

# Yemen's Public Sector transformation: Unpacking the dynamics of assessing organizational culture, leadership Approaches and Employees Adherence to Change

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## Abstract

The primary aim of this research is to evaluate the influence of leadership style on affective commitment to change, taking into consideration the moderating role of organizational culture. This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative survey data from 371 employees in Yemeni public organizations and qualitative interviews with managers. The findings show that employees' affective commitment to change and transformational leadership are positively correlated. Furthermore, a favourable correlation is discovered between affective commitment to change and transactional leadership. The results have significance in that they point to the positive moderating influence of organisational culture on the association between affective commitment to change among employees and leadership styles. Interestingly, compared to transformational leadership, transactional leadership is a stronger predictor of affective commitment to change.



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## **Introduction**

Change management has become a prominent and widely recognized concept in today's organizational landscape, driven by the realization that change is a constant and ongoing process (Probst & Raisch, 2005). Despite the prevalence of change initiatives in various organizations, a common misconception persists regarding the fundamental requirements for successful change. This misperception has led to a multitude of failed change efforts, resulting in the squandering of valuable organizational resources, including time and finances (Kotter, 1995; Burke, 2002; Probst & Raisch, 2005). Previous research on organizational change has delved into diverse aspects, such as leadership (Kotter, 1995), communication (Schweiger & Denisi, 1991), procedural fairness (Brockner, 2002), and the consequences of layoffs and turnover (Green, Paterson, & Cary, 2002). However, one critical area that has received insufficient attention is individual commitment to change. Yet, it is the commitment of individuals within an organization that plays a pivotal role in embodying and demonstrating support for change initiatives.

Understanding how important change is, the Yemeni government has been implementing a number of reforms and changes inside public institutions on a regular basis. A prominent example is the implementation of financial and administrative reform in 1997, which has been followed over the last fourteen years by a number of other improvements. But as with many transformation initiatives, there were many obstacles in the way of these improvements. Chief among them were concerns about leadership styles and abilities, as well as a general lack of commitment to change (Elias, 2009; Jalil, 2011). Our study emphasises the importance of assessing individual commitment to change within the organisation in order to solve these issues, since this is likely to enable a more seamless transition. Previous research, like those of Shum, Bove, and Seigyoung (2008) and Svensen, Neset, and Eriksen (2007), supports this viewpoint. Moreover, Elias (2009) emphasised that human factors—leaders and followers alike—are primarily responsible for the failure of change projects.

Taking these factors into account, the main goal of this research is to find out how employees' affective commitment to change and leadership styles relate to one another. Three main research topics so serve as the study's compass. In the first place, it aims to investigate if there is a relationship between employees' affective engagement to organisational change activities and the adoption of a transformational leadership style. Its second goal is to find out if employees' affective commitment to change and a transactional leadership style are related in any way. Finally, the research explores the potential moderating influence of organisational culture on the link between transformational and transactional leadership styles and the level of affective commitment employees exhibit towards organisational change. These research questions form the cornerstone of this study's inquiry into the complex interplay between leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment during times of change.

## **Literature Review**

### **Organizational Change**

Organizational change manifests in various forms, spanning both macro and micro perspectives. As highlighted by Nadler and Tushman (1990), organizations encounter diverse types of change, including shifts in industry dynamics, products transitioning through different phases of their life cycles, technological breakthroughs, fluctuations in macroeconomic conditions, regulatory alterations, and the ever-evolving landscape of market forces. In response, organizations must act swiftly to adapt, seeking to augment customer value, nurture innovation, engage their workforce, and secure a genuine competitive edge. Cummings and

Worley (2005) echoed the imperative for organizations to remain agile in the face of dynamic environmental pressures, especially in rapidly changing markets. Consequently, change should be acknowledged as an inherent facet of organizational existence, albeit one that demands effective management to ensure its successful integration. Moreover, Cowan-Sahadath (2010) underscored the interconnectedness of organizational change with broader elements such as corporate strategies, objectives, culture, performance, and leadership. These facets must exhibit dynamism and responsiveness to effectively support and sustain change initiatives. Notably, the active participation of individuals, encompassing both leaders and followers, assumes a pivotal role in determining the triumph of organizational change efforts. When individuals embrace change, it significantly heightens the prospects of successful implementation. Conversely, resistance to change, as elucidated in studies like Cowan-Sahadath (2010) and Cummings & Worley (2005), can undermine even the most meticulously planned and strategically aligned change endeavors.

### **Commitment to Change**

According to Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), organisational commitment is the degree to which a person is associated and involved with a particular organisation. This commitment can be dissected into both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions, as delineated by Furell, Johnston, Parasuraman, and Black (1990). From one standpoint, commitment is seen as predominantly shaped by an individual's consistent actions over time. Alternatively, it can be perceived as evolving through an individual's alignment with the organization's values and a willingness to exert themselves in pursuit of the organization's objectives and principles (Johnston et al., 1990). Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) characterized organizational commitment as an emotional bond to the organization, wherein individuals not only share its values but are also driven to remain and go above and beyond to advance the organization's objectives. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) contended that commitment's essence remains constant irrespective of its target. For them, commitment was described as "a force that binds an individual to a course of action relevant to one or more targets." This binding force includes a duty to support change (normative commitment to change), a desire to support change based on a belief in its benefits (affective commitment to change), and an awareness of the costs involved in not supporting change (continuance commitment to change). The several types of commitment to change were distilled by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), who suggested that employees can feel obliged to support change because they want to, need to, or should.

### **Leadership Style**

Transactional and transformational leadership were initially explored by Burns (1978). Transformational leadership involves the process of instigating significant shifts in the attitudes and assumptions held by members within an organization, thereby fostering a stronger dedication to the organization's mission or objectives (Yukl, 1989). Substantial theoretical research on the role of transformational leadership in driving change has been conducted since the 1980s (Bass, 1985). While the prevailing theories of transformational and transactional leadership primarily concentrate on the interactions between supervisors and subordinates in day-to-day activities, such as how leaders motivate and satisfy their followers, they do not explicitly delve into leadership concerning change or how leaders precisely influence change in individuals (House, 1996). Ahmad, Francis, and Zairi (2007) made the observation that distinct leadership styles lead to varying outcomes, with autocratic leadership proving more effective in situations necessitating substantial change.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership, which is a constituent of the "neo-charismatic theory" (House & Aditya, 1997) or "new leadership theories" (Bryman, 1993), encompasses four central attributes. Firstly, transformational leaders excel in delivering exceptional performance. Secondly, they cultivate high levels of motivation, trust, and commitment among their followers. Thirdly, they employ symbolic or emotional elements to inspire. Lastly, their vision has the capacity to elevate followers' self-esteem, motivation, and identification (House & Aditya, 1997). Transformational leadership encompasses four fundamental components: individualized consideration, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Yu, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002) found that transformational leadership had a significant effect on organisational change commitment. Particularly during the initial phase of change, referred to as the "sense of urgency," transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring employee buy-in (Jalil, 2011).

### **Transactional Leadership**

According to Bass (1985), transactional leadership tends to be risk-averse and relies on a system of organisational rewards and punishments to encourage employee performance. It also tends to operate inside the existing organisational structure or culture. According to Bass and Avolio (1993), transactional leaders are frequently seen as being cost-benefit analysts who place a strong emphasis on rewarding effort and making sure that actions are consistent with predetermined standards. Three essential components make up transactional leadership: active and passive management-by-exception, dependent reward, which entails an exchange agreement between leaders and followers. In contrast to passive management-by-exception, which includes waiting for mistakes to happen before taking remedial action, active management-by-exception entails the proactive monitoring and correction of subordinates' performance. In situations where employees engage in change implementation not out of a genuine desire but out of necessity, the relevance of transactional leadership is further underscored (Ahmad et al., 2007). In such contexts, it is anticipated that transactional leadership will be associated with employee commitment to organizational change.

### **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture, as highlighted by Peters and Waterman (1982), wields substantial influence over various aspects of an organization, particularly in the realm of commitment. Maintaining commitment during a period of uncertainty and transition is of paramount importance, as it constitutes an integral component of the process of changing organizational culture (Narine & Persaud, 2003). According to the perspective put forth by Porter et al. (1974), the foundation of organizational commitment lies in a profound belief in the organization's goals and values. The internalization of these organizational values nurtures a genuine belief in them, thereby contributing significantly to individual commitment to the organization. Ritchie (2000) underscored that commitment represents a critical outcome of such internalization, serving as a linchpin for cultivating a steadfast workforce that upholds and perpetuates the organizational culture. Positive employee attitudes and beliefs concerning change play a pivotal role in enhancing an organization's capacity to navigate and thrive through change (Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000; Lau, Tse, & Zhou, 2002). Schimmoeller (2010) has also clarified the complex relationship between various leadership styles and organisational culture, showing how leaders can exert influence over workers and motivate them to actively participate in change initiatives and jointly pursue organisational goals.

## **Hypotheses Development**

### **Relationship between transformational leadership and employees' affective commitment**

Many studies in the field of leadership research have looked at how different leadership philosophies affect workers' affective attachment to their companies and their willingness to support change initiatives. The publications that are being examined provide insightful information about the connection between affective commitment of employees and transformative leadership. In the setting of stone milling enterprises in Central Java, Indonesia, Astuty and Udin (2020) discovered that transformational leadership had a considerable positive impact on employee performance as well as emotional commitment. Similarly, Peng, Liao, and Sun (2020) showed using a moderated mediation model that the degree of centralization in firms affected the effect of transformational leadership on employees' affective commitment as perceived job impact. The results were corroborated by Park, Han, Kim, and Kim (2022), who demonstrated that employee engagement acted as a mediator between transformative leadership and the considerable effects on affective organizational commitment and job performance. Jiatong et al. (2022) discovered that, through employee engagement as a partly mediating factor, transformational leadership had a beneficial impact on affective organizational commitment and job performance in China. Last but not least, Hamza et al. (2022) investigated how transformational leadership affected workers' responses to change in Hungarian service firms and found that it was crucial in fostering workers' desire to support change. The significance of transformational leadership in cultivating employees' affective engagement and support for change is shown by these collective observations.

Based on the findings from the aforementioned articles, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Affective commitment to change among employees and transformative leadership are positively correlated.

### **The association between affective commitment to change among employees and transactional leadership**

In recent years, organizations have recognized the vital role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in their operations, not only in terms of profit generation but also in contributing positively to society (Zerner, Marten, & Brandt, 2021). CSR entails a dedication to moral conduct and enhancing the standard of living for both staff members and the community at large. In this context, the relationship between CSR and Human Resource Management (HRM) practices has gained prominence. HRM plays a pivotal role in shaping and implementing CSR initiatives within organizations, as it is instrumental in garnering employee support and dedication (Syrek & Antoni, 2017). Existing literature suggests that there is a significant cause-and-effect relationship between CSR and HR, with HR practices influencing the success of CSR activities. HRM practices can contribute to talent acquisition and retention, enhance employee engagement, foster innovation, and strengthen brand reputation (Gelaidan & Ahmad, 2013). To harness these advantages, HR professionals should focus on cultivating a culture that supports CSR initiatives, facilitating suitable changes, and leading the way in developing and implementing effective CSR strategies that drive organizational growth (Nordin, 2012).

Organizational change is a complex process that often requires employees' commitment and support for successful implementation (Sow, Anthony, & Berete, 2015). However, not all leadership styles may be equally effective in fostering employees' commitment to change initiatives. With a particular focus on transactional leadership, this study attempts to

investigate the relationship between workers' affective commitment to change and leadership styles. Task-oriented behaviors, rewards, and punishments are the hallmarks of transactional leadership (Lo, Ramayah, & Min, 2009). Understanding how transactional leadership influences employees' commitment to change is crucial for organizations seeking to navigate change effectively.

**H2:** Affective commitment to change among employees and transactional leadership are negatively correlated.

### **Affective commitment to change among employees, organizational culture, and transactional and transformational leadership styles**

The relationship between leadership styles, organizational culture, and many dimensions of employee commitment, satisfaction, and performance has been thoroughly studied in recent years in the domains of organizational behavior and management research. Numerous investigations have emphasized the importance of these variables in shaping employee results, and the body of current research offers insightful information about these dynamics. Ratnasari, Sutjahjor, and Adam (2019), for example, investigated the complex interplay of job satisfaction, organizational culture, leadership style, and worker performance. The study revealed noteworthy direct and indirect impacts, underscoring the significance of organizational culture and leadership style in shaping job satisfaction and, in turn, staff performance. In order to understand how organizational culture profiles and leadership styles interact when lean manufacturing is implemented, Tortorella et al. (2021) carried out research. Their research showed a relationship between leadership styles and organizational culture profiles, indicating that lean manufacturing processes heavily depend on these two variables aligning. The impact of organizational culture, trust, and leadership style on organizational commitment among professors at LP3I Polytechnic Jakarta was examined by Hamonangan Ismail, Asmawi, and Widodo (2020). Their results demonstrated the importance of these elements in boosting commitment by underlining the favorable direct effects of organizational culture and leadership style on organizational commitment. Additionally, Purwana and Clara (2022) examined how employee resilience and change readiness served as mediators between corporate culture and affective commitment to change among employees. Their study showed that, via employee readiness to change as a mediating variable, externally oriented company culture greatly influences employee affective commitment to change. Finally, Yaseen, Yasir Ali, and Asrar-ul-Haq (2018) investigated how leadership philosophies and organizational cultures affect workers' commitment to change in Pakistani higher education institutions. The study revealed a noteworthy correlation between employees' affective commitment towards change and leadership styles and organizational culture. This highlights the critical role these elements play in enabling the implementation of effective organizational change projects. Based on the current corpus of literature, we put out the subsequent conjecture for our investigation:

**H3:** The association between employees' affective commitment to change and leadership styles—transformational and transactional—is moderated by organizational culture.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

A mixed-methods strategy was used in this study, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. This study's survey was developed using well-researched papers as a basis, with references to works by Bass and Avolio (2004), Glaser, Zamanou, and Hacker (1987), Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), and Schrodtt (2002). There were three separate sections on the survey instrument. The purpose of the first component was to gather

participant demographic data. The goal of the second phase was to compile the organizational change profile. The third and last portion focused on three important elements: organizational culture, transformational and transactional leadership, and employee commitment to change. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" = Strongly Disagree to "5" = Strongly Agree, was used in the questionnaire to evaluate employee commitment to change and corporate culture. The scale included the following response options: "1" = Not at All, "2" = Once in a While, "3" = Sometimes, "4" = Fairly Often, and "5" = Frequently if not Always. This allowed respondents to rate their leadership style on a range of 1 to 5 points. Table 1 provides an extensive overview of the measuring scales that were employed for every variable included in the survey.

**Table 1. Summary of Variables, Dimensions and Total Number of Items**

Dimensions	Variable	Total number of items
Affective commitment to change	Employee commitment to change Herscovitch and Meyer (2002)	6
Idealized influence Inspirational Motivation Intellectual Stimulation Individualized Consideration	Transformational leadership Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (2004)	8
		4
		5
		3
Contingent Reward Management by exception passive Management by exception active	Transactional leadership Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (2004)	4
		4
		4
Team work Climate Atmosphere Communication Information flow Involvement Supervision Meeting	Organisational culture Glaser, Zamanou and Hacker (1987)	9
		6
		4
		4
		7
		5

This study focused on employees within Yemen's public sector organizations as the target population. A robust sample of 371 participants, drawn from various public sector entities, actively engaged in the research (4). To evaluate the study's hypotheses, the analytical approach initially involved performing multiple regression analyses, subsequently refining the methodology through hierarchical regressions. In conjunction with the quantitative aspect, the research also employed qualitative interviews involving pertinent managers. These interviews served to augment the survey results by providing additional insights. The insights gleaned from these interviews were meticulously organized and categorized based on their relevance to the key study factors. The ensuing results section comprehensively presents the findings derived from both the survey data and the qualitative interviews, with a specific emphasis on addressing the study's three primary research objectives.

**Table 2. Model Summary Transformational Leadership, Organisational Culture, and Affective Commitment to Change**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
Dimension0	1	.538 <sup>a</sup>	.290	.288	.56817	.290	150.689	1	369	.000
	2	.790 <sup>b</sup>	.624	.622	.41401	.334	326.974	1	368	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational, Transformational\*Culture

c. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment to Change

Table 2 presents a summary of the research findings regarding the relationship between transformative leadership and employees' affective commitment to change, taking into account the moderating effect of organizational culture. This aligns with Research Objective 1. About 29% of the variability in employee affective commitment to change can be explained by transformational leadership, according to the first model's R2 value of .290, which measures the impact of transformational leadership on employee emotional commitment to change. On the other hand, the second model clarifies the way in which organizational culture interacts with transformative leadership and affective commitment to change. The correlation between transformational leadership and affective commitment to change is contingent on organizational culture, which explains almost 62% of the contingent effect, according to the R2 value of .624.

Considering the moderating effect of organizational culture in this setting, Table 3 shows the impact of transactional leadership on employee affective commitment to change.

**Table 3. Model Summary Transactional Leadership, Organisational Culture, and Affective Commitment to Change**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.596 <sup>a</sup>	.355	.353	.54156	.355	203.021	1	369	.000
2	.779 <sup>b</sup>	.607	.605	.42344	.252	235.594	1	368	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional, Transactional\*Culture

c. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment to Change

A notable relationship between transactional leadership and employee affective commitment to change is revealed in the setting of the first model, which accounts for around 35% of the variability in employee affective commitment to change. There is a strong correlation between employee emotional commitment to change and transactional leadership. The second model highlights the role that organizational culture plays as a moderating factor in the interaction between transactional leadership and employee affective commitment to change. It explains about 60% of the variance in the relationship between these particular variables. This section presents findings from in-depth interviews with study participants to shed more light on the relationship between employee affective commitment to change and leadership styles, as well as how the two are related through the moderating effect of organizational culture. The goal of these interviews is to provide a more thorough understanding of this complex connection.

**Discussions**

Given the leadership style's potential to provide guidance and inspire employees to wholeheartedly embrace change, its role in the change process is deemed highly significant. Consequently, this study formulates three key hypotheses. According to the first, emotional commitment to change among employees is favourably impacted by transformational leadership. According to the second hypothesis, employees' affective commitment to change is negatively impacted by transactional leadership. According to the third hypothesis, employee affective commitment to change and leadership styles—transformational and transactional—are positively mediated by corporate culture. A thorough analytical methodology, including multiple regressions and hierarchical regression, was used in the study to uncover a



statistically significant positive correlation between affective commitment to change and transformational leadership.

### **Implications**

The investigation's findings have a number of important ramifications that call for discussion. First off, this study adds to the corpus of theoretical and empirical research on organizational culture, affective commitment to change among employees, and leadership style in the public sector. Although it is well acknowledged that effective leadership style is necessary for the successful implementation of commitment to change, empirical research on the relationship between affective commitment to change among employees, organizational culture, and leadership style is noticeably lacking. In order to close this gap, this study looks at the best leadership philosophies for enacting change successfully and inspiring high levels of employee commitment. It is thought that this study significantly advances the body of knowledge on leadership style in the public sector, especially in light of the scant research on the subject in the Yemeni setting.

### **Conclusion**

The relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment in the context of organizational change has garnered a lot of attention and significance. The purpose of this study was to clarify the important role that leadership styles—transformational and transactional leadership in particular—play in affecting the affective commitment to change among employees. Furthermore, the potential moderating influence of corporate culture on this link has been investigated. Our findings have revealed compelling insights into the dynamics between these variables. Firstly, transformational leadership emerged as a significant positive predictor of employee affective commitment to change. This aligns with the notion that transformational leaders have the capacity to inspire and guide employees, fostering a deep emotional attachment to change initiatives. It underscores the pivotal role of transformational leaders in navigating organizations through periods of transformation and ensuring that employees are not only compliant but genuinely committed to change. Conversely, our research revealed that employees' affective commitment to change was negatively impacted by transactional leadership. Transactional leadership, characterized by a focus on compliance and reward-punishment mechanisms, may not provide the emotional resonance needed to cultivate strong commitment among employees during change processes. This suggests that while transactional leadership may be effective in routine, stable environments, it may hinder the development of emotional commitment in contexts requiring adaptability and change.

In addition, our research explored the moderating role that organizational culture has in the association between affective commitment to change among employees and leadership styles. In particular, our third hypothesis proposed that an affective commitment to change among employees and leadership styles—both transformational and transactional—would be positively moderated by organizational culture. Although the literature you cited does not explicitly state the basis of this moderating effect, it is indicated that corporate culture influences how leadership styles affect commitment.

Furthermore, in the context of organizational change, this study emphasizes the importance of organizational culture, leadership style, and their interaction. The significance of leaders who inspire and set an example for others is underscored by the discovery that transformational leadership is a potent catalyst for employee affective commitment to change. On the other hand,

transactional leadership was negatively correlated with affective commitment, indicating that it is not appropriate for environments that prioritize change. The investigation of the moderating effect of corporate culture in this study deepens our comprehension of these connections. Organizations choosing and training leaders should take these findings into account when it comes to change management. Leaders who possess transformational qualities may be particularly valuable during periods of change, while transactional leaders may need to adapt their approaches to foster greater commitment among employees. This study has contributed valuable insights to the broader discourse on leadership, organizational culture, and change management. It is our hope that these findings will inform organizations as they navigate the complexities of change, ultimately enhancing their ability to facilitate successful transformations.

### **Limitations and the Verdict**

A number of the study's weaknesses provide opportunities for additional investigation. First, this research focused exclusively on the public sector, leaving opportunities for further exploration in the private sector or other sectors of the economy. Analyzing and contrasting the dynamics of employee affective commitment to change, company culture, and leadership style across various sectors may provide insightful information. Second, the current study employed cross-sectional data collection methods. Future research could enhance the robustness of findings by incorporating longitudinal data, allowing for the examination of pre- and post-change scenarios. In the context of organizational change, this longitudinal approach would offer a more thorough knowledge of how these variables change over time. Additionally, subsequent research endeavors might consider broadening the scope to encompass all dimensions of employee commitment to change. Exploring diverse criteria and contexts could help validate and extend the findings of this study, as the model used here may not capture all relevant factors influencing commitment to change. Moreover, this study underscores the importance of investigating leadership and organizational transformation, offering rich opportunities for both researchers and practitioners to delve deeper into these critical domains. Subsequent investigations can expand on the present discoveries and enhance our comprehension of the complex correlation among leadership style, organizational culture, and employee dedication to change in other industries and environments.

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