^{**}$, $P < .000$), while transactional leadership negatively correlated with an innovative work behaviour ($r = -.046^*$, $P < .001$). Therefore, according to Omani organizations, no relationship was obtained between transactional leadership and innovative work behaviour during the pandemic.

Table 3. Pearson correlations between independent and dependent variables

Variables	Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Innovative work behaviour
Transformational leadership	1		
Transactional leadership	.780	1	
Innovative work behaviour	.217**	-.046*	1

** $P < .01$ (2-tailed)

* $P < .05$ (2-tailed)

5.4 Regression Analysis

To determine how much variation is clarified by the independent variable, the linear regression investigations are performed in this research through Table 4. The regression analyses concluded that transformational leadership explained 64% of the variance in innovative work behaviour ($R^2 = .046$, adjusted $R^2 = .034$, $\beta = .644$ & $p < .000$); however, this effect was positively significant. Furthermore, transactional leadership indicated -54% of the variance in innovative work behaviour ($R^2 = .002$, adjusted $R^2 = -.010$, $\beta = -.548$, $p < .001$). This result shows a negative relation between transactional leadership and IWB.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis ($n = 100$)

Variables	R ²	ΔR ²	B	b	S.E	F	t	p
Transformational leadership	.046	.034	.644	.410	.104	3.933	3.950	.000
Transactional leadership	.002	-.010	-.548	-.489	.145	18.240	-3.360	.001

6. Discussions

In the midst of the COVID19 epidemic, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the influence that transformational and transactional leadership styles had on creative work behaviour. Leadership style was used as an independent variable, while the dependent

variable was innovative work behaviour H1 and H2 is two hypothesized propositions in this research. The regression analysis and correlation between variables gave adequate and useful information on the influence of both leadership styles on innovative work behaviour.

Furthermore, transformational leadership significantly positively affects innovative work behaviour during the pandemic; thus, the first hypothesis (H1) was supported. Transformational leadership accounted for 64% of the variance in innovative work behaviour ($R^2=0.046$, adjusted $R^2=0.034$, $.644$ & $p<0.000$). As a result, the H1 may be accepted. These findings align with what the previous research suggested, such as Afsar and Umrani (2020), which finally got a confident influence on innovative work behaviour. As a result, Nago et al. (2022) investigated the beneficial effects of transformational leadership, such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, on organizational innovation and employee creativity during the Covid19 pandemic.

Additionally, this study validates and adds to the findings of previous research studies. Transactional leadership negatively impacted innovative work behaviour. Thus Transactional leadership accounted for -54 % of innovative work behaviour ($R^2=0.002$, adjusted $R^2=-0.010$, $p<0.001$). This study suggested that there is a negative correlation between transactional leadership and creative behaviour in the workplace; thus, H2 may not be accepted. This result is similar to previous studies on the leadership-innovative relationship, such as (Azizaha et al., 2020; Antonopoulou et al., 2021), which measured the impact of transactional leadership on innovativeness during the covid19 pandemic in a different sector.

6.1 Conclusion, Results and Management Implications

This study contributes to the existing body of research by concentrating on the creative work behaviour and leadership styles prevalent in the Arabian Gulf region during pandemics. This research explored the link between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour, indicating that transformational leadership has a positive and substantial influence on innovative work behaviour among employees. The findings of this research did not lend credence to the second hypothesis H2, which stated that transactional leadership would have a significant and positive influence on creative work behaviour during a pandemic. Consequently, leaders with higher idealized levels of authority, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual concern may build strong relationships and a high degree of creative work behaviour among their subordinates.

This study's conclusions have ramifications for organizational leaders and managers, especially those in the Arabian Gulf area. It is recommended that leaders enhance their ties with their subordinates. Allowing employees to create new ideas during work-related tasks and choices and treating them more favorably can increase organizational creativity. Additionally, as a consequence of this, connectedness and trust will develop between the many members and leaders of the organization; hence, fostering innovation will continually support and improve organizational efficiency and effectivity stimulation. Individual concern may foster strong relationships and a better degree of inventiveness among subordinates.

6.2 Limitations and Future Study

Due to time, financial, and accessibility restrictions, the researchers were not being able to get in touch with a significant portion of the responders, hence restricting the generalizability of the research findings. Second, this investigation was finished in a reasonable little amount of time. Third, convenience sampling was selected and used in this study, despite the fact that researchers did not have access to complete information regarding organizational workers. Employees were thus questioned and asked to complete questionnaires. In addition, in order to generalize the idea under investigation, future research should analyse the reasons why transformational leadership has no influence on the creativity and innovativeness of all organizations, not just the workers. Lastly, future study should explore the notion of leadership style and its efficacy in organizations by considering numerous organizational phenomena during the pandemic, such as employee job satisfaction, organizational performance, and commitment.

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