

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employees' Readiness for Organizational Change: The Moderating Role of Organizational Transparency and the Mediating Role of Perceived Action Plan

Saber. Shokri^{1*}, Rouhollah. Sharifi¹, Saeed. Sadeghian Gharaghieh¹

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: shokri@pnu.ac.ir

Editor

Mohd Aminul Karim^{id}
Professor of University of Malaya,
Kuala Lumpur; former visiting
Professor at China Foreign Affairs
University, Beijing
mdaminulkarim1967@hotmail.com

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Marco Yamba-Yugsi^{id}
Unidad Académica de Posgrado, Universidad Católica de Cuenca, Azuay 010101,
Ecuador
Email: marco.yamba@ucacue.edu.ec
Reviewer 2: Abbas Monavarian^{id}
Professor, Management Department, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran.
Email: amonavar@ut.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, the discussion of transformational leadership is appropriate, but the manuscript should better connect the four classical dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—to readiness for change. For example, when the manuscript states that “transformational leadership functions as an important psychological and managerial antecedent of readiness for change,” it should explain which leadership behaviors are expected to reduce uncertainty, increase trust, and strengthen change-related self-efficacy among employees.

In Table 2, the manuscript concludes that “all variables and data were normal and homogeneous” because skewness and kurtosis values were between -1 and +1. This statement requires revision. Skewness and kurtosis assess approximate univariate

normality, not homogeneity. Homogeneity usually refers to equality of variances or consistency across groups. Please replace “normal and homogeneous” with a statistically accurate interpretation, or add appropriate tests if homogeneity is being claimed.

The manuscript uses PLS-SEM, but the normality discussion should be reconsidered. PLS-SEM is generally less dependent on multivariate normality than covariance-based SEM. Therefore, the normality test should not be presented as a central prerequisite for using PLS. Please explain why PLS-SEM was chosen, such as prediction orientation, model complexity, sample size, non-normality concerns, or the exploratory nature of the model.

In Table 3, the heading “Validity Values Related to Each Variable” is imprecise. The values reported appear to be AVE values, not general validity values. Please rename the table as “Average Variance Extracted Values” and explicitly state that AVE values greater than 0.50 indicate acceptable convergent validity. This will improve technical clarity and align the table with SEM reporting standards.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph discussing perceived action plan needs stronger theoretical justification. The construct “perceived action plan” is central to the mediation model, yet it is not sufficiently defined in the methods or theoretical background. Please clarify whether perceived action plan refers to employees’ perception of the clarity, feasibility, sequence, communication, or implementation capacity of the change plan. Without a precise conceptual definition, the mediating role may appear statistically tested but theoretically underdeveloped.

The role of organizational transparency as a moderator should be more explicitly theorized. The manuscript states that “organizational transparency significantly moderated the relationship between transformational leadership and readiness for organizational change,” but it does not explain the direction and mechanism of moderation in sufficient detail. Please explain whether transparency strengthens the effect of transformational leadership by increasing trust, reducing ambiguity, improving information access, or legitimizing change decisions.

In the methods section, the sentence “The present study is applied in terms of objective and descriptive-survey in terms of method” should be expanded. A descriptive-survey design alone does not fully describe the analytical nature of the study, which includes structural equation modeling. The authors should specify that the study used a cross-sectional correlational survey design with SEM-based hypothesis testing. This clarification is necessary because the model implies directional relationships, but the design does not permit strong causal inference.

In the sampling paragraph, the manuscript states that “The sampling method in this study was simple random sampling,” but it does not explain how the sampling frame was obtained or how randomization was practically implemented among the 800 employees. Please provide details about the employee list, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, response rate, and whether all occupational groups within Qazvin University of Medical Sciences had equal probability of selection.

The methods section reports that “the statistical sample size was determined to be 259 participants based on Cochran’s formula,” but the formula assumptions are not reported. Please specify the confidence level, margin of error, estimated population proportion, and finite population correction used in the calculation. This is particularly important because the population size is known to be 800, and readers should be able to verify the adequacy of the sample size.

The description of the questionnaire is insufficient. The manuscript states that “The data collection instrument was a standardized 50-item questionnaire,” but it does not identify the source, dimensions, number of items per construct, sample item, scale type, scoring range, or interpretation of scores. Please add a complete instrument section explaining how transformational leadership, readiness for organizational change, organizational transparency, and perceived action plan were measured.

The validity paragraph should be revised for methodological precision. The sentence “To assess the quality of the questionnaire, content validity, construct validity, and reliability were examined” is too general. Please explain how content

validity was evaluated, how many experts reviewed the questionnaire, whether CVR or CVI was calculated, and which criteria were used for construct validity in the PLS measurement model.

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics are useful, but the interpretation is limited. The sentence “The results indicate that transformational leadership had the highest mean, whereas perceived action plan had the lowest mean” is descriptive but analytically weak. Please interpret these mean values according to the questionnaire scale. For example, if a five-point Likert scale was used, explain whether the means indicate low, moderate, or high levels of each construct among employees.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.