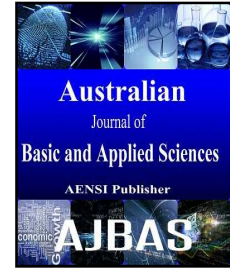




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**Transformational Leadership Andorganizational Citizenship Behavior: The Role Of Employee Engagement**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this study, we examined the relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). This paper intends to explore transformational leadership, employee engagement and OCB literatures to investigate the interrelationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement, and OCB. A retrospective analysis is carried out of existing theoretical and empirical research studies to support the associative interrelationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement, and OCB. This integrative review considers a conceptual framework to establish causal relationships between transformational leadership, employee engagement, and OCB. Findings indicate that employee engagement has potential to drive OCB. Engaged employees also have the greatest potential to augment OCB. This study suggests that value-based organizations through their HR architecture should adopt high performance HR practices to sustain high levels of employee engagement, since the psychological mechanism of engagement drives OCB by which an organization achieves effectiveness. Furthermore, this study mainly focuses on employees as engaged in their work roles, since these employees are highly capable of stimulating positive workplace behaviors and organizational performance. The study contributes to transformational leadership, employee engagement and OCB literatures by adding the notion of employee engagement as a significant antecedent of OCB.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Transformational leadership has garnered a plethora of attention since its inception more than three decades ago. The pervasive focus on transformational leadership appears to be well founded due to its positive documented effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996) and across cultures (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe, 2009; Walumbwa, Lawler, & Avolio, 2007). Given these well-established links, the need to illuminate the boundary conditions and mechanisms through which transformational leaders foster positive employee work outcomes has gained an increased focus in the leadership literature (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). For example, researchers have focused on explicating the boundary conditions and motivational mechanisms through which transformational leaders enhance employee performance (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006;

Schaubroeck, Lam, & Cha, 2007; Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu, 2008; Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). Although researchers have made significant progress in elucidating mechanisms through which transformational leadership impacts followers, more work is still needed to uncover the psychological linkages through which followers are motivated to perform beyond expectations. As Avolio and colleagues (2009) recently stated, "Generally speaking, few have paid any attention to the underlying psychological processes, mechanisms, and conditions through which charismatic and transformational leaders motivate followers to higher levels of motivation and performance" (p. 429). The continuance of employee engagement goes beyond the traditional notions of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement etc. Engagement involves the active use of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral energies at workplace while working in coherence with the organization's objectives and strategies (Andrew & Sofian, 2011). Also, engaged employees being focused,

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energetic, and fully engrossed in their jobs are highly motivated to direct their focused energy towards organizational goals (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). Certainly, organizational performance and effectiveness is a function of the collaborative efforts of engaged employees (Bakker, 2011). Engaged employees experience greater attachment to their work and organization (Organ, 1994; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) and they are more likely to do things that augment organizational effectiveness (Saks, 2008). For instance, engaged employees are optimistic and spontaneous, they tend to exhibit positive attitudes and proactive behaviors at work place (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) including low absenteeism, helpful attitude towards co-workers and adherence to company rules etc., more popularly known as organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988). Engaged employees bring enduring state of fulfillment at workplace while feeling intrinsically motivated to exhibit positive feelings such as sharing, assisting, cooperating, and supporting, and thus create a holistic framework of the positive psychological, social, and organizational context of work. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), a positive psychological approach of engaged employees towards work and organization is concerned with those informal duties and tasks that go beyond the set boundaries of one's job (Organ, 1988). The presence of OCB has been advocated for the increased organizational effectiveness (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). OCB has been observed to encompass those behaviors which lubricate the social machinery and construct the psychological fabric of an organization. Hence, OCB is widely considered both critical and beneficial to organizations (Wei *et al.*, 2010). OCB literature has produced an impressive amount of substantive research on antecedents of OCB (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). However, the constant evolution of the psychological process of employee engagement has lately begun to emerge as yet another important pathway for the evocation of OCB (Wei *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, research studies in organizational sciences have recently begun to report a positive association between employee engagement and OCB (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Christian *et al.*, 2011; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009).

## **II. Literature Review:**

### **2.1. Transformational leadership:**

Leadership is broadly discussed topic in literature. Its antecedents and consequences have greater impact on organizational outcomes and performance. Scholars, such as (Bass, 1988, 1990; Hartog *et al.*, 1997) contributed in the literature of leadership and its prominent styles of transactional and transformational leadership style. Transactional leadership style is defined as the exchange of rewards

and targets between employees and management (Howell and Avolio, 1993) leaders fulfill employee needs of rewards when targets are met (Bass, 1990; Howell and Avolio, 1993; Humphreys, 2002) it is defined as the transaction of needs fulfillment from both sides of the organization and employees (Pounder, 2002). Transformational leadership style focuses on the development of followers and their needs. Managers exercising transformational leadership style focus on the development of value system of employees, their motivational level and moralities with the development of their skills (Ismail *et al.*, 2009) transformational leadership acts as a bridge between leaders and followers to develop clear understanding of follower's interests, values and motivational level (Bass, 1994) it basically helps follower's achieve their goals working in the organizational setting; it encourages follower's to be expressive and adaptive to new and improved practices and changes in the environment. (Bycio *et al.*, 1978) Burns's (1978) transformational theory and Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory explained these characteristics of leadership style. Transformational theory proposed by Burns (1978) explains that transformational leadership style supports mutual understanding between employees and management while Burns's (1985) theory explained that interaction between employees and management is managed in ways that ultimately lead employees beyond their self-interest in support of organizational targets. Transformational leadership is discussed based on two important characteristics of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. As discussed by Bass and Avolio (1994) intellectual stimulation is the enhancement of the followers' ability to think on his own related to his work tasks. Intellectual stimulation is defined as the ability of an individual to be logical, rational and able to intelligently adopt from certain situations (Dionne *et al.*, 2003). Another characteristic of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. Literature defines individualized consideration as the consideration of employee's individuality. Transformational leaders link priorities of every follower's with the development of the organization (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Leaders focus on the development and training of employees that create promotion opportunities (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). The outcomes of these characteristics depend on the ability of the leader to stimulate and direct followers in order to achieve desired outcomes (Bass, 1994; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Social support from the management motivates employees perform better (Maslach, 2003). Employee's involvement in their work tasks increases when managerial support is available; employees become more innovative and involved in their work tasks (Gilson, 2008).

### **2.2. Employee engagement:**

Considerable attention is given to the notion of employee engagement in contemporary organizations due to the recently reported positive relationship between engagement and direct measures of organizational effectiveness as job performance, output, quality, customer satisfaction, profits, and business growth (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002; Buchanan, 2004; Gallup Organization, 2004; Hewitt Associates LLC, 2005; Fleming and Asplund, 2007; Lockwood, 2007; Sundaray, 2011). Therefore, engaged employees nowadays is at the central focus of various organizations. Though emergence and vast popularity of the concept has often been attributed to practitioners' community, yet a great deal of research from researchers and academicians establishing the instrumentality of the concept, and identifying its differential antecedents and consequences has been flourishing lately (Sonnentag, 2011; Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012). Kahn (1990), in his first and foremost qualitative study on engagement states, "Engaged employees drive personal energies (physical, cognitive, and emotional) into their work roles". In this connection, psychological experiences were identified as significant and necessary for an employee to invest his/her personal energies into their work role performance. Three psychological conditions were also articulated as a result of this notion a) meaningfulness (identification with one's work/creative and challenging work, autonomy etc.), b) safety (elements of social systems), and c) availability (sense of having physical and psychological resources). In this context, engagement was presumed as having positive outcomes for both individual as well as organizations. The fulgent beginning of engagement literature with the works of Kahn (1990) has drifted considerable attention and inclination of researchers in recent times. Hence, numerous definitions on engagement have been produced thereafter: Harter *et al.*, (2002) defined engagement as "the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work". Schaufeli *et al.*, (2002) defined engagement as "a positive fulfilling, work related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". Robinson *et al.*, (2004) defined engagement as "a positive employee attitude towards the organization and its values, involving awareness of business context, and work to improve job and organizational effectiveness". Saks, (2008) defined employee engagement as "a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance" (p. 602). Shuck & Wollard, (2010) distinctly defined employee engagement as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes". In sum, an emerging body of research is using a common conceptualization of employee engagement

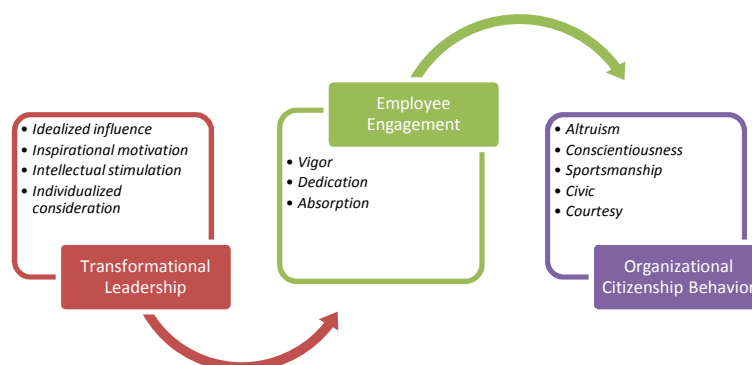
connoting it as high levels of personal investment in terms of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies in the work tasks performed on a job (e.g. Kahn, 1990; Macey & Schneider, 2008; May *et al.*, 2004; Rich, *et al.*, 2010; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002; Christian *et al.*, 2011). Bakker & Schaufeli (2008) claimed that organizations need more engaged employees who feel energetic, dedicated and absorbed by their work. Schaufeli's three-factor model that captures engagement in terms of vigor, dedication, and absorption components has been one of the most popular measures (Wefald *et al.*, 2011) due to its vast validity in majority of countries across the world (Bakker *et al.*, 2008). *Vigor*- vigor refers to the positive core affect in employees that is characterized by the high levels of positive energy and mental resilience while working, and the willingness to invest time and efforts in job tasks. *Dedication*- contains the emotional framework of engagement. It is a state in which employees perceive their work as a significant and meaningful pursuit. *Absorption*- refers to the cognitive aspect where employees experience their work as engrossing and something on which they are fully concentrated and one finds it difficult to detach himself from work. Engaged employees are happily involved and experience their work as engrossing and something to which they can devote their full concentration (Bakker *et al.*, 2010, 2011). Hence, engagement is inferred as a positive experience in itself which has positive consequences for the organizations (Bhatnagar, 2012) in terms of high commitment, task proficiency, less employee turnover, less absenteeism, higher productivity, and consequently, increased performance of the organization. Employee involvement, commitment, and performance are directly connected to the goals of an organization (Denison *et al.*, 2004). Engaged employees would make a big difference if organizations provide positive psychological climate, good working conditions, job resources, and organizational support to inspire them to give their best and go extra-mile to enhance the effective functioning of the organization. In addition, employees perform better when they experience positive practices at work place for instance, being treated with respect, provided with opportunities to develop their career, adequate reward and recognition for high performance etc. In fact, employees desire positive feelings about their work experiences that go beyond global attitudes of job satisfaction or commitment (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003; Wagner & Harter, 2006). Therefore, it is a two way process and much effort is needed on the part of organizations to nurture and leverage engagement. Providing employees a positive work environment is of ominous significance where employees can improvise and consequently help their organization to flourish in the present scenario.

### 2.3. Organizational Citizenship behavior (OCB):

Barnard's (1938) impression of the "willingness to cooperate" has directed considerable interest from industry and management towards that constituent of job performance other than formal role requirement or task performance which has substantial impact on the capability of an organization to achieve its long term goals. In addition, his concern for the cooperative efforts on part of employees in terms of sharing information among organization members to make the organization function smoothly prefigures that willingness of individuals to engage in spontaneous and cooperative gestures are instrumental for the vitality of organizations (Walz & Niehoff, 2000). While expanding and refining his idea, several authors have made significant contributions thereafter to describe employees' positive and cooperative gestures as those extrarole behaviors that are instrumental to the organization's effectiveness (Katz & Kahn, 1966, 1978). Organ, (1988) subsequently conceptualized these efforts as organizational citizenship behaviors that are discretionary, not directly and explicitly recognized by the organizational reward system, and that in aggregate, promote the effective functioning of the organization. Borman & Motowidlo, (1993) conceived the idea as contextual or citizenship performance and defined this type of performance as behaviors that are not directly related to the main task activities but are significant because they support the organizational, social, and psychological context that serves as the critical catalyst for tasks to be accomplished. Further, while sharing a common belief, these behaviors have been defined and termed differently in literature in terms of extra-role behaviors (Dyne *et al.*, 1995), pro-social behaviors (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), organizational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992), and as contextual performance (Motowidlo, 1997), but organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is more comprehensive and popular term that describes these wider range of cooperative behaviors that are positive, voluntary, non-obligatory, and goes beyond the set requirements of a job (Turnipseed & Wilson, 2009). More recently, while broadening the scope of the construct, Organ (1997) reshaped the definition of OCB's as behaviors that facilitate "the maintenance and enhancement of social and psychological context

that supports task performance", explicating similarity to the conceptualization of contextual performance by Borman & Motowidlo (1993). Further, although there exists a lack of consensus on the dimensionality of OCB among researchers as almost 30 overlapping or somewhat different forms of OCB's have been identified (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000), but Organ's (1988) taxonomy delineating citizenship behaviors in terms of altruism, courtesy, civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship has been widely accepted, popular and much studied in literature reporting the greatest amount of empirical research (LePine *et al.*, 2002). *Altruism* refers to the helping approach of an employee towards fellow employees. *Conscientiousness* denotes impersonal behaviours for instance, obeying rules. *Sportsmanship* invoke behaviors that includes not complaining on fiddling issues and willingness to tolerate less than ideal circumstances. *Civic Virtue* behaviors that indicate employees' participation and concern about the life of organizations such as participating in meetings, and *Courtesy* reflects in discretionary behavior such as positive gestures of consulting and passing along the information, aimed at preventing work related problem with others (Organ, 1988). Given the rationality for a significant association between OCB and organizational effectiveness (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Williams & Anderson, 1991), it has been observed that employee's extra efforts in form of citizenship behavior enable supervisors to devote more time in planning organizational activities, promote optimum utilization of organizational resources, enhances co-workers' and managerial productivity, make organization a better place to work and thereby resulting into better functioning and smooth running of the organization. In fact, reduced absenteeism, increased employee satisfaction and employee retention, are some other contributions of OCB towards increased organizational performance and effectiveness (Chahal & Mehta, 2010; Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Khalid & Ali, 2005; Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1997).

### III. The Conceptual Framework:



**Discussion:****4.1. Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement:**

Kahn (1990) defined personal engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances” (p. 700). Harter and colleagues (2002) suggested that employee engagement refers to “one’s involvement, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for work” (p. 295). Although differences exist among the various definitions, they all view engagement as being composed of purpose, involvement, commitment, focused effort, and enthusiasm (Macey & Schneider, 2008). In the present study, we chose to adopt Schaufeli and Bakker’s (2004) definition of employee engagement as a psychological state because we are interested in how employees come to feel about themselves at work. According to their conceptualization, engagement consists of three dimensions: *vigor* (exhibited by high levels of energy, mental resilience, and persistence), *dedication* (depicted by enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge at work), and *absorption* (evidenced by concentration, focus, intensity, and being deeply engrossed in work; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). These characteristics are consistent with Kahn’s (1990) perspective that engagement involves an individual’s physical, cognitive, and emotional effort. Transformational leadership theory identifies four dimensions that describe leader behavior (Bass, 1985). Idealized influence is the charismatic behavior that inspires followers to trust and identify with their leader and their mission. Inspirational motivation is the ability to articulate shared goals and a clear, compelling vision that arouses followers and promotes positive expectations. Intellectual stimulation is the capacity to challenge followers to question assumptions, take risks, think critically, and identify and solve problems proactively. Individualized consideration is the extent to which leaders identify, understand, and address followers’ developmental needs and treat them uniquely. Shamir and colleagues’ (1993) self-concept based theory asserts that followers’ commitment to the work unit’s mission, vision, and goals is a core element of transformational leadership’s motivational process. They referred to commitment as the “motivational disposition to continue a relationship, a role or course of action and to invest efforts regardless of the balance of external costs and benefits and their immediate gratifying properties” (Shamir *et al.*, 1993, p. 583). Transformational leaders develop followers’ commitment by linking their behavior and goals to the work unit’s values and mission (Shamir *et al.*, 1993). Consequently, followers express greater enthusiasm, intensity, and resilience toward achieving the unit’s objectives. By

connecting the follower’s self-concept to the unit’s vision and mission, transformational leaders foster employees’ work engagement. In essence, transformational leaders positively influence employee work engagement by raising followers to higher levels of potential, developing their skills, and expressing confidence in their followers’ ability to perform beyond expectations. In line with this expectation, research has detected a positive relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement (see Zhu *et al.*, 2009). In addition, results of Kahn’s (1990) extensive two qualitative studies, designed to explore the conditions at work in which people personally engage or disengage, revealed that leadership influenced the degree to which individuals were engaged. Specifically, Kahn found that in environments where people felt supported and allowed to take risks, as we would expect with transformational leaders (Bass, 1985), work engagement increased. Therefore, we expect transformational leadership to positively influence employee work engagement.

**4.2. Employee Engagement and OCB:**

Employee engagement, an active psychological state of employees’ (Parker & Griffin, 2011), is often associated and described in congruence with OCB. Organ (1988) defined OCB as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization”. When employees are engaged in their work, they increase the occurrence of OCB’s, i.e., when employees have choices, they will act in a way that furthers their organization’s interests (Kennedy & Daim, 2010). Towers Perrin, (2003) have reported that engaged employees bring discretionary effort to work, in the form of extra time, brain power and energy. In addition, engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organization and highly involved in their job with a great enthusiasm for the success of their employer while going extramile beyond the formal job requirements (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Engaged and attached employees put more effort in their jobs, and are likely to perceive higher obligations of their employers (Bal, Cooman, & Mol, 2011). This states the willingness of engaged employees to exhibit behaviours that go beyond the set boundaries of their jobs. Several studies in this direction have established that engaged employees being proactive, vigorous and consecrated are more consistent to invest their personal resources and act more freely to display extra-role behaviour than others. In other words, they are more likely to be better in contextual performance in addition to the task performance (Bakker, 2011; Christian *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, engaged employees’ relatively enduring state of being active reflect interpersonal facilitation and their constant willingness to find meaning in work

keep them emotionally engaged (i.e. job dedication). Both of them (interpersonal facilitation and job dedication) have long been recognized as inherent concepts of OCB. Thus, OCB indicates the employee's responses to their employment relationship and it is profoundly associated with employee engagement. It has been recently observed that engaged employees consistently demonstrate three general behaviours which improve organizational effectiveness: a) Say- the engaged employee proponent for the organization's reputation to its customers, co-workers and potential employees b) Stay- the engaged employee stays with the organization despite of the opportunities available outside c) Strive- the engaged employee invest extra time, efforts and take initiatives to see that the employer succeeds (Baumruk and Gorman, 2006; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Although employee engagement is most commonly outlined in terms of extra-role performance or discretionary efforts (Macey & Schneider, 2008, Fine *et al.*, 2010), yet it has not been suggested to delimit the state of engaged employees in terms of going extra mile (Schaufeli & Bakker). In fact, engaged employees are enthusiastic about their work and dedicated completely to find meaning in their work, and profoundly engrossed to put forth their efforts towards the attainment of organizational goals. They are more likely to exert extra efforts like helping co-workers, compliance to rules etc. which have been considered as instrumental for the effective functioning and smooth running of organizations (Organ, 1988).

### Conclusion:

The current study represents a unique and humble attempt to explore the functional relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement, and OCB. We applied a theoretical perspective to integrate previous research on transformational leadership, employee engagement, and OCB. In addition, review of the relevant literature suggested that inclusion of employee engagement enhances the relationships between transformational leadership and OCB. Thus, individuals with higher levels of engagement are more likely to exhibit OCB - in ways that would be expected to achieve and sustain organizational effectiveness. The primary contribution of this study is its attempt to bring into light much-needed models for the OCB literature and its attempt to include employee engagement as a significant construct mediating the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness. It might theoretically be possible that the combined effect of both factors (i.e. transformational leadership and employee engagement) is greater than each one, alone; creating a potential avenue for further empirical research in this and allied directions. The study also presents an expedient view point on

transformational leadership, employee engagement and OCB link that serves an interesting platform for future research.

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