

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Psychological Empowerment of Omani Civil Service Agencies' Employees: A Conceptual Model

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Abstract

Purpose: Workplace empowerment comprised the Social Structure Empowerment (SSE) that provides the fundamental climate of empowerment and psychological empowerment (PE) associated with individuals' cognitive processes. PE has an active role in overall empowerment. However, organizations overlook PE since it is not formal in their process of empowerment. This is a motive to conduct a study on PE and the factors that drive this type of empowerment. Leadership role is the most significant factor in driving PE. Studies assured that transformational leadership (TL) has a strong influence on workplace behavioral outcomes, however few studies focused on attitudinal outcomes such as PE. This is another motive to conduct study on PE generally, and specifically in the Omani context, which is the aim of this study.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Literature review was utilized to collect and assess the secondary data. Based on this review, the study hypothesis was postulated for this stage of this study. For the second stage.

A quantitative approach will be utilized to collect primary data; and survey will be completed by 354 heads of sections of the OCSAs. SPSS and AMOS for SEM will be used for data analyzes.

Findings: Literature review results indicated that TL has a positive and significant influence on the overall PE and its subscales (competence, self-determination, impact and meaning).

Research limitations/implications: The focus is on reviewing literature and develop a conceptual model without validation at this stage. The expected limitations of the second stage are in study focus and error data collection. The focus is only on OCSA and not on other governmental agencies or the private sector. it covers only the relationship between middle managers and HoS and no other managerial levels. There is also a possibility of error in data collection due to the sensitivity of the information, and some respondents may not give true answers.

Practical implications: The results may be used for future studies to validate the model within the context of Oman and assist in the development of Human Resources Development plans in the areas of leadership development and employees' empowerment enhancement.

Originality/Value: At this stage, the study uses secondary data based on the literature as the basis to develop a conceptual model and formulate a subject hypothesis as per the study

objective. To validate the developed conceptual model at the second stage, the study will use the original data that will be collected from OCSA.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, Civil Service Agencies, Employees, Oman

Paper Type: Conceptual Paper

1. Introduction

Oman is a developing Arab country in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula. Since the early 1970s, major efforts have been exerted in the private and public sectors in Oman, aiming to develop its human resources in order to reach a level that stands in comparison to other developed countries in the field of human resources (Al Zefeiti and Mohamad, 2015; ALKindy, 2017). The developed and advanced human resources are vital for the modern state with advanced infrastructure, efficient governmental system, health system, education system and a diversified economic system (ALKindy, 2017).

To achieve a governmental administrative system that can sustain the required level of performance that is vital to provide high quality of services demanded by the Omani public, it was essential to have a clear strategy for continuous development of this system. Accordingly, the Symposium of Development of Governmental Performance was organized by the Ministry of Civil Service in light of the vision of the late, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the former Sultan of Oman (ALKindy, 2017; Ministry of Civil Service, 2012). The objective of this strategy is to have a governmental system with a clear vision for future development striving to achieve set economic, social, and administrative objectives. Further, to induce significant changes in the current administrative system leading to the increase of its effectiveness, its efficiency and its contribution to the national development process in accordance with a clear future vision (ALKindy, 2017; Ministry of Civil Service, 2012).

With emerging economies, and the scarcity of resources, there is a challenge in many developing countries, including Oman, to cope with the world's requirement of having an effective and high-performance workforce that is essential to overcome the economic constraints. This challenge extends to the Omani Civil Service Agencies (OCSA) (ALKindy, 2017; Ministry of Civil Service, 2012). Organizational performance is driven by the performance of the individual members in organizations. There are many factors that affect individual performance, such as job satisfaction, organization commitment, and psychological empowerment (PE). Leadership plays a great role in the enhancement of individual PE, which in turn, stimulates individuals' performance and thus, increases organizational performance. Therefore, it is essential that the Omani governmental leadership styles are examined to determine their efficiency, effectiveness, and performance enhancement role (ALKindy, 2017). It's essential to highlight that PE is one of the most significant factors that drive individual performance behavior. Many studies supported the role of PE in improving work performance (e.g. ,ALKindy, 2017; AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Indradevi, 2012; Liden *et al.*, 2000; Maynard *et al.*, 2012; Seibert *et al.*, 2011; Spreitzer, 2008; Srivastava and Singh, 2008; Tuuli and Rowlinson, 2009; Wat and Shaffer, 2005).

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of transformational leadership (TL) on PE. Although PE has a significant role in driving performance behavior, however, there is a significant tendency within organizations to ignore this type of empowerment because PE is not part of organizations official processes and it is not documented by the organizations in the same

manner as social structure empowerment (SSE) despite its vital role of driving many organizational outcomes such as work performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018).

1.1. *The significance of the study*

The focus of this study is on the micro-scale of empowerment; that is, the PE and the role of leadership in the enhancement of this type of empowerment, for the following reasons: First, PE is a perception of empowerment, it is also a cognitive form of empowerment and despite of the active role of PE in overall workplace empowerment (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Araújo, 2016; Spreitzer, 2008) and in driving individual work performance (ALKindy, 2017; AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018), there is a large tendency of organizations to neglect it, because it is not part of a formal organizational administrative process such as SSE. Thus, there is theoretical and practical demands to focus on this type of empowerment in this study. Second, generally, there are few PE studies in Oman in and specifically in the context of this study the Omani Civil Service Agencies (OCSA) (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). Therefore, there is a demand for research on this type of empowerment in Oman to add more knowledge to this area of research.

This current study is one of the few studies that has been specifically conducted in Oman to investigate the influence of TL on PE in OCSA context. According to AlKindy and Jusoh (2018), few studies have been conducted in Oman on empowerment, (e.g. ,Al-Amri, 2013; Khan, 2006), but, none of these studies were concerned on PE. One of the latest study on PE was by AlKindy and Jusoh (2018), it provided a picture of the level of perception of PE by the OCSAs' Head of Sections. The recommendation of that study was to enhance the PE and to maintain it at a similar level of SSE. This process will ensure the overall sustainability of employees' empowerment. Because of the significant role of PE in providing the employees' motivation, that is crucial for organizational work performance behavior enhancement (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). This recommendation will contribute to overcome one of the obstacles of the development and to maintain governmental performance in Oman, as highlighted by the Ministry of Civil Service (2012). This is a third reason to conduct this study that focuses on the way of improving and maintaining the sustainability of PE in Oman.

According to (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018), to enhance and to maintain the sustainability of PE, it is essential to understand the factors that impact PE, and take the required majors to enhance them. Thus, it vital to discuss the antecedents of the PE and examine the required action to ensure the existence of these antecedents in a work environment. Because of the importance of these antecedents for the individual level PE, and to ensure its sustainability, it is essential to ensure that work environment of the individual provides the factors that will assist that individuals' perception of PE.

The role of leadership is one of the most significant antecedents of PE that has the greatest influence on this construct (ALKindy, 2017; AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). TL generally was found to be strongly related to its followers' empowerment and especially PE (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Kark *et al.*, 2003; Spreitzer, 2008). Furthermore, Spreitzer (2008) reported that researchers have replicated the relationship between TL and followers' empowerment (e.g. ,Avolio *et al.*, 2004). In line of the above, some researcher reported that employees who have established better relationships with their leader reported significant feeling of empowerment (e.g. ,Aryee and Chen, 2006; Chen *et al.*, 2007; Chen and Klimoski, 2003; Liden *et al.*, 2000; Wallach and Mueller, 2006; Wat and Shaffer, 2005). Moreover, many scholars have reported that the most

examined and vital antecedent of individual PE and work performance is leadership (e.g., AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Kark *et al.*, 2003; Liden *et al.*, 2000; Seibert *et al.*, 2011; Spreitzer, 2008).

According to ALKindy (2017), TL can be vital in addressing the areas of this study. This can be validated by Kouzes and Posner (2007) TL behaviors contribution to some core areas of this study. Assessment of previous studies on leadership in Oman and in the Arabian Gulf region from 2001 to 2017 indicated that there is a scarcity of these studies in this region, and accordingly, more studies are required (eg. Abdalla and Al-Homoud, 2001; Al Balushi, 2012; Common, 2011; Dorfman and House, 2004; Khan and Varshney, 2013; Rao and Abdul, 2015). Therefore, this study will attempt to address this gap in the literature and precisely the requirement to conduct the TL studies with related work outcomes. This demand was supported by several studies (eg. Al-Araimi, 2012; Al Balushi, 2012; Al Zefeiti, 2017; Al Zefeiti and Mohamad, 2015; ALKindy, 2017; Khan and Varshney, 2013; Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013; Rao and Abdul, 2015).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Transformational Leadership

Leadership is the art of directing organizational resources to achieve organizational objectives in the most efficient way, when the leader's characteristics and charisma play a great role in motivating, elevating, directing, and appealing to followers' behaviors (ALKindy, 2017). According to ALKindy (2017), TL is crucial in addressing the practical areas of this study. For example, Kouzes and Posner (2007) indicated that TL could provide an organizational vision for employees and it can also empower them. Also, TL is suitable leadership for this study because of its contribution to develop leadership in different organizational levels of OSCA as per the recommendations of the Ministry of Civil Service (2012).

TL is an appealing theory for the OCSA. Studies have supported the universality of TL, its diverse utilization in a widespread of industries, its utilization in private and governmental agencies, and its implementation across a wide range of leadership levels within organizations (ALKindy *et al.*, 2016; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Getha-Taylor and Morse, 2013; Kouzes and Posner, 2007; Smith, 2015; Strack *et al.*, 2008; Tapke, 2011). Thus, TL is expected to fit with the leadership demands of the OCSA, because these governmental agencies provide a wide range of services to the Omani public that necessitates leadership that has been proven and used in a broad base of industries (ALKindy, 2017). Moreover, studies have supported the requirement to develop TL in Oman and the in the region (eg. Al-Araimi, 2012; Al Balushi, 2012; Al Zefeiti, 2017; Al Zefeiti and Mohamad, 2015; ALKindy, 2017; Khan and Varshney, 2013; Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013; Rao and Abdul, 2015).

2.1.1. Transformational Leadership Theory

TL is concerned with values, ethics, emotions, long term goals, standards, including the assistance of followers, satisfying their needs, motivating them and treating them with grace and dignity (Jackson, 2014). Transformational leaders motivate followers to perform over and above their initial expected goals to a higher level of achievement by engaging them to strive for the elevated desires (Jackson, 2014). TL provides work environment and job circumstances that lead to followers' job satisfaction and empowerment (Jackson, 2014). TL is a fundamental for organizational success (Jackson, 2014; Jandaghi *et al.*, 2009; Spinelli, 2006). TL emphasizes

transforming its followers' values, judgments, beliefs and needs (ALKindy, 2017; Northouse, 2015; Yıldız *et al.*, 2014). TL encourages the followers to become goal-oriented through their awareness of the organizational mission and vision. It thus increases their self-confidence in reaching organizational goals. It can be clearly concluded that, through TL behaviors, leaders creates a vision of change, provides resources, gives individual support and monitor the improvements of their followers (ALKindy, 2017; Yıldız *et al.*, 2014).

2.1.2. Kouzes and Posner Transformational Leadership

This leadership model was developed by Kouzes and Posner to reveal the necessary behaviors that leaders follow when they are striving to achieve extraordinary performance from their followers (ALKindy, 2017). It comprises five leadership behaviors: modeling the way; inspiring a shared vision; challenging the process; enabling others to act; and encouraging the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). For over thirty years the five-practice framework has been utilized in more than 600 research papers and in applied leadership development. Researchers representing over 70 countries and more than five million in number have developed instruments related to the framework (ALKindy *et al.*, 2016). The five practices of leadership present a prudent and well-established method of conceptualizing that is applicable across cultures (Posner, 2013; Zagorsek *et al.*, 2004).

This model has been used by scholars to study the leadership experiences of individuals in many areas such as manufacturing, business, government, education, healthcare, community service, entertainment, profit, and nonprofit organizations (ALKindy, 2017; Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Moreover, According to Getha-Taylor and Morse (2013), Kouzes and Posner's work is particularly distinguished because, over two decades, it has been a subject to validation by a hundred thousand people and the work itself has a strong research base. This leadership is generic leadership and is not sector-specific. This model has been primarily researched and applied in private sector, there is also evidence of its utilization in all levels of public leadership. The five practices comprise elements of personal and interpersonal leadership and seem to be applicable in organizational and inter-organizational settings (ALKindy, 2017; Getha-Taylor and Morse, 2013). The five behaviors of the Kouzes and Posner (2007) TL are explained below.

2.1.2.1. Modeling the Way

Leaders go first is what modeling the way means. Transformational leaders create both progress and momentum for their followers and their organizations by setting an example and building a commitment, through their daily acts and practices. Transformational leaders build an excellent program and thereafter, set an example that the leader expects from others to follow (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). "To model the way leaders need to have a philosophy, a set of high standards by which the organization is measured, a set of principles concerning the way people should be treated, and the way goals should be pursued that make the organization unique, and distinctive (Kouzes and Posner, 2007, p. 46)". Transformational leaders set and live the values they preach by implementing these values in their daily practices. They believe in alignment between the message and practice. In other words, they are practising what they are preaching, and thus, building their credibility as transformational leaders (ALKindy, 2017; Kouzes and Posner, 2007; Nelson *et al.*, 2014).

2.1.2.2. Inspiring the Shared Vision

Transformational leaders sketch a clear, ideal, and unique picture of their organizations' future to their followers. These leaders strongly believe that they can make a great difference to their followers. Through the use of skilful and positive language, personal energy, use of metaphors and symbols, transformational leaders can generate enthusiasm and excitements for the common vision of the organization to their followers (ALKindy, 2017; Kouzes and Posner, 2007). According to Martin *et al.* (2014), inspiring a shared vision is one of the key ingredients of effective leadership, in terms of providing orientation and steering the whole system towards excellence. Leaders are demanded to create the organizational vision and satisfactorily explain this vision to the followers across the organization (Barut, 2012; Pennings, 2007). On the other hand, followers must comprehend the vision, and commit themselves to achieve the mission (ALKindy, 2017). Additionally, Bennis and Goldsmith (2013) asserted that, when leaders inspire and empower others, the work becomes stimulating, motivating, challenging, and fascinating.

2.1.2.3. Challenging the Process

Challenging the process is made possible either by transformational leaders creating novel ideas or recognizing and supporting their followers' novel ideas, while the leader is strives towards the achievement of a goal or set up of the goals (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). This action takes place when the transformational leader challenges the system to produce new ideas that will lead to the improvement of the organization main business objectives (for example, new products, process, goods or service). Leaders search for challenges that will give them opportunities to examine their skills and allow them to discover novel ways to enhance their organizations. In order to move forward, transformational leaders are willing to take risks (ALKindy, 2017; Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Challenging the process is the leader's capacity to question the status quo, take a risk, and step into the unknown. It includes being willing to innovate, grow, improve, learn from mistakes and to initiate changes that will enhance the organization (Ammons, 2014; Beamon, 2011; Chen, 2014; Kouzes and Posner, 2007).

2.1.2.4. Encouraging Other to Act

TL behavior involves followers in planning and grants them the liberty to make their own decisions. Accordingly, It fosters collaboration and empowerment (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). This behavior allows the followers to perform their job and make them reach their ultimate potential (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). It is essential for leaders to be able to develop their followers into most effective and efficient workers (Nelson *et al.*, 2014). To enable teams, partnerships, and other alliances to function effectively, it is significant that leaders and followers possess collaboration as a master skill (Chen, 2014; Kouzes and Posner, 2007). These leaders highly value teamwork and cooperation, because both are the basis for organizational success (ALKindy, 2017; Chen, 2014; Goethals *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, Kouzes and Posner (2007) argued that transformational leaders enable others to act by giving away their power instead of merely holding it by themselves. When followers are empowered, they put in more effort to perform better and be part of the decision-making process. Consequently they are more likely to use the participatory approach to reach a common consensus (AlKindy *et al.*, 2016; ALKindy, 2017).

2.1.2.5. *Encouraging the Heart*

To achieve organizational goals, it is essential for the leaders to encourage and motivate their followers. The high expectations of the leaders for themselves and for their followers is a sign of a successful leader (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Leaders attaching rewards and recognition to work performance, is a way of motivating the followers. Since transformational leaders are the most prominent personalities in the organization and act as role models, they play a special role in the celebration of individual or group achievements (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Celebrating achievements together, increases followers' sense of belonging to the organization and their feeling that they are a part of the group. Followers' inspiration to perform better is achieved through leaders' encouragement of their followers through recognition and celebration (AlKindy, 2017; Caza and Posner, 2014). Followers feel empowered as a result of their leaders' inspiration that motivates them, stimulates them, and challenges them (Hutton, 2012; Pennings, 2007).

In summary, the behaviors of Kouzes and Posner (2007) TL expected to have an impact on employees' work attitude and behaviors. These positive work attitudes foster an environment of enhancing PE. The five behaviors exhibit a positive relationship with the workplace empowerment of the employees.

2.2. *Psychological Empowerment*

The foundation of the construct of PE was built on the organizational theories of participative management and employee involvement of Cotton (1993) and Wagner (1994) respectively (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). Empowerment may be defined as the “process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Conger and Kanungo, 1988, p. 474)”. The concept of Conger and Kanungo (1988) was further developed by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) to a framework that significantly presents PE as intrinsic motivation, built on four cognitions; competency, self-determination, impact and meaning. These four cognitions reflect employees orientation to work (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Spreitzer, 2008).

PE is defined as a set of psychological states that are essential for individuals to feel a sense of control in relation to their work, and it focuses mainly on how employees perceive their work role in relation to their organizations (Spreitzer, 2008). Moreover, there was broad support for these four empowerment dimensions, across dissimilar literatures, and based on these findings; the four dimensions of PE were further developed (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018).

2.2.1. *Competence.*

Competence may be defined as the self-efficacy specific to one's work, or a belief in one's ability to accomplish work-related tasks with the required knowledge and skills (Spreitzer, 2008). It is also known as the belief that individuals possess in relation to their ability to complete their assigned tasks skillfully (Maynard *et al.*, 2012). The lack of individuals sense of confidence in their capabilities to perform a task, without a doubt, will make them feel inadequate when accomplishing their assignment tasks (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Joo and Lim, 2013).

2.2.2. Self-determination

Self-determination is known as a feeling of freedom or choice in starting and regulating one's actions (Spreitzer, 2008). It reveals a perception of autonomy or choice over the initiation and sustainability of work behaviors and processes by the individual, for example, decision making, choosing work methods, and degree of effort required for the task (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). It was further defined as the feeling of having control (Srivastava and Singh, 2008). This degree of autonomy or freedom is vital for the perception of empowerment by the individuals (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018).

2.2.3. Impact

The impact is the degree to which one can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 2008). It reflects the degree to which individuals perceive that their behaviors make a difference or the degree to which their actions influence the operating system outcomes (Maynard *et al.*, 2012). It reflects the bond between the individuals and their work tasks (AlKindy, 2017). When the relationship is established and based on its strength of this relationship, it will drive the cognitive state of the individuals toward their work. This relation or the feeling of individuals' influence toward their work is a reflection of the impact dimension of PE (AlKindy, 2017).

2.2.4. Meaning

Meanings is the representation of a fit between the requirements of one's work role and one's beliefs, values and behaviors (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). Meaning is also the value of work objectives or goals, assessed in respect to an individual's standards, values and ideals. Therefore, the emphases of the meaning dimension is on the relations or the alignment between the values of a task hold and the individual's value system (Srivastava and Singh, 2008). Meaning known as an individual's degree of caring about a task, and it is signifying the mechanism through which individuals become energized about work. It also plays the role of a main empowering engine (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018). The strength of the established bond between the employees and its work tasks reflects the cognitive driver known as a meaning dimension of PE. Meaning is a relationship between the individual and the associated work role.

Following from the above, PE is a second-order motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Spreitzer, 2008). The overall construct of PE is a combination of the all four individual dimensions (Seibert *et al.*, 2011; Spreitzer, 1995). This construct is related, theoretically and empirically with important work outcomes through its effect on employees' intrinsic motivation (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Hill *et al.*, 2014). According to AlKindy and Jusoh (2018), the four dimensions collectively reflect an active and passive orientation to an employee's work role. The experience of PE is evident in all four dimensions of this construct, and the absence of any of the four dimensions will have a detrimental impact on the overall level of empowerment, for example, the reduction of the empowerment level experienced by the individuals (Spreitzer, 2008).

2.2.5. Antecedents of Psychological Empowerment.

According to AlKindy and Jusoh (2018), to understand the factors that impact PE, it is important to discuss its antecedents. Due to the importance of these antecedents for the individual level PE, AlKindy and Jusoh (2018), provided a detailed explanation on these antecedents and clarified

their contribution to this construct. These antecedents are as follow; the role of leadership, trust, job characteristics or job design, social structure empowerment, individual characteristics and, organizational support (Maynard *et al.*, 2012; Spreitzer, 2008). For a further detailed explanation of the role of each of these antecedents and their contribution to the formation of this construct, refer to AlKindy and Jusoh (2018).

2.2.6. Outcomes of Psychological Empowerment.

According to AlKindy and Jusoh (2018), there are many outcomes of PE, such as: managerial effectiveness, work related outcomes, innovative behavior and work performance. Further, Maynard *et al.* (2012) stated many outcomes related to PE; however, the outcomes do appear to blend around two wide categories: performance and affective reactions. The overall outcomes of PE are detailed in the article by AlKindy and Jusoh (2018) titled “Work Place Empowerment: An Assessment for the Omani Civil Service Agencies”.

2.3. Impact of Transformational Leadership on Psychological Empowerment

Transformational leadership (TL) theory has always paid special attention to followers' development toward autonomy and empowerment through the followership mechanism (Dvir *et al.*, 2002; Graham, 1988). Transformational leadership outcomes processes are what lead to followers' empowerment. For example, transformational leaders improve their followers' ability to think independently, develop new ideas, and question obsolete managerial procedures and processes (Dvir *et al.*, 2002). The main aim of transformational leaders is the development of follower self-management and self-development (Avolio and Gibbons, 1988; Dvir *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, Shamir (1991) emphasized the transformational effects of transformational leaders on follower independence. It was also reported that charismatic leadership, through self-efficacy is strongly related to empowerment (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Dvir *et al.*, 2002). Additionally, the improvement of followers' self-efficacy was a specific result of the effect of transformational leadership development on its followers (Dvir *et al.*, 2002; Shamir *et al.*, 1993). In conclusion, TL has a positive impact on the development of followers' empowerment in terms of their critical-independent approach, active engagement in the task, and specific self-efficacy (Dvir *et al.*, 2002).

Kark *et al.* (2003) stated that the effect of TL on followers' performance is demonstrated through the development of their empowerment and motivation. This is achieved when TL embodies in the followers behaviors that foster empowerment, such as the delegation of responsibility, the enhancement of the capacity to think independently, and the encouragement of creativity and innovations (Dvir *et al.*, 2002; Kark *et al.*, 2003). In conclusion, TL has a positive impact on followers PE (Kark *et al.*, 2003).

Charbonnier-Voirin *et al.* (2010) stated that transformational leaders challenge future organizational vision, and consequently, they instill on their followers a commitment that fosters team empowerment. Jackson (2014) added that TL empowers followers to perform, because empowerment is a requirement for individual, team and overall organizational success. Allameh *et al.* (2012) also reported a positive and significant relationship between TL and PE. This finding is in line with the previous studies findings (e.g., Dvir *et al.*, 2002; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Khanmohammadi Otaghsara and Mohseni, 2010).

TL is an empowering leadership that can be adopted to enhance hospital and nursing work environments (McGuire and Kennerly, 2006; Tapke, 2011). Further, TL preaches facilitative

behaviors that focus on follower empowerment, learning, and development (Senge *et al.*, 1999; Tapke, 2011). Transformational leaders utilize a wide range of skills, traits, and behaviors to facilitate change in organizations through the leaders empowerment of their followers (Beamon, 2011).

Barut (2012) stated that transformational leaders involve their followers in participating in the decision-making process, they empower them and delegates responsibility to them. By creating an environment where followers feel the values of their participation and involvement, transformational leaders transform their followers into leaders. Followers who receive an acknowledgement from their leaders value the significance of their participation and feel psychologically empowered (Barut, 2012; Pennings, 2007). Leaders also empower their followers when they inspire them, and so they can stimulate, motivate, and challenge their followers. Furthermore, transformational leaders set up a commitment to the organization's goals and accordingly, empower their followers to attain these goals (Barut, 2012; Yukl, 2011).

According to Joo and Lim (2013) researchers on TL have reported a strong relationship between TL and PE (e.g., Avolio, 1999; Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Bono and Judge, 2004; Cameron and Dutton, 2003; Peterson and Speer, 2000). Additionally, scholars have argued that, the followers of transformational leaders stand a higher chance of being empowered, because these types of leaders tend to transform their followers' value and behavior. Their followers can thus reach their maximum potential (Joo and Lim, 2013). Further, transformational leaders, through the enhancements of their followers' PE, effectively support their followers' perceived potential impact on their organization (Joo and Lim, 2013; Laschinger *et al.*, 2001). More specifically, the results of their study revealed that TL is significantly related to PE (Joo and Lim, 2013). Moreover, a study by Lana and Chongb (2015) moreover revealed that TL is significantly related to PE. Their study results were in line with a previous study conducted by Li *et al.* (2006). It was further reported that TL behaviors have clear empowering effects on followers in terms of increasing their self-efficacy (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Smith, 2015).

The role of leadership as highlighted earlier, is the most significant antecedent of PE and it has a great influence in providing most other PE antecedents. Studies have supported the role of leadership as the most crucial antecedent of PE and specifically the role of TL (e.g., AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Kark *et al.*, 2003; Liden *et al.*, 2000; Seibert *et al.*, 2011; Spreitzer, 2008). TL has an active role in providing the other antecedent of PE except for the individual characteristics. Because, TL behaviors and qualities play an active role in the building of work environment for employees' empowerment. The role of headship, however, may have a minimum impact on individual characteristics as an antecedent of PE, because core traits of the followers remain the same and may have a decisive impact on the eventual success or failure of empowerment initiatives. Leaders have minimum influence on these characteristics (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2014; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2015).

TL may enhance employee education, and competency through the leaders support employee's education and training programs. TL may also have a great impact on long employee job tenure by ensuring organizational corporates culture and social and psychological work environment that will have in turn a positive impact eventually on employee tenure. Many studies have emphasized the important role of TL in influencing employees' PE, in particular, its significant effect (e.g., Allameh *et al.*, 2012; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2015; Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Bono and Judge, 2004; Dust *et al.*, 2014; Givens, 2011; Han *et al.*, 2016; Joo and Lim, 2013; Lana and Chongb, 2015; Rao and Abdul, 2015; Yukl, 2011).

Despite the positive finding of TL on PE, Yukl (1999) stated that one of the weaknesses of TL theory is that it does not clearly identify any situation where it has a negative effect. However, researchers have reported the possibility of TL having negative effects on followers or on organizations (Yukl, 1999). In line with this, further studies have aimed to explain the antecedents and consequences of leadership style, including TL that have shown a lack of consistency (e.g., Dai *et al.*, 2013; Patiar and Wang, 2016). This lack of consistency on the effect of TL consequences may be demonstrated in studies such that conducted by Lana and Chongb (2015). They reported that, not all dimensions of their TL model had a significant impact on the four dimensions of PE.

Further, many scholars reported the influence of TL on PE (e.g., ALKindy, 2017; Allameh *et al.*, 2012; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2014; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2015; Balaji and Krishnan, 2014; Charbonnier-Voirin *et al.*, 2010; Chhotray *et al.*, 2018; Dvir *et al.*, 2002; Jung *et al.*, 2003; Kark *et al.*, 2003; Lana and Chongb, 2015; Park, 2015; Tapke, 2011). The assessment of the literature, despite the mixed findings, reported previously, revealed support for the positive impact of TL on PE mainly by the majority of the literature and accordingly, the following five hypotheses can be postulated between TL and PE, the main variable and its dimensions (competence, self-determination, impact and meaning):

H1: TL has a significant and positive impact on overall PE.

H1a: TL has a significant and positive impact on the competence dimension of PE.

H1b: TL has a significant and positive impact on the self-determination dimension of PE.

H1c: TL has a significant and positive impact on the impact dimension of PE.

H1d: TL has a significant and positive impact on the meaning dimension of PE.

3. Methodology

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of transformational leadership (TL) on PE through an exploratory research. PE has a significant role in driving performance behavior however, there is a significance tendency within organizations to ignore this type of empowerment because PE is not part of organizations official processes and it is not documented by the organizations in the same manner as social structure empowerment (SSE) despite its vital role of driving many organizational outcomes such as work performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (ALKindy and Jusoh, 2018). To fulfill the objective of the study, an extensive review of the literature was accomplished, and the conceptual model was formatted. This model will be validated in the context of Oman, and more specifically to OCSA after data collection analysis at the next stage of this study. For further development of the current study (conceptual study), a detailed research paper will be accomplished as a second stage of this study. The second stage of this study will adopt of a full research methodology with details highlighted in subsequent paragraphs.

To achieve the research objectives and reply to the assonated research questions, research methodology will be adopted for this purpose. The major areas of the research methodology for this study are; research design, the target population and sampling process, the research instrument and its translation to the Arabic, and the instrument pilot testing. Also the sequential stages and procedures for data collection will also be discussed. Finally, the research methodology will cover the use of descriptive statistics to analyze data and to assess construct validity and instrument reliability for all the measured variables. Computerized tools such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) for

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be also used to analyze the collected data. The below-detailed explanation of the methodology is to be adopted in the next stage of this study.

3.1. Research Design

The research design methodology processes of Saunders *et al.* (2012) is adopted as a framework for research design of this research. These processes are as follow: philosophies, approaches, strategies, choice of method(s), time horizons, and techniques and procedures of data collection and analysis are in final stage of the entire process. The adopted research design for this research will be explained in below paragraphs.

The pragmatist philosophy is going to be followed in this study, since suitable for a deep examination of the studied variables of this research. Researchers who chose pragmatism have a broad freedom of choice; and thus, scholars are free to choose the techniques, methods, and procedures of research that are more appropriate for their perspective and goals (Creswell, 2013). In this research, the predominant research approach is deduction as per Saunders *et al.* (2012) research approaches. According to Gill and Johnson (2010), deduction gives the opportunity to the scholar to establish research question and objectives based on the theory, associate them to research, collect data based on surveying strategy to examine and explain the causal relationship between variable to reply to the research questions and achieve its objectives. The focus of this research is to study the relationship between TL and PE based on the established framework, and therefore the deduction is the approach of this study.

On the research method for this study, the quantitative research method is suitable for the area of this study. This method may be used by the programmatic philosophy that is associated with the deductive approach. Accordingly, the quantitative method is in line with the philosophy and approach of this present study (ALKindy, 2017; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). On the research time frame, this current study is concerned with a particular phenomenon at a particular time; and that is the impact of TL on individual PE. This study data was collected only once in the research time period (snapshot); accordingly, this is a cross-sectional study (ALKindy, 2017; Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

3.2. Target Populations and Sampling Process

The population of this research is represented by the overall employees of the 36 Oman Civil Service Agencies (OCSA), and target population is the 4439 heads of sections (HoS) who report directly to the middle managers in these agencies (ALKindy, 2017; Ministry of Civil Service, 2015). To calculate sample size, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was used and it was confirmed by the Sample Size calculator from the following website (<http://raosoft.com/samplesize.html>). According to Saunders *et al.* (2015), scholars are satisfied to estimate the population's characteristics within plus or minus 3% to 5% of the true values for the majority of business and management research. Thus, for this study, it requires a sample (S) of 354 of HoS per the provided population size (N=4439), confidence level of 95% and a precision level of 5% and a response distribution of 50% (p and q).

According to Saunders *et al.* (2012), probability sampling techniques is associated usually with survey and experimental research strategies. Accordingly, probability sampling will be used in this study since it is a pragmatic, quantitative, deductive research, with a survey strategy and cross-sectional time horizon. The simple random sampling technique is also suitable to this research, since in this research the population is widely spread in a geographical area and the

quantitative method of collecting data and analysis will be used that does not require face to face interview data collection and other means such as online, internet, email or smartphone may be used for data collection (ALKindy, 2017).

Take the sample size of 354 of the HoS who are spread into the 36 OCSA (strata), the research design, and guidelines as per Saunders *et al.* (2012), it was concluded that the proportionate stratified random sampling is the most appropriate approach for this research. The advantage of stratified sampling for this study is that, the 36 OCSA are already in strata distribution and thus, the sample itself already has strata based on Saunders *et al.* (2012), and the second advantage is “Dividing the population into a series of relevant strata means that the sample is more likely to be representative, as you can ensure that each of the strata is represented proportionally within your sample (Saunders *et al.*, 2012, p. 228)”.

3.3. Survey Instruments

According to Saunders *et al.* (2012), questionnaires tend to be used for descriptive or explanatory research. Therefore, developed questionnaire that was based on the research design, research question and objectives was the instrument utilized for data collection of this research. For this study, due to the criticality involved in questionnaire design, it was decided to adopt questionnaires that had already been previously utilized in many research and had proven their effectiveness and quality in data collection in the area of this study. The survey tool of this study consisted of three main sections: The first section is demographic questions, the second section is in TL and the third section is PE (ALKindy, 2017). Section one of the instrument, comprises demographic data collection that is associated with the respondent. This section consists of questions on the respondent age, gender, number of years in the current position in the current organization, total number of years in OCSA and education level.

The second section of the questionnaire covers the required questions to measure TL. Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) questionnaire of Kouzes and Posner (2013) will be adopted to measure the TL. There are many factors drove the selection of LPI for this study was based on many reasons, for examples, the high-reliability coefficients reports and evidence of construct validity that suggests the dependability of the usage of this tool in measuring transformational leadership behaviors (ALKindy, 2017; Chen, 2014). LPI-Observer will be utilized in this study and it is already obtained from the following website <http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/home.aspx>.

The third questionnaire section comprises questions to measure PE. It will be measured by a 12-item instrument that was developed by Spreitzer (1995). Based on the previous research, conducted by the using of this instrument, the reliability and validity of the four dimensions was well established (ALKindy and Jusoh, 2018; Spreitzer, 1995). For the four dimensions (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact), a 12 items scale of empowerment will be utilized to assess these subscales, which consist of three items for each of the four dimensions.

There was a requirement to translate sections one and three of the instrument into Arabic, because Arabic is the official language used in OCSA and it will be the medium of data collection. For LPI, section two of the surveying instrument, the Arabic version will be used since the LPI is offered in Arabica and therefore, no translation is required. The back-translation method is followed in this research because, it is the most known method for cross-cultural studies used to assess the validity of an instrument in situations where the questionnaires are in more than one language (Brislin, 1970). This method aims to produce equivalent materials in two languages. This English version of the instrument was translated into Arabic and it was back

translated to English. According to Saunders *et al.* (2012), to translate questions to another language demands specific detailed attention, especially if the translated question is to be decoded and answered by participants in the way its intended and also to confirm the quality of collected data. Thus, for this study, the instrument translation was carefully carried out and, to ensure that the process was appropriately accomplished, the Blaschko and Burlingame (2002)s' three steps method was followed.

According to Burns and Burns (2008), validity relates to the suitability of the measure to assess the construct it significances to measure (Burns and Burns, 2008). The validity of the instrument for quantitative data defined as the extent to which a used scale or the instrument, assesses what it is intended to measure (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). In this study, the most common validly measurement, the content and construct validity, will be utilized to measure the questionnaire's validity for the main variables, the TL and the PE. Content validity is the extent to which the measuring instrument, provides adequate coverage of the research questions (Rossiter, 2008; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The two most common approaches to achieve content validity and both will be combined in this study are; the first approach is based on a vigilant definition of the research through the literature review and, the other approach is to rely on a panel of experts to evaluate of the necessity and the significance of each measurement question in the questionnaire (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Construct validity known as the degree of which the measuring questions in the instrument assess the presence of those constructs that are intended to be measured (Patten, 2012; Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Tsai *et al.*, 2013). According to Hair *et al.* (2013), a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is used to measure the extent to which the variables are presenting a smaller number of constructs. Thus, an overall CFA will be accomplished to evaluate the quality of the factor structure and the designated factor loadings by examining statistically the fit between the proposed measurement model and the data (Yang, 2005).

Reliability is related to the consistency of the instrument, and it is, therefore, associated with the strength of the measuring instrument. Specifically, its capacity to produce constant results at different times and under different conditions (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Klenke, 2008; Tsai *et al.*, 2013). It shows the degree of the internal consistency of the items (or constructs), where the data will be only one time collected. These conditions are in line with the conditions of this study, and therefore, Cronbach-Alphas will be used to assess the reliability of the associated instrument.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2012), questionnaire pilot testing is a requirement before it is used in data collection. Therefore, a pilot test will be carried out to fulfill this requirement and obtain feedback from the participants. This feedback is utilized to enhance and refine the questions, responses, and format of the instrument, striving to improve its effectiveness (ALKindy, 2017).

3.4. Data Collection

To collect data for this research, the drop and collect questionnaire approach will be used. The reason to select this approach is the difficulties in conducting this type of research in Oman, as highlighted by many researchers (e.g., Al Zefeiti, 2017; Common, 2011; Dorfman and House, 2004). As a measure to overcome this difficulty, the researcher plans to visit the OCSA and make direct contact with concerned managers in these agencies. In addition, it was decided to adopt some of the guideline provided by Saunders *et al.* (2012). For further elaboration on this process, based on the established respondent distribution across these OCSAs, the questionnaires will be handed to Managers of Human Resources of these agencies OCSA proportionally for

their internal distribution to the concerned HoS. The proportionate stratified simple random sampling approach will be the base of this distribution.

3.5. Data Analysis

To reply to the research question, it is essential to analyze the collected data. For this purpose, the data analysis techniques for this study comprise descriptive statistics, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Therefore, a number of statistical tools will be used, such as SPSS or AMOS.

To identify distributions and provide the mean and the standard deviations of the data of the main variable and their subscales, a descriptive statistics technique will be utilized for this study. It will be used to assess the mean and the standard deviation of TL and PE, and represented the level of the practicing of the TL behaviors by the middle managers as perceived by the sample population, and the perception PE by the HoS (sample population) of OCSA. The higher the mean score, the more common the variable is considered to be demonstrated and the opposite is also true. The lower the standard deviation, the less variance there is among the distribution of score and the opposite is also true (AlKindy and Jusoh, 2018).

According to Byrne (2013), SEM has highly desirable features that made it as common and broadly acceptable techniques for non-experimental research, where testing methods for theory are not well developed and ethically is not viable to achieve experimental design for the research study. Further, SEM is a powerful and effective technique to address several of the research problems related to non-experimental research as per Byrne (2010), therefore and for this reason, SEM will be used in this current study. SEM will be used to address the quantitative, explanatory, hypothesis testing and non-experimental research, together with the relationship between the studied variables, and the causal effects between TL and PE.

4. The conceptual Framework and Discussion

The two variables of this study are TL as the Independent variable, and PE as the dependent variable. The relationship between the two main variables of this study are presented in the developed conceptual framework in Figure 1.

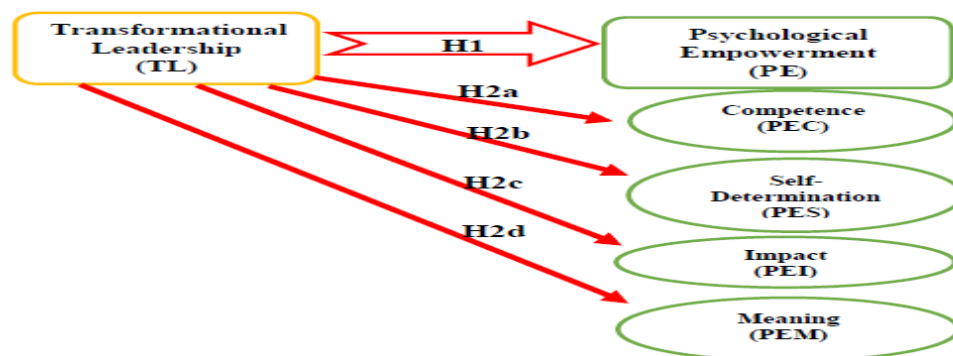


Figure1: The Conceptual Framework

The objective of this conceptual framework is to investigate the relationship between Kouzes and Posner (2007) TL and the four dimensions of the Spreitzer model of PE (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact). The results of the theoretical literature review revealed that TL has an impact on psychological empowerment (e.g., AlKindy, 2017; Allameh *et al.*, 2012;

Appelbaum *et al.*, 2014; Appelbaum *et al.*, 2015; Balaji and Krishnan, 2014; Barut, 2012; Beamon, 2011; Chhotray *et al.*, 2018; Dvir *et al.*, 2002; Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Jackson, 2014; Joo and Lim, 2013; Kark *et al.*, 2003; Lana and Chongb, 2015; Park, 2015; Smith, 2015; Tapke, 2011; Yukl, 2011).

This study utilizes a single factor approach for transformational leadership. The reason behind this approach course from the behavioral aspect of this research. This model focuses on the overall behaviors of Kouzes and Posner (2007). It is, therefore, less biased toward the average leadership style. Leaders do not pick and apply a single supervisory practice; they constantly exercise all or most practices (ALKindy, 2017; Beamon, 2011). Thus, overall, the five leadership practices combined provide the leadership effect on followers. According to ALKindy (2017), the use of single-factor TL is very common and it often appeared in the literature. For example, Franke and Felfe (2011) stated that in fact, most of the previous studies in this field have applied an overall dimension instead of a subscales measure. Examples studies of single factor approach of TL are as follows (Abu-Tineh *et al.*, 2009; Ahmed *et al.*, 2017; Al-sharafi and Rajiani, 2013; ALKindy, 2017; Brown and Reilly, 2009; Cooney, 2016; Hautala, 2005; Jensen and Bro, 2017; Joo and Lim, 2013; Sawie, 2015; Zimmerman, 2016).

According to ALKindy (2017), TL and its impact on the work attitudes of the followers were well demonstrated in many studies (e.g., Abu-Tineh *et al.*, 2009; al-Baradie, 2014; Ammons, 2014; Barut, 2012; Beamon, 2011; Caza and Posner, 2014; Chen, 2014; Hutton, 2012; Jackson, 2014; Kouzes and Posner, 2007, 2011; Martin *et al.*, 2014; Nelson, 2009). These positive work attitudes foster an environment of enhancement of individual PE. Accordingly, it can be concluded that TL has an impact on its followers' PE in general. Furthermore, ALKindy (2017) reported that TL is associated with follower empowerment. Many studies have asserted that employees who have developed better relationships with their leader reported a greater feeling of empowerment (e.g., ALKindy, 2017; Aryee and Chen, 2006; Chen *et al.*, 2007; Chen and Klimoski, 2003; Liden *et al.*, 2000; Spreitzer, 2008; Wallach and Mueller, 2006; Wat and Shaffer, 2005).

5. Conclusions

This study developed a conceptual model by integrating the concepts of TL behaviors to PE. This model will address practical and theoretical issues related to the enhancement of the organizational performance of OCSA, once validated. The approach will be focus on individual performance and its active contribution to the overall organizational performance. The role of leadership is detailed and assessed due to its role in providing a social and psychological environment for individual performance. This model will have a theoretical contribution specifically on the role of TL and its impact on employees PE.

Theoretically, this study is one of a few studies that link TL with individual level PE in Oman theoretically. This study will contribute to the theory of TL and its impact on PE in a region with few leadership studies. This study is one of the few studies on leadership in Oman that integrates TL behaviors to individual-level PE as dependent variables in both overall dimensions and in subscale level, which makes it unique since most studies were conducted in western countries and Asian countries. It will also assess Kouzes and Posner (2007)'s TL model in a region where this model has seldom been utilized specifically in the public sector this is considered a methodological contribution.

Practically, this study adds many practical implications to knowledge, specifically for the studied context. It will contribute to the area of development of governmental performance, especially in human resources. It assessed leadership aiming to improve OCSA leadership. Once the model is tested and validated within the context of Oman, and more specifically at OCSA, it will provide formulae practical guidelines to the Ministry of labor in the setup of the National Plan for the Human Resources Development in the following areas; First, leadership development plans and related leadership training. Second, employee development and their training plans should focus on employees' empowerment and specifically PE. This information may be used by the Ministry of Labor to establish the training foundation for the OCSAs' employees.

6. Limitation of the study and future scope

Several limitations may be present in this research, though the researcher put in a maximum effort to ensure the ultimate integrity of this research. The literature review generally revealed that there is a scarcity of studies on TL and its influence on work-related outcomes such as PE, specifically in the public services organization. Further, this study results will be limited to literature review only. Therefore, it is suggested that the developed hypothesis will be tested by the SEM causal analyses (regression) between the variables. The basic component of the SEM structural model will be TL and PE with the associated subscales of PE. The structural model will present the causal relation between TL and PE. An AMOS 18 SEM analysis will be conducted to perform analysis on the casual relationships.

7. Reference

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