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## A review of related literatures on the leader's core self-evaluations and the followers' organizational commitment: The mediating roles of transformational and ethical leaderships

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### Abstract:

*This literature review strives to assess the higher educational institutions' leaders and their positive core self-evaluations [CSEs] adherence to and personification of transformational leadership [TFL] and ethical leadership [EL] behaviors that transcend self-interest that may in turn be emulated and reciprocated by their followers. By doing so, the latter accomplishes their duties and responsibilities beyond the minimum level of expectations set to them through organizational commitment. To understand the leader's CSEs as a possible antecedent of specified outcome variable of the followers' OC with the mediating roles of TFL and EL, it is necessary to examine previous relevant studies. Thus, this literature review evaluates the theories of leadership constructs in the framework of the leader's CSEs, TFL, EL, and the followers' OC.*

**Key words:** Core self-evaluations, Organizational commitment, Transformational leadership, Ethical leadership

## 1. Introduction

In examining the literature, streams of research have already been devoted on the core self-evaluations [CSEs] theory which predicts outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, happiness, career success, stress and coping process, and leadership. Thus, this literature review employs CSEs to elucidate the “interpersonal and intrapersonal” (Tsaousis, Nikolaou, Serdaris, & Judge, 2007, p. 1450) aspects of the leader's specific traits. Another important facet of leadership effectiveness is a trickle-down effect to the followers that is manifested through the bind the latter has to the organization. Indeed, effective leadership establishes commitment among employees (Wallace, Chernatony, & Buil, 2013) and strongly committed employees have the least probability of leaving the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Meyer and Allen (1991) refers to this as organizational commitment [OC] which is entirely a psychological state. However, another noteworthy aspect of understanding leadership goes beyond its antecedents and consequences and explores comparatively the mediating variable/s by which the leader impacts the followers. Thus, this literature review contends that through the leader's behaviors in the context of transformational leadership [TFL] and ethical leadership [EL], the link between the leader specific traits in the context of the leader's CSEs and a trickle-down effect of leadership effectiveness through the followers' response in the context of OC could be mediated.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the considerable amount of literature conducted and published by Western researchers whereas very few researches on the subject have developing countries as locus (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Similarly, only few studies focus on higher education institutions [HEIs] (Voon et al., 2010 as cited in Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012) which resulted to mostly Western and limited

vantage point on leadership (Takahashi, Ishikawa, & Kanai, 2012). Taken together, this creates an imbalance in the academic literature; thus, the researcher finds that a study is deemed necessary to bridge the above knowledge gaps.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

This section examines the development of empirical data from diverse literatures. Thus, the relevant key concepts, theories, and systematic empirical studies are reviewed. Different sources of scholarly published journals, published, and unpublished dissertations are utilized to strengthen the solid foundation of the current literature study. There has been an outpouring interest and research specifically in the arena of leadership. It is continuously growing rapidly; thus, the present review concentrates only on the aspects significant to the current research. The influences of this literature review came from the epistemological discussions made by scholars most especially in the works of Judge et al., Meyer and Allen, Bass and Avolio, and Brown et al..

### **Research on core self-evaluations**

The concept of core evaluations has its roots in the works of Edith Packer (1985/1986 as cited in Chang, Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, & Tan, 2011), which argued that core evaluations are appraisals of definite events or occurrences and are affected by other fundamental appraisals. In a later study (Judge et al., 1997 as cited in Chang et al., 2011) used core evaluations to come up with a comprehensive theoretical framework that shows dispositional relationships with job satisfaction. The concept of core evaluations stems from eight aspects of literatures such as (a) child development, (b) clinical psychology practice, (c) clinical psychology research, (d) job satisfaction, (e) personality, (f) philosophy, (g) social psychology, and (h) stress

(Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012). Preliminary work on core evaluations was undertaken in 1997 by Judge et al. who introduced the theory of core evaluations—a comprehensive idea for comprehending the personological components of job satisfaction (Bono & Judge, 2003). Judge, Locke, Durham, and Kluger (1998) argued that in order to be called as a core evaluation, the two aspects must be present “core [fundamental] and an evaluation” (p. 18). Judge et al. (1997 as cited in Judge & Larsen, 2001) established that the situationally specific appraisals are influenced by core evaluations because it encompasses the entirety. Hence, these underlying principles are termed “core self-evaluations” (Judge et al., 1997 as cited in Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011) and the three basic judgments one can give are always about “oneself, other people, and reality (the world)” (Judge et al., p. 18). As a result, CSEs research served as the groundwork of self-evaluative traits by concentrating on how people see themselves, their lives, and their surroundings (Bono & Judge, 2003). Further, this concept suggested that people who evaluate or judge themselves positively consequentially deal with life confidently since they act and assert themselves positively across different circumstances (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). In the past 16 years, a considerable amount of literature has been published on CSEs (for a recent review, see Chang et al., 2011). A contemporary study includes the previous work-related outcomes that CSEs has predicted: commitment, success, satisfaction, performance, creativity, changing organizational context, and happiness (e.g., Creed, Lehmann, & Hood, 2009; Judge, 2009; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011; Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012; Song & Chathoth, 2013; Srivastava, Locke, Judge, & Adams, 2010; Zhang, Kwan, Zhang, & Wu, 2012); stress and coping process (e.g., Brunborg, 2008; Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, & Scott, 2009); and career success (e.g., Judge, 2009; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011).

Equally, a more recent number of studies have found the positive effect of CSEs, a personality-related construct about leadership (e.g., Hu, Wang, Liden, & Sun, 2012; Nübold, Muck, & Maier, 2013). Since time immemorial, the relationship between CSEs and job performance and satisfaction has been widely investigated (e.g., Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005; Kacmar, Collins, Harris, & Judge, 2009; Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005).

Earlier works on CSEs associating job and life satisfaction (Judge et al., 1998) suggested that CSEs can be employed to better comprehend its causes because of its direct and indirect effects. An article (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998) suggested that “a broad personality trait, labeled positive self-concept or core self-evaluations” (p. 167) is a key factor that may predict job performance. They asserted that the main cause why positive self-concept and job performance are related is because optimistic personnel are enthused and driven to do their work. The discussion further extended on the review and theoretical work on the dispositional affect and job satisfaction by Judge and Larsen (2001). They established solid proof that to a certain extent job satisfaction is dispositionally based. This review concluded that to predict satisfaction on the job, a careful assessment of traits is appropriate. The most comprehensive and only known confirmation on the validity of CSEs construct for motivation and performance are provided in the theoretical study by Erez and Judge (2001) of the relationship of CSEs to goal setting, motivation, and performance. Results of CSEs trait have been related to goal-setting behavior; however, there is a higher order factor provided by rigorous confirmatory factor analyses which explained the correlations among the individual traits. Another study (Judge et al., 2005) suggested the positive relationships of CSEs and job and life satisfaction. They accounted for the CSEs concept as positively associated to self-concordance, which

means that an individual with optimistic self-regard is expected to seek for intrinsic and identified [value-congruent] intentions. A study (Srivastava et al., 2010) investigated the mediating role of task complexity in the correlation between CSEs and satisfaction. It verified the temporal sequencing of variables. Two studies conducted in this particular research both demonstrated that individual high in CSEs prefer or search for tasks with greater complexity which increases their satisfaction. Their findings are consistent with the earlier study where they presented that CSEs have a positive correlation with satisfaction in respect to their task and an effect mediated by their views of task characteristics.

On the one hand, an addition to the upsurge interest in CSEs (Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012) identified this concept as a valid predictor of performance and its components—task performance, adaptability, employee productivity, job stress and stability. For this particular study, authors utilized the core self-evaluations scale [CSES] as a measure of CSEs trait. This instrument was developed by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003 as cited in Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012). Results of their study acknowledged that generalized self-efficacy emerged as the predominant variable having a vital impact on job performance followed by locus of control. Furthermore, it demonstrated that CSEs or positive self-concept has a significant impact on job performance. Correspondingly, its components indicated that as a personality variable, it has its own predictive validity with respect to job performance like other personality models.

Some researches proposed potential mediators between CSEs and job performance, namely, employees' assimilation-specific adjustment factors, goal orientations, and perceived work environment (e.g., Kacmar et al., 2009; Sheykhshabani, 2012; Song & Chathoth, 2013). The research to date focuses on Judge et al.'s developed personality taxonomy, CSEs, "which

are 'basic conclusions' or 'bottom-line evaluations' that represent one's appraisal of people, events, and things in relation to oneself" (Erez & Judge, 2001, p. 1270) together with the extant empirical studies to support the basis of the proposed hypothesized intervening variables, explicitly TFL, and EL. One of the findings of TFL study (Hu et al., 2012) showed that when leaders highly consider CSEs, they consequently act confidently, and this makes their respective followers perceive their leaders as a transformational. This study employed CSES' 12-item measure on a five-point Likert scale by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003) to rate leaders' own CSEs. The researchers extended the work of Resick et al. (2009 as cited in Hu et al., 2012) and increased the buoyancy in "considering leader CSEs as a critical antecedent of TFL" (p. 865). Besides, they stated that the leader CSEs are significantly and positively related to the followers' perceived TFL, utilizing a sample of 150 leaders and 464 employees from three Chinese organizations. On the basis of collected data in China, their findings are mostly congruent with the CSEs and theories on leadership initiated from and created mainly in the US setting.

Study of CSEs in a non-Western culture specifically in Japan (Piccolo et al., 2005) produced results which corroborate the findings of the previous work. Authors verified the latent factor structure of the CSEs concept, evaluated if there were associations among concept of the four lower-order traits, and expected associations between CSEs and decisions of happiness, and job and life satisfaction. Further, they verified the relative validity of positive and negative affectivity's (PA/NA) core concept, and the Neutral Objects Satisfaction Questionnaire (NOSQ). Findings indicated a preliminary support for the CSEs generalizability in a nation that varies in numerous aspects from Western nations. It recognized that the non-Western nation has a dispositional basis in reference to assessments of happiness and satisfaction.

### ***Components of core self-evaluations***

In 1997, Judge et al.'s first systematic study claimed that the four more specific lower-order traits comprised the higher-order concept labeled CSEs. Hiller and Hambrick (2005), and Karthikeyan and Srivastava (2012) also discussed these components.

1. *Self-esteem.* Self-esteem is an “individual’s self-acceptance, self-liking, and self-respect” (Judge & Larsen, 2001, p. 72). It represents his/her general appraisal of self-worth and competency through situations (Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012; Li, Arvey, & Song, 2011). Brown (1998 as cited in Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2004) asserted that “individuals high on self-esteem generally feel good about themselves, whereas low-self-esteem individuals tend to feel bad about themselves even if they conceive of themselves as highly efficacious” (p. 376). He specified that the latter are regardless of their views about their capacities, and personalities. Similarly, Judge et al. (1998) stressed that “people with high levels of self-esteem appear to have consistent, stable, and lucid views of themselves whereas individuals with low self-esteem appear to have unclear, incomplete, or contradictory self-views” (p. 169). Lastly, Chen et al. (2004) claimed that “self-esteem captures more of an affective evaluation of (or feeling regarding) the self” (p. 376).

2. *Generalized self-efficacy.* Chen et al. (2004) stated that general self-efficacy construct is coined from the “concept of self-efficacy generality, which is delineated in Bandura’s social cognitive theory” (p. 376). Additionally, Bandura (1986, 1997 as cited in Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009) described self-efficacy as “a vital ‘driver’ of performance in a variety of task domains” (p. 766). Furthermore, Johnson (2005) explained that self-efficacy plays “central roles in influencing the behaviors individuals choose to engage in” (p. 739). Further, he stated that self-



efficacy denotes these individuals' way of acting out their behaviors, the length of their persistence in difficult situations, and their coping mechanism. As a result, generalized self-efficacy represented "how well an individual can perform across a variety of situations" (Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012, p. 326). Moreover, generalized self-efficacy is believed to be different from self-esteem since what one learns well is not always equivalent to what one basically regards as important (Judge & Larsen, 2001).

3. *Neuroticism*. Neuroticism emanated from one of the traits of the big five-factors of personality (Judge & Bono, 2001). Some studies utilized *emotional stability* [low neuroticism] in lieu of neuroticism. Consistent with Judge and Bono (2001), the current research uses these labels interchangeably. Neuroticism is the propensity to display low emotional stability and experience undesirable distresses [i.e., depression, fear, and hostility] (Goldberg, 1990 as cited in Judge et al., 1998). They are susceptible to anxiety, pressure, and vulnerability (Costa & McCrae 1992 as cited in Hiller & Hambrick, 2005). Individuals who scored "low in neuroticism are thought to have high emotional stability" (Piccolo et al., 2005, p. 966). As Judge and Bono (2001) stated, it reflects the propensity of an individual to feel assured, safe, and steadfast, thus, an indicative that it is a broad trait that reveals an individual's view of his/her emotional stability. On the other hand, it is assumed that numerous interpretations can arise with these labels (Hiller & Hambrick, 2005); hence, it is worth noting that the "heart of most measures of neuroticism is anxiety" (Judge et al., 2003, p. 307). Mount and Barrick (1995 as cited in Judge & Bono, 2001) clarified that these are simply labels [i.e., emotional stability and neuroticism] denoting the negative and positive ends of one construct.

*4. Locus of control.* Locus of control is the extent an individual understands that he/she has the capacity to control their lives events (Piccolo et al., 2005). The events that occur to an individual are the effects of his/her behavior (Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012). Rotter (1966 as cited in Judge et al., 1998) mentioned that there are two types of locus of control: (a) internal locus of control [ILC], and (b) external locus of control [ELC]. He argued that both are assumptions of who controls the lives of an individual; however, ILC is through behavior and ELC is through luck, chance, fate, or powerful others. Further, individuals with ILC confidently accept that they have control over their destiny, and external environments while individuals with ELC are the absolute reverse (Karthikeyan & Srivastava, 2012).

Karthikeyan and Srivastava (2012) found that CSEs research focuses on the links among personality traits which measured in isolation [viz., generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and self-esteem]. Thus, Hiller and Hambrick (2005) proposed that parsimony and explanatory power of higher-order CSEs construct is achieved if its component traits is treated in unison rather than in isolation. Crafted from the previous seminal articles, this view (Judge et al., 1998) supported the empirical correlation among the specific CSEs traits that are strongly correlated. This study explored a meta-analysis of the relationships among these traits with 12 samples of roughly 15,000 individuals. Accordingly, it demonstrated empirical evidence why the specific traits are considered as manifestations of one underlying construct instead of being studied separately, or added as opposing descriptions of trait.

Another seminal article (Judge, 2009) considered significant relations among the traits. He cited the influential meta-analytic study in 2002 by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen on CSEs traits. It revealed an average correlation of .64 which is high compared to other measures of traits in the

big five-factor of personality. He analyzed that the nascent research stream on CSEs explains that the overlap of these traits is deemed superior over the individual traits while maintaining the work-related outcomes it predicts. Hence, this gives more weight on the validity and correlations among the psychological four traits concept as representations of a collective core construct.

In order to further elucidate the points made by some scholars, the relationship between the four components and CSEs is depicted from the stylized schematic portrayal by Hiller and Hambrick (2005). They conclusively identified that there is a noticeable overlap of the four human traits, and CSEs are found at the center/core that captures the overlap. Further, they emphasized that the four overlapping trait measures are a qualitative aid rather than a quantitative relationship involved to help explain the CSEs construct.

### **Research on organizational commitment**

The burgeoning studies on commitment appear to point towards wide-ranging definitions. Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979 as cited in Bogler & Somech, 2004) defined OC as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (p. 279). According to Bogler and Somech (2004), this concept is based on three factors: the acceptance of the organization’s goals and values (identification), the willingness to invest effort on behalf of the organization (involvement), and the importance attached to keeping up the membership in the organization (loyalty). These characteristics imply that the members of the organization wish to be active players in the organization, have an impact on what is going on in it, feel that they have high status within it, and are ready to contribute beyond what is expected of them. (p. 279)

On the other hand, Meyer and Allen (1991) found it difficult to interpret the results of an accumulating body of research due to the diversity in the conceptualization and measurement of OC. This paves way to the groundwork of a three-component model [TCM] of OC. Thus, this conceptualization of TCM of OC serves as one of the most significant events in 1990s. The development of TCM is an effort to incorporate uni-dimensional conceptualizations of OC including the side-bet theory by Becker (1960 as cited in Powell & Meyer, 2004). This influential article (Meyer & Allen, 1991) illustrated the schematic basic postulates of the two approaches of commitment: (a) attitudinal, and (b) behavioral (see Meyer & Allen, 1991, pp. 62-63 for a detailed distinction).

The three general themes of commitment identified in their study is referred to, henceforth, as (a) affective commitment (AC), which is the *desire* to remain, the want to do so, and/or the attachment to the organization, (b) continuance commitment (CC), which is the recognition that the *perceived costs* associated with leaving would be high, and/or the have to do so, and/or (c) normative commitment (NC) is the feelings of *obligation* to remain, and/or the ought to do so (see Allen & Meyer, 1990; Allen & Meyer, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer, Stanley, and Vandenberg (2013) argued that Meyer and Allen's TCM of OC was grounded on the proposition the three components could be useful to all commitment irrespective of their application. Strauss, Griffin, and Rafferty (2009) argued that commitment denotes emotional ties between individuals and larger groups [i.e., teams, professions, unions and organizations]. In brief, Powell and Meyer (2004) maintained that the common denominator in all definitions of commitment lies in the notion that commitment per se is what binds a person to a certain course of action whereas what differs is the "mind-set" assumed to describe the commitment.

The subsequent studies accounted for the effectiveness of OC construct in measuring different outcome variables. Meyer et al. (2012) steered a meta-analysis research of the three components of OC to measure the commitment levels across cultures. One of their proposed hypotheses is the link between cultural values and strength of commitment. In order to explain the observed variance, this study utilized a total of 54 countries in nine geographic regions, and cultural values/practices. Results showed that cultural values/practices represent the highest number of variance in NC, next is AC; however, it failed to elucidate variance in CC.

### ***Components of organizational commitment***

Meyer and Allen (1991) believed that it is deemed proper to view the conceptualized three approaches of commitment as components rather than as types. They found that the three forms of commitment are, indeed, mutually exclusive in respect to psychological states. Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997 as cited in Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002) outlined and discussed the hypothesized links between the three components of commitment and the constructs measured as their antecedents, correlates, and consequences. These distinguishable components of attitudinal commitment are experienced in psychological states by each employee to varying degrees (Allen & Meyer, 1990). They further examined that:

Some employees, for example, might feel both a strong need and a strong obligation to remain, but no desire to do so; others might feel neither a need nor obligation but a strong desire, and so on. The 'net sum' of a person's commitment to the organization, therefore, reflects each of these separable psychological states. (p. 4)

*1. Affective commitment.* Affective commitment refers to the “employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67).

The primary reason why employees continue their service with the organization is that they *want to do so*. At the same time, their work experiences in the organization offer a sense of trial and security (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Stanley, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, and Bentein (2013) argued that this results in a negative correlation with employees' turnover intention and turnover per se, hence, creating a strong OC.

2. *Continuance commitment*. Continuance commitment refers to the "awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). The primary reason why employees continue their service with the organization is that they *need to do so*. This has something to do with the employees' extent of investments and employment alternatives in their organizations (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Stanley et al. (2013) stated that this attachment is on the basis of instrumental considerations.

3. *Normative commitment*. Normative commitment "reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). The primary reason why employees continue their service with the organization is that they *ought* to remain. It is believed that NC is a result of experiences such as early socialization (i.e., parental emphasis on loyalty to an employer) and after organizational entry (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Stanley et al. (2013) observed that commitment out of moral obligation indicates a weaker negative relationship with these outcomes.

Each component differs in influence and its combination mirrors the employee's mindset towards commitment by having an "additive and/or interactive effects on behavior" (Meyer et al., 2013, p. 192). Panaccio and Vandenberghe (2012) suggested that the different intention that characterizes employees AC, NC, and CC underlies their perceived tie within the organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) maintained that this tie

serves as the common denominator in all three conceptualizations of attitudinal commitment. They further considered AC, CC, and NC as components unlike of those of subsequent studies that considered it as distinct types of commitment (e.g., Sayyadi & Sarvtamin, 2011) and used the three components in isolation—AC (e.g., Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2013; Loi, Lai, & Lam, 2012; Rego, Ribeiro, Cunha, & Jesuino, 2011), CC (e.g., Boichuk & Menguc, 2013; Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012), NC (e.g., Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Moreover, study of Lambert, Kim, Kelley, and Hogan (2013) used two components of TCM—AC and CC.

### **Research on transformational leadership**

In 1978, James MacGregor Burns published his influential book entitled “Leadership” in which the concept of “transforming leadership” was first studied. According to the seminal work of Burns (1978 as cited in Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison, 2003), transforming leadership “is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 14). Building on the empirical work of Burns, Bernard Bass introduced the concept of TFL to organizational settings in 1985 (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). Nine years later, Bass and colleague Bruce Avolio reported that the TFL itself is the epitome of what people have in mind in respect of an ideal leader and what subordinates opt to identify (Bolden et al., 2003). Bass (1999) referred TFL to the “leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence [charisma], inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration” (p. 11). Accordingly, TFL is a mutual view that effective leaders are important agents of change. They transformed the basic values, beliefs, and attitudes of their followers to transcend minimum levels required by the organization.

A similar statement by Vera and Crossan (2004 as cited in Nemanich & Keller, 2007) described transformational leaders that are essentially change agents who inspire their followers to work in unison with them to accomplish the new future. Thus, they stressed that the status quo is entirely not the same in their vision of the future. This type of leaders act as coach or mentor that directs their followers through empowering behaviors parallel with their respective needs (Cho & Dansereau, 2010). In summary, TFL goals to arouse and encourage followers to go beyond the possibility produce unexpected outputs (Tuuk, 2012). He further claimed that true commitment and involvement of followers can only be attained by including one's self-worth in the work.

Subsequent TFL research focused mostly on its impact on followers, in particular, identification, development, performance and group ethics (e.g., Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010; Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Inam-ul-Hassan, & Waqas, 2012; Zhu, Avolio, Riggio, & Sosik, 2011), and individual, team, organizational outcomes (e.g., Hur, van den Berg, & Wilderom, 2011; Ismail, Mohamad, Mohamed, Rafiuddin, & Zhen, 2010; Zhu, Chew, & Spangler, 2005). It is worth noting that an enormous and growing body of literature investigates the relationships between TFL not only on followers, but on the organization as well. Shibru and Darshan (2011) confirmed the importance of TFL style as a determinant of subordinate contentment with the leader. This study is conducted on leather companies and the participants are direct subordinates who evaluated their direct leader's behavior. Results showed the strong relationship between the four components of TFL and satisfaction of the subordinate with the leader.

In the service industry (Liaw, Chi, & Chuang, 2010) TFL suggested a trickle-down effect when supervisory support of transformational leaders is perceived by the employees. Employees showed reciprocity by extending additional effort to



meet the needs of their customer and treat them well in the course of service encounters. Not surprisingly, the role of TFL is significantly and positively related even on information systems (e.g., Cho, Park, & Michel, 2011) and employee creativity (e.g., Haq et al., 2010), which is in contrast to some previous work (e.g., Judge and Piccolo, 2004).

Notwithstanding the positive influence and role of TFL, the concept has not been freed from criticism specifically from a non-profit organization such as education. Chipunza and Gwarinda (2010) conducted a case study in the higher education sector's implementation of merger and incorporation policy. This study elucidated an important point that in the face of a well-acknowledged success of transformation process, still, followers are dissatisfied with the entire process. This is rooted in the absence of strategic direction and empowerment. They add that before a merger starts, it is essential to focus on transformational rather than transactional leadership. A critique of TFL education in university business schools (Tourish, Craig, & Amernic, 2010) highlighted the danger of creating graduates who will try to appeal to collective needs that guide by ideologies of TFL, and who will instantaneously enact contrary performance management systems that guide by agency theory. Finally, the study suggested that business school curricula manifest confusion by virtue of their teaching concepts of *collective interest* that convey TFL teaching and concepts of *self-interest* derived from agency theory.

One study pertaining to the outcome of commitment (Strauss et al., 2009) revealed that the transformational team leaders increase proactivity of employees through confidence in initiating change. On the other hand, the transformational organizational leaders increase proactivity of employees through enhanced commitment to the organization.

A recent scholarly work (Gumusluoglu, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, & Hirst, 2013) claimed that TFL significantly influences

partially the followers' OC by means of procedural justice and their supervisory commitment by means of interactional justice. While taking into consideration the huge span of control, one of the interesting findings this study reveals is that TFL effects are positively significant on supervisory commitment however not significant on OC among R&D workers. Another recent work (Ewen, et al., 2013) utilized the transformational leadership inventory [TLI] measure created by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). This study revealed that “politically skilled leaders were able to realize effectiveness through both the transformational and transactional leader behaviors they demonstrated” (Ewen, et al., 2013, p. 18).

### ***Components of transformational leadership***

There are four inherent components of TFL that are referred to as the Four I's. Sadeghi and Pihie (2012), and Shibru and Darshan (2011) also discuss these Four I's.

*1. Idealized influence/charisma [II].* According to Horwitz et al. (2008): idealized influence is commonly subdivided into two types: (a) *idealized influence attributed [IIA]* in which the leader charisma is used to foster strong positive emotional bonds with the followers, and (b) *idealized influence behavior [IIB]* in which the idealized behavior of the leader becomes manifested in collective values and actions throughout the organization. (p. 50)

Original work on TFL proposed charisma as its main component (Bass, 1985 as cited in Rowold & Heinitz, 2007). Also, it is considered to be the “most prototypic and often the single most important dimension” (Judge & Bono, 2000, p. 751) of TFL. Its purpose is to use charismatic communication to influence followers through a set of objectives regarded as generally important to attain (Horwitz et al., 2008). Leaders act as role models because of the followers' emotional identification

with their vision (Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). The characteristics of the idealized leaders is someone who can walk first on the manner they talk about (Avolio, 2005 as cited in Shibru & Darshan, 2011).

2. *Inspirational motivation [IM]*. This leader articulates a clear, appealing and inspiring vision to his/her followers (Judge & Bono, 2000) and mostly by means of communication (García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, 2012). Thus, this approach provides the followers with meaning and challenge that inspires them in their work (Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011).

3. *Intellectual stimulation [IS]*. Intellectual stimulation challenges the capacity of the followers to think in a logical manner and to address concerns in pursuit of new avenues while questioning the leader (Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). This behavior that leaders exhibit promotes critical thinking among followers because a status quo is questioned (Cavazotte, Moreno, & Hickmann, 2012). Also, the leader fuels the followers' innovativeness and inventiveness (Limsila & Ogunlana 2008 as cited in Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

4. *Individualized consideration [IC]*. This uncovers the leader's reaction to the distinct and personal wants of the followers (Barling & Turner, 2012). It pays special attention to expectation and development of each follower (Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). The leader acts to aid the follower reach desired intrinsic needs (Horwitz et al., 2008). This leader develops an atmosphere of support among the followers whom he/she recognizes and treats according to their individual characteristics, needs, and desires (Cavazotte et al., 2012). Lastly, the leader coaches and mentors followers while trying to

assist each individual to achieve his or her fullest potential (Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak, 2009).

One of the foci of the current study is on TFL; thus, it will give emphasis on the results of TFL. The choice of TFL in this study is congruent with the claim of MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Rich (2001 as cited in Morhart et al., 2009) that it surpasses the impact of TSL on the outcome variables from the followers because transformational leaders not only stimulate in-role behaviors but also extra-role behaviors. Further, TFL encourages people to exceed what is expected of them (Khoo & Burch, 2008). This is not surprising that a number of studies report transformational behaviors as compared to transactional behaviors to be positively correlated to the subordinates' efficiency in different settings of the organization (Zhu et al., 2005). Authors like Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1994; and Burns, 1978 (as cited in Berson & Avolio, 2004) have the same contention about TFL theory as being more proactive and effective than TSL. TFL's common measure used in assessing the leadership style is the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X). In view of the foregoing, this gives weight on the choice of TFL over TSL. Thus, the dichotomy between TFL and TSL is not tackled in this review.

A meta-analytic test (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) provided a full range thorough investigation of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leaderships. Their study recorded a significant support for the overall validity of TFL at 0.44 on the basis of 626 correlations from 87 sources. This validity is generalized over longitudinal and multisource designs. Also, the characteristics of TFL and TSL posted a high correlation; thus, their distinct effects are hard to isolate.

Another seminal study (Bono & Judge, 2004) offered the first meta-analytic evidence on the relationship between the big five personality traits and ratings of the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. As an organizing outline,

the authors gathered 384 correlations from 26 independent studies by employing the five-factor model of personality. One of the important findings presented is that the personality traits are connected to three dimensions of TFL [viz., (a) idealized influence—inspirational motivation [charisma], (b) intellectual stimulation, and (c) individualized consideration]. TFL is originally believed to have only three components [viz., (a) charismatic—inspirational, (b) intellectually stimulating, and (c) individually considerate] (Shibru & Darshan, 2011). However, factor analyses proposed that the charisma factor be named\_“idealized influence;” thus, it is detached from the inspiration factor [inspirational motivation]. This eventually forms the 4 I's of TFL.

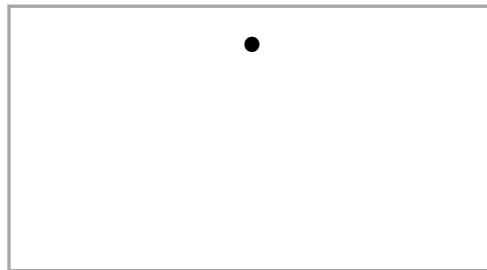
Another note-worthy work in a multi-cultural and multi-level perspective (Jung, Yammarino, & Lee, 2009) explored between TFL and the followers attitudes when it comes to their leader. Results indicated that it is greatly correlated in the U.S. sample while in the Korean sample, it is somewhat low excluding the TFL-value congruence association [ $r = .20$ ]. Thus, results in both samples indicated that TFL is effective across different cultures. In a later study (Walter & Bruch, 2010) confirmed the efficiency of TFL in the organization. Another study on TFL (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012) accounted for 82% of the variance in the effectiveness of leadership in three Malaysian research universities. Their regression analysis demonstrated significant predictors of leadership effectiveness such as contingent reward, idealized influence [attribute], individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, laissez-faire, and management-by-exception active.

### **Research on ethical leadership**

Certainly, great power is coupled with great responsibilities. Brown and Treviño (2006) examined and realized that ethics

scandals happened in all sectors [e.g., business, government, non-profits, sports, and even religious organizations]. With this, individuals are questioning “what is wrong with our leaders?” Brown and Treviño (2006) rationalized the fact of the matter that scandal sells; thus, the media are more interested in scandal. They further acknowledged that negative information is recalled easily and retained in the minds of the perceivers compared to positive information. This happens to be true at all times. The stories of *unethical* leaders always get retained in the memories of people while the stories of ethical leaders are rarely recalled. A small speck of mistake usually stains the entire positive accomplishment a leader has done in the organization.

A metaphor of the impact of leader's action to his or her followers is represented in Figure 1. The speck of black seems to be very noticeable than the whole broadsheet of white. Through this metaphor, it shows how critical the impact of the leader is to the followers and to the success of the organization. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 5 as cited in Gardiner, 2006) stated that the essentiality of a metaphor is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (p. 67). This is a clear demonstration of how exactly ethics affects each aspect of leadership (Waggoner, 2010).



**Figure 1. Metaphorical portrayal of the impact of the leader's action to the followers**

Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) defined EL as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through

personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (p. 120). Leaders are significantly important in the organization in achieving a high level of performance. Ideally, they exert great power and influence towards the realization of the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Thus, the Spiderman principle comes in the picture for “with leadership comes serious responsibilities” (Price, 2008, p. 487).

On the macro- and micro-levels of the organization, another issue that needs to be addressed is the role played by the leader in influencing ethics and ethical behavior (Schminke, Ambrose, & Neubaum, 2005). As the leader guides the members of the organization toward the attainment of its goals, he/she ensures all the functions of the organization are executed in an ethical way (Haq, 2011). Taken together, it is deemed important to highlight that EL is one of the most significant factors to be considered in conceptualizing a framework of effective leadership. Schminke et al. (2005) concluded that EL becomes a more salient aspect of leadership with cases like those of “Enron's Kenneth Lay, ImClone's Samuel Waksal, and WorldCom's Bernard Ebbers” (p. 135).

Empirical evidence (Sosik & Dinger, 2007) demonstrated that leaders express themselves through communication; thus, in order to realize the vision statements that are authentic to their true selves, the leader's expressiveness must be translated to their actions. Brown and Treviño (2006) declared that “leaders do not just talk a good game—they practice what they preach and are proactive role models for ethical conduct” (p. 597). If top management is committed to ethical business practices (Singhapakdi, Gopinath, Marta, & Carter, 2008), there is a need for effective dissemination and communication throughout the organization. As a consequence, they agreed that it creates high awareness about how essential ethics is to

successful business practice. Suffice it to say, an ethical leader makes fair and balanced decisions, and epitomizes an honest, caring, and principled individual (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders make it a point to communicate ethics, establish transparent ethical standards, and apply rewards and punishments to assure a strict compliance (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) pointed out a salient argument on ethical norms and behavioral ideals in modern Western moral concern. They remarked that ideals, behavior, and search for truth which are muffled and not enforced, must be freely accepted. Further, motivation must grow out of genuine inner commitment.

Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and De Hoogh (2011b) stated that leaders need to guard their reputation and behave ethically to reach the goals of the organization in a manner that is generally responsible. One research (Kanungo, 2001 as cited in De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008) validated the effectiveness of EL in the organization as it directs and benefits its followers, stakeholders, and society. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) also agreed that EL is associated to observed team effectiveness of top management and the subordinates' positivity to their own place in the organization and the future. Another research (Walumbwa, Morrison, & Christensen, 2012) confirmed the effectiveness of a leader who displays high levels of ethical behavior towards the members of the group. To measure the EL behavior, they utilized the 10-item Ethical Leadership Scale [ELS] which Brown et al. (2005) developed. This scale appeared to exhibit "high reliability, stable uni-dimensionality, predictive validity, and discrimination from related constructs" (Brown et al., 2005 as cited in Walumbwa et al., 2012, p. 957). Results of their study probed that EL is an essential factor of group in-role performance, which could increasingly result in improved performance in the organization while taking into account the potential difficulty to link ethical conduct of the leader to total



performance of the organization. A field study (Kalshoven & Den Hartog, 2009) utilized ELS as measurement of EL among 244 employees from various organizations in the Netherlands. They discovered that the link between the leader's overall ethical behavior and effectiveness is mediated by prototypicality and trust. Moreover, they explained that effective leaders who embody ethical behaviors are the ones trusted by their followers.

### ***Components of ethical leadership***

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) offered three pillars where leadership ethics emanated: (a) the moral character of the leader; (b) the ethical legitimacy of the values embedded in the leaders vision, articulation, and program which followers either embrace or reject; and (c) the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue. (p. 182)

However, Northouse (2010) recognized that ethics is central to leadership. In this regard, leaders must take into account the five principles that constitute EL, namely: leader—(a) respects others, (b) serves others, (c) shows justice, (d) manifests honesty, and (e) builds community. Thus, this substantially sets the ground in the development of a sound EL.

*1. Respects others.* A leader must learn the meaning of respect to others. People in all walks of life deserve to be respected. A good leader is not only sympathetic, more so, he is empathic; thus, he puts himself in others' shoes. He listens and values the difference of each individual. With that, a good leader allows his/her people to talk and enthusiastically listens to them to better address their concerns. Respect to the leader is achieved as a consequence of what he/she does (Clarke, 2011).

2. *Serves others.* This is on the basis of altruistic principle wherein the leader puts the followers at the prime of his or her plans. This selfless act of a leader connotes a follower-centered leadership. An ethical leader who promotes altruistic behavior among the members of the organization will in turn promote the followers' dedication to teamwork rather than rivalry, and commitment to the organization (Kanungo & Conger 1993 as cited in De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008).

3. *Shows justice.* The focal point of the leader's decision-making pays important consideration on the issues of fairness and justice. Hence, all followers must be treated equally; there is no special treatment in any manner. If there is inevitable special treatment, it is deemed proper to explain why a particular follower needs to be treated that way. The reasons must be clear, reasonable, and based on sound ethical values of the organization. Ethical leaders are open to suggestions and are objective in giving judgment to the followers' important concerns (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). The authors also agreed that this eventually increases followers' involvement when it comes to their work. Lastly, the action of the leader is based on reflection and is not driven by reactive emotions (Dobel, 1998).

4. *Manifests honesty.* An honest leader is someone who exemplifies authenticity but knows how to strike a balance by being sensitive to the feelings of others. Brown and Treviño (2006) ask, "Does closeness between executives and rank-and-file employees [as might be observed in smaller organizations] neutralize cynical attitudes?" (p. 611). At times, it is important to some degree to set a demarcation line as to the level of closeness between leader and follower dyadic relationship since too much familiarity brings contempt. An ethical leader clarifies his/her follower's responsibilities, expectations, and

performance goals (Kalshoven et al., 2011b). Through this, they maintained that the followers would discern and better appreciate when their performance is up to the standard. In crafting a favorable reputation of EL, qualities like integrity or honesty must be present. Den Hartog and Belschak (2012) listed those qualities that are attributed to ethical leaders because it denoted authentically moral values and ethical identities.

*5. Builds community.* A good leader works in unison with the followers. The leader thinks for the common good by not imposing his or her will on others most especially if it is out of the volition of the followers. The leader is the driving force towards the unity of his or her followers, and not the point person in making the gap between them wider. The task of the leader is vital because of his/her power in influencing the organization's ethical environment (Schminke et al., 2005). Results of the study by Walumbwa et al. (2012) suggested that the group executes efficient work because they view their leaders as someone who displays high degree of ethical behavior.

### **3. Synthesis**

The body of knowledge is limitless. This explains the continuous proliferation and amalgamation of research on various areas and disciplines. As manifested by pieces of irrefutable evidence, the study of leadership is one of the most sought after topic that has received considerable attention from scholars in different fields of sciences (e.g., Day, 2011; Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, & Harms, 2008). In this respect, Crevani, Lindgren, and Packendorff (2010) acknowledged that since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the field of leadership has grown as fast as a fundamental body of management knowledge. This growing

interest led them to discern the multifaceted leader traits and behaviors (e.g., Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009; Bruno & Lay, 2008; Cavazotte et al., 2012; Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; Strang & Kuhnert, 2009). In effect, numerous constructs have been developed and tested. Accordingly, these constructs confirm the reliability and validity towards a better comprehension of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of leadership (e.g., Ahmetoglu, Leutner, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011; Bugenhagen, 2006; Chang et al., 2011; Hannah, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2012). One of these constructs is the broad personality taxonomy termed CSEs that was conceptualized by Judge, Locke, and Durham in 1997. From its introduction, streams of research have already been devoted to CSEs concept, which embody the fundamental judgment that people make of themselves (Judge et al., 2005). Henceforth, the terms CSEs, CSEs concept, and CSEs construct are used interchangeably.

Since CSEs can be a useful construct for a better understanding of the traits of a leader, it is deemed necessary to examine the style or behavior of the leader [e.g., transformational, transactional, ethical] using four criteria namely, follower job satisfaction, group performance, leader effectiveness, satisfaction with the leader (Derue et al., 2011). The leader plays a vital role in identifying effectiveness in all levels in the organization: (a) the individual, (b) the team, and (c) the unit (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007). Henceforth, the terms "style of leadership/the leader" and "behavior of leadership/the leader" are used interchangeably. However, the style of the leader is considered as one of the most essential components that contribute to effectiveness of leadership (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012) and it can be defined as the behavior shown by the leader as he/she leads members toward a goal (Certo & Certo, 2006 as cited in Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). However, the leader can advance and improve his/her

leadership skills and styles through experience, education, and training (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

Consequently, leadership style or behavior is, indeed, necessary because it allows all the members of the organization to make their own contributions using all of their abilities to come up with concepts that may involve better methodology toward a goal (Llorens-Montes, Ruiz-Moreno, & Garcia-Morales, 2005). Evidently, there has been an emerging body of research focusing on the style or behavior of a leader that produces effectiveness (e.g., Bruno & Lay, 2008; Jung et al., 2009; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012; Yukl, 2008). In general, the acceptance of TFL has grown among researchers and practitioners (Brown & Keeping, 2005) and has been discussed in numerous researches and achieved tremendous support from publications (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). A transformational leader has the ability to foresee a sound future, to voice out how it can be achieved, to be an example for others to follow, to raise performance standards, and to exemplify confidence and will power. He/she goes beyond short-term goals and centers on higher order intrinsic needs (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). On a more profound level, TFL is considered one of the most reknowned ways to comprehend and assess the effectivity of leaders (Bass et al., 2003 as cited in Vasilaki, 2011) in managing an organization (Felfe & Schyns, 2004 as cited in Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

In parallel, ethical behavior is identified as another important aspect of leadership. For this purpose, another leader behavior paradigm worthy to be explored is the construct of EL that is focused on the moral facet of leadership (e.g., Brown & Treviño, 2006) as morality is obligatory among all rational beings, and this includes leaders (Price, 2008). As such, it is believed that leaders are agents of change, for without them many developments are impossible to attain. Leaders set the tone at the top for others to follow (e.g., Schminke et al., 2005).

In this light, it is imperative that leaders exemplify moral values (e.g., Michie & Gooty, 2005) in order to win the trust (e.g., Burke et al., 2007) and respect (e.g., Clarke, 2011) of their followers. Treviño et al. (2003 as cited in Brown & Treviño, 2006) explained that to build the reputation of ethical leadership, they must be consistent and proactive in integrating ethics into their routine. The noteworthy thing among all researches about leadership is that they are mostly about trying to comprehend “good” or “effective” leadership (Shaw, Erickson, & Harvey, 2011). Not surprisingly, the meaning of leadership postulates upon the impact of leaders to followers. One research (Schminke et al., 2005) acknowledged that leaders certainly impact the organization, the ethical climate, and his/her employees' attitudes. In essence, leadership is a vital part in the success of an organization (Julsuwan, Srisard, & Poo Sri, 2011). Clearly, it requires ethics because of the major responsibilities involved. In fact, there has been an influx of concern from scholars to integrate EL in to their research agenda (e.g., Brown & Treviño, 2006; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Kalshoven & Den Hartog, 2009; Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh, 2011a; Kalshoven et al., 2011b). Brown and Treviño (2006) affirmed that while EL has been an interest for generations, its exact social scientific theory-based research is comparatively new. They maintained that even though it is not predominantly tackled, EL is potentially a promising venture among academic researchers.

In view of the essentiality of the broad dispositional trait named CSEs to leadership and a significant number of studies that show its usefulness as a barometer of attitudes, motivation, and behavior (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011), the causal influence of the leader's CSEs on the followers' OC and the influence of TFL and EL as mediators are still fuzzy. Thus, it necessitates attention. As Rok (2009) attested, for so many years, the definition of leadership and the role of

leadership in starting and upholding organizational changes has been a topic of research. However, he added that the kind of leadership that yields most effective employee engagement is not clear. To further reinforce the requisite of this study, it is noteworthy to draw upon the conclusion made by Derue et al. (2011) that behaviors of the leader can show further aspects of efficiency than of traits. However, the studies show that “an *integrative model* where leader behaviors mediate the relationship between leader traits and effectiveness is warranted” (Derue et al., 2011, p. 7). In fact, Haq et al. (2010) recognized that journals about leadership discussed leadership styles using different methodologies. They believed that the mainstream methodologies are generally studied, and produce outcomes across situations and time periods such as OC (Meyer & Allen, 1997 as cited in Chiang & Wang, 2012).

The current literature research attempts at advancing on a single but important outcome variable, that is OC as an addition to the outcome predicted by CSEs—“work motivation, job performance, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and stress” (Judge, 2009, p. 60) with the mediating roles of two behavioral approaches of leadership: (a) transformational, and (b) ethical.

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