

**Impact of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement: The Mediating
Role of Psychological Empowerment and Knowledge Sharing**

By

HOSSEN, Mohammad Awal

THESIS

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

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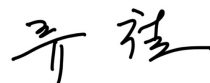
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ABSTRACT

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement: The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment and Knowledge Sharing

By

Hossen, Mohammad Awal

The modern knowledge-based economy, technological improvements, market demands, and dynamic workplace culture present significant challenges to higher academic institutions. With this issue, universities must strive to become centres of excellence for their faculty and non-faculty staff, who play a vital role in the institution's growth. If transformational leaders want their staff to be more effective and results-oriented, one of the most important roles they can perform is helping subordinates build a sense of engagement and devotion to the enterprise. Considering this, this study aims to explore the effects of transformational leadership on faculty members' job engagement through knowledge sharing and psychological empowerment at a public university in Bangladesh. Using a simple random sampling method, data from 101 full-time academics were gathered and then analyzed using SPSS and Hayes PROCESS Macro. The findings revealed that transformational leadership practices, directly and indirectly, influence faculty engagement. Knowledge sharing acted as a mediator in the relationship between transformative leadership and faculty work engagement, providing new insight into Bangladesh's higher education system.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, work engagement, university academics, knowledge sharing, psychological empowerment, Bangladesh

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CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the primary issues firms confront in today's competitive and globalized information culture is achieving sustained competitive advantage. Organizations must attract and maintain a skilled staff and encourage people to use and express their maximum potential at work to thrive and grow. To put it another way, engaged workers who are prepared to devote their mental, physical, and intellectual resources are essential for businesses. Employees that are deeply engaged in their work are energized and enthusiastic about what they do (Bakker & Leiter, 2017). An engaged workforce is ready to put in extra hours outside of regular working hours to pursue the company's goals, unlike disengaged workers (Bakker, 2011). Furthermore, engaged employees may promote a favourable work environment for their coworkers, management, and the organization's stakeholders. Therefore, scholars and practitioners have devoted considerable attention to employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

To be a premier institution of higher education in the twenty-first century, universities must have highly competent and totally engaged academics to meet the ever-evolving educational needs of its students (Hovey, 2011). Teachers need to be well-versed in the subject matter they are teaching and be able to properly convey the information to students to ensure their academic growth (Aslam & Sarwar, 2010). According to research, faculty members who actively participate in learning and using current pedagogical techniques may be able to convert this engagement into enhanced performance, resulting in greater responsibility and quality (Trahan, 2009). As a result, the management of a university should look at the level of job engagement of faculty members to establish an environment where faculty members are motivated to act (Wade & Demb, 2009), and

take the necessary measures to improve student interaction and teaching (Ballantyne, 2010). Engaging teachers in their work may assist academic directors in cultivating innovation, inspiring adaptation, and promoting flexibility in a continuously changing educational environment (Bresciani et al., 2009). In Bangladesh, higher education institutions (HEIs) are confronting intense competition for their survival and growth due to the sector's explosive growth over the last few decades (Karim, 2019). In addition, these universities are commonly accused as having insufficient research activity, low teaching quality, and a poor academic climate (Karim & Majid, 2017). Consequently, fostering a culture of innovation, information sharing, academic achievement, and collaborative research is critical to these institutions' success and development. It is often assumed that such a culture cannot be fostered without increasing academics' level of work engagement.

Although employee engagement provides substantial benefits to the organizations, the global engagement level remains between 13%-15% during the previous decade (Gallup, 2013, 2017). It has also been found that job engagement has declined globally, but it has decreased more in Asia (Roman & Frantz, 2013). According to Gallup (2017), academic institutions are among the least engaged organizations worldwide because they are not maximizing the potential of their most valuable asset - teachers and workers. Consistent with this view, a few studies have shown that higher education quality has declined in Bangladesh over the last few years (Rahman, 2013; Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014). In addition, a prevalent trend in Bangladeshi universities is the continued usage of lecture-based teaching techniques and obsolete educational materials by many teachers (Rabbani & Chowdhury, 2014; Akareem & Hossain, 2016). The major influential factor behind this problem is the lack of job engagement among the faculty members and the little time they spend on their professional development (Ashraf et al., 2016; Shiddike, 2019). This is a matter of concern because university teachers are the central contributing element in enhancing teaching,

scientific research, and community service in higher education. Wefald and Downey (2009) claim that academic and industrial engagement is different and that few studies have sought to assess this construct. Because of this, studying the causes of faculty members' job engagement is just as essential as studying the consequences of poor organizational behavior, like burnout and stress (Dai et al., 2021), or the desire to quit the company (Pitts et al., 2011). Work engagement is studied extensively to understand its underlying causes and effects. Bailey et al. (2017) reviewed 172 empirical studies on employee engagement. They found five categories of determinants (perceived management and leadership, organizational interventions, factors related to job design, observed corporate and group characteristics, and psychological states of individuals) and two types of engagement outcomes (such as morale and performance). Bailey et al. (2017) found a scarcity of research on how transformational leadership affects work engagement across the seven categories.

One of the most prevalent models of leadership in today's literature is transformational leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). It is connected to several work outcomes, including innovation (Shin & Zhou, 2003), job performance, and well-being (Nielsen et al., 2009). Leaders with transformational characteristics are virtuously mature leaders who guide their subordinates' actions and attitudes in a way that improves their degree of moral thinking (Burns, 1978). But transformational managers don't change the actions and attitudes of their subordinates in a simple way. Sivanathan et al. (2004) indicate that transformational leadership influences subordinate via various mediation processes, however Avolio et al. (2009) concluded that the process in which transformational supervisors encourage subordinates required additional examination. Furthermore, whereas prior work engagement research has mostly focused on developed nations (like Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia) (Bailey et al., 2017), few studies have been carried out in developing nations. Moreover, Reissner and Pagan (2013) suggested that

promoting work engagement is a challenging task, and as a result, additional investigation is required to figure out how to make employees more engaged.

In response to the research calls of Reissner and Pagan (2013) and Bailey et al. (2017), this research seeks to examine the connections between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, knowledge sharing, and job engagement among academics working at a public university of Bangladesh. By investigating knowledge sharing and psychological empowerment as possible mediator in the association of work engagement and transformational leadership, this research seeks to make three significant contributions to the existing scholarship. First, it is a unique approach to investigating the link between transformational leadership, knowledge sharing, psychological empowerment, and faculty engagement. Second, it focuses on the work engagement of academics, which has been overlooked in prior research (Selmer et al., 2013). Lastly, this research makes a contribution to the corpus of previous scholarship regarding job engagement by offering empirical data obtained from the growing tertiary education segment of an emerging nation such as Bangladesh.

1.2 Objectives of the research:

The primary goal of this investigation is to explore how leaders' transformational behavior can enhance faculty members' work engagement by enhancing knowledge sharing and psychologically empowering them in a developing country context, namely Bangladesh.

1.3 Research questions:

As part of this paper, the subsequent research questions were formulated.: First, what effect does transformative leadership have on faculty members' levels of work engagement in Bangladeshi public universities? Then, what effect does transformational leadership have on faculty members' psychological empowerment? Then, what effect does transformational leadership have on faculty

members' knowledge sharing behavior? To what extent does psychological empowerment mediate the relationship between transformative leadership and faculty work engagement? Finally, what role does knowledge sharing play in mediating the link between transformative leadership and faculty members' level of engagement to their jobs?

1.4 Chapter presentation:

The following is the order in which the remainder of this article will be presented: chapter 2 provides of a literature review of the variables of this study, followed by description of the study's research method and an analysis of the results. The last section provides implications, conclusions, limitations, and potential prospects for potential research.

CHAPTER: 2

Literature Review

Conceptualization of the Study:

2.1 Transformational Leadership:

The concept of transformational leadership was first coined by Burns (1978) to characterize politicians who influence the views of their adherents. Subsequently, the scope of the idea was expanded by Bass (1985, 1990) to include leadership in corporate settings. Influential transformational leaders motivate people to improve their moral reasoning abilities (Burns, 1979). Avolio (1999) defines transformational leaders as constantly encouraging, capable of effective delivery, and capable of setting behavioral norms for supporters to follow. Leaders with transformational characteristics take the initiative and inspire their teams to develop their potential and pursue more outstanding achievements. Transformational leadership, according to Putra (2019), refers to a leader's ability to generate initiatives, motivate staff, and improve their followers' capacities to achieve outstanding outcomes. An active transformational leader can see the broad picture while demonstrating personal caring for employees to build long-term trust in the workplace. Transformative leaders have high expectations, but their employees have faith in them and work hard to achieve what they previously thought was impossible.

The most extensively used conceptual model for transformational leadership is the theory provided by Bass (1985), which consists of four aspects: intellectual stimulation, inspiring motivation, idealized influence, and personalized consideration. Communication skills and the ability to inspire and motivate individuals are critical components of inspirational motivation. When speaking about the future, transformational leaders are seen as passionate and optimistic, which motivates and energizes their followers (Dubinsky et al., 1995). As the name suggests, idealized

influence involves influencing others by setting an example. Such actions might include adhering to strict ethical norms and emphasizing the collective good above individual gain (Bono & Judge, 2004). Recognizing and catering to the specific needs of each follower on an individual basis is what is meant by providing "individualized consideration" (Judge & Bono, 2000). The growth of the follower is the primary objective of actions classified as individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). Finally, stimulating followers' creativity and urging them to explore old themes in new ways is called "intellectual stimulation" (Bass, 1985). Transformative leaders cultivate a culture of active thinking in the workplace by providing intellectual stimulation (Tims et al., 2011).

However, Podsakoff et al. (1990) synthesize their analysis of transformational leadership into six traits that define transformational leaders. These behaviors are: being a good role model, having a clear vision and being able to explain it, having high expectations for performance, helping people accept group goals, stimulating the mind, and giving individualized support. On the basis of the model developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990), Carless et al. (2000) identified transformational leaders as people that display the following seven characteristics: 1) create and express a vision for the future of the company; 2) develop personnel (identify each employee's needs and talents and demonstrate individual interest); 3) help them achieve their goals via collaboration; 4) empowering workers (giving them the ability to devise rules and respecting their choices); 5) being innovative (using unusual tactics to accomplish the objectives); 6) setting a good example (adopting habits that are congruent with the beliefs and attitudes they promote); and 7) being charismatic.

Numerous measures assessing transformational leadership behaviors can be found in the literature, such as the "Leadership Practices Inventory" (LPI; Kouzes & Posner, 1990), the "Conger-Kanungo scale" (Conger & Kanungo, 1994), and the "Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire" (MLQ; Avolio et al., 1995). All these scales have the common characteristic of being lengthy and

time-consuming to finish. Carless et al. (2000) proposed the “Global Transformational Leadership scale (GTL)” as a solution to this issue. The GTL is a simple, useful, and equally relevant tool for assessing transformational leadership. It is based on the authors' seven transformative leadership attributes, which are listed above. The GTL scale is used in the present study because of its psychometric qualities and the fact that it is a compact scale that can be completed in a short period of time.

2.2 Work Engagement:

Kahn came up with the idea of "work engagement" for the first time in 1990. Since that time, several scholars (see Rothbard, 2001) have theorized engagement differently and proposed various measures of work engagement. Rothbard (2001) describes job engagement as a mental condition and suggests it includes two essential elements: absorption and attention. Albrecht (2010) defines "work engagement" as a good job-related mental condition defined by a real motivation to promote the accomplishment of the business. Work engagement, according to Macey and Schneider (2008), is identified as having a good, rewarding, and emotionally motivated state at work. Although Kahn's (1990) engagement theory successfully generalizes the psychological factors that resulted in engagement or disengagement, Saks (2006) identified a weakness of this theory in delineating why individuals exhibit various degrees of engagement in different situations. Various new facets of engagement have been discovered in more recent research. Engagement was defined by Sharoni et al. (2015) as an employee's devotion to their job in terms of mental and physical energy as well as their emotional commitment, whereas Demirtas et al. (2017) characterized it as a constructive mentality, improved vitality, self-fulfillment, and commitment reflected by emotions of inspiration, passion, pride, and the significance of the task.

However, research by Schaufeli et al. (2006) was influential in differentiating the emotional state of engagement from the prevalent satisfaction surveys, which had previously been unsuccessful in making this connection. The “Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)” was created by Schaufeli et al. (2002) for the purpose of measuring employee engagement in their work. This scale has three components: absorption, vigor, and dedication. Schaufeli et al. (2002) define engagement as a pleasant, rewarding, and profession-oriented psychological condition marked by dedication, vigor, and absorption. The term "vigor" relates to an individual's mental rigor and physical vitality (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Higher-vigor employees are extremely dedicated to their job and exhibit endurance when faced with adversities at employment (Maunno et al., 2007). The concept of dedication refers to a constant commitment to one's job with a feeling of importance, excitement, and pride. Dedication, on the other hand, differs from job participation in that it is more intimately related to a person's work and includes both emotional and mental aspects (Taipale et al., 2011). Lastly, to be fully immersed in one's job and conditions of one's employment is absorption. The present research uses the definition provided by Schaufeli et al. (2002) for two reasons. First, the engagement theory of Schaufeli et al. (2002) has greater reliability and fills earlier definition gaps (Bakker, 2009; see also Wefald & Downey, 2009). Second, since it encompasses the emotional and cognitive aspects of employees' views of work, academics frequently use Schaufeli's notion of job engagement as a study basis (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

2.3 Psychological Empowerment:

Several academics have endeavored to explain and define the idea of empowerment in different ways. Conger and Kanungo (1988) were the first to offer a psychological viewpoint on empowerment. They defined this notion as a way of increasing employee self-effectiveness by identifying and removing situations that create powerlessness using both official organizational

procedures and informal means of imparting efficacy knowledge. Psychological empowerment is an important concept that has been addressed extensively by scholars in management and other domains in terms of its effect on empowered personnel and their relationships with one another (Solansky, 2014). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) characterize empowerment as an internal motivator based on four cognitive factors: competency, meaning, choice, and influence. Spreitzer (1995) extended on Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) work by defining it as an improved internal motivational construct exhibited in a group of four psychological processes indicating employees' attitude to their job roles: impact, self-determination, competency, and meaning.

Employees that feel empowered develop more competency and perform better on the job. This is because they understand the purpose of their job and believe they can complete it by making their own work choices; thus, they understand the impact of their work on the institution (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). Competence is a term that relates to an individual's faith in one's personal capacity to do a task successfully. According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), a clear chain of authority increases a person's perceived competence. Additionally, Spreitzer (1995) said that self-esteem is positively connected with competence, and that when workers have high self-esteem, they see themselves as valuable resources with unique abilities that help to improve the performance of the firm. Self-Determination, the third component, pertains to employees' feelings of autonomy regarding how individuals execute their responsibilities and represents their perception of control or independence in starting and directing processes, behaviors, and activities (Goodale et al., 1997; Spreitzer, 1995). Employees will feel empowered when they realize they are not merely following the top-level hierarchy's directions, but rather have the autonomy and flexibility to choose the best time and method for completing a given assignment. This will increase their effort to complete the task (Spreitzer, 1995). Finally, impact refers to the belief held by employees that their effort will

make a substantial difference in attaining the task's objective, as well as the belief that they can affect organizational results (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees who lack a feeling of progress toward objectives would lack empowerment; hence, they must believe that their job has an impact on administrative, strategic, and effective outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1995). Additionally, impact highlights the relevance of self-influence and capability when people believe they can affect organizational results (Corsun & Enz, 1999). Finally, impact is a belief that a person's effort makes a substantial difference in attaining the task's objective, as well as the belief that he or she can affect organizational results (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees who lack a feeling of progress toward objectives would lack empowerment; hence, they must believe that their job has an impact on administrative, strategic, and effective outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1995). Additionally, impact highlights the relevance of self-influence and capability when people believe they can affect organizational results (Corsun & Enz, 1999).

2.4 Knowledge sharing:

According to Snyman and Kruger (2004), knowledge and knowledge workers are the most important assets for a 21st-century organization. This perspective has an influence on HR procedures and policies, which help the organization create and retain the competences essential for organizational success. Knowledge is the reciprocal transfer of messages, assumptions, and views between individuals (Clark & Brennan, 1991). Knowledge is transmitted at several levels within a company, including group, individual, and organizational (De Long & Fahey, 2000). Most of the knowledge generation appears at the person stage, information exchange happens at the group stage, and information use occurs at the organizational level (Parry, 2010).

Knowledge sharing, according to Lin (2007), is the act of people exchanging important experiences and information inside an organization. A common understanding of the company's

goals, vision, values, purpose, work procedures, and strategies benefits the workforce. This shared understanding becomes organizational knowledge when it is implemented, creating an atmosphere where learning may take place. Wang and Noe (2010) defined knowledge sharing as the act of sharing one's expertise and experience with others in order to assist them in resolving issues, creating new knowledge, or putting strategies into action. Sharing of knowledge is viewed as a collective action, rather than as the transferring of information between people (Kakabadse et al., 2001; Song & Chermack, 2008). Chua (2003) asserts that a person contributes information because of social obligation. Additionally, such behavior, or sharing, is anticipated to be returned, resulting in reciprocal gain. Without reciprocity, knowledge exchange and transmission are stifled.

In universities, knowledge exchange is a continuous process. Academics are increasingly urged to work with researchers inside their departments, across departments, and across institutions on a national and worldwide scale. Members of the research team are expected to collaborate with one another and learn from each other to develop new ideas via research funding and publications. The problem is that academics may be unwilling to share their expertise in the pursuit of good research performance in a fiercely competitive atmosphere. A leader's ability to build an open, honest, and trustworthy work atmosphere is crucial in this situation since information sharing is strongly dependent on the way in which a leader act. Individual faculty members' psychological needs must also be examined, such as what motivates them to share their knowledge. Moreover, when management supports information sharing, employees see a ubiquitous knowledge-sharing culture, and hence management's example may be quite persuasive (Wang & Noe, 2010).

2.5 Hypotheses Development

2.5.1 Transformational leadership and work engagement:

Transformative leaders stimulate their subordinates to become "cognitively engaged" in their institutions by displaying their distinct characteristics. Thoughts, values, intellectual engagement, and teacher cognition are just a few of the many categories that have been used to define cognitive engagement (Zigarmi et al., 2009). Transformational leaders stimulate the cognitive components of followers to increase the level of participation in teaching, as has been proved by several prior research (Bass, 1990; Saks, 2006). As transformational leaders, principals, for example, inspire teachers' perspectives, cognitive judgement, and ideas in the school setting, encouraging meticulous problem solving, rationality, intelligence, and logical thinking (Bass, 1985). They also inspire instructors to look for fresh answers to old issues and to look at current circumstances from a different perspective (Bass, 1990).

Employee engagement has been emphasized in previous research as being critical for businesses. Nevertheless, the academic literature on work engagement and transformational leadership has attracted limited attention. Transformational leadership, according to Hayati et al. (2014), has a major effect on job engagement. Bezuidenhout and Schultz (2013) argued that transformational leadership helps match the ambitions of people with the strategic goals of businesses. Transformational leadership is a method of interacting with followers, building a shared understanding, and increasing motivation for all the parties involved. According to Northouse (2010), transformative leadership has a considerable role in establishing a focused, motivated, and committed staff, which encourages people to become engaged in their job.

Transformational leadership expects followers to reach greater degree of competency while meeting their esteem wants and encouraging them to put the organization ahead of their personal

self-interest. As a result, it is likely to boost staff commitment. Similarly, a worker who receives positive reinforcement from his or her supervisor, as well as outstanding guidance and coaching, is likely to see their job as more challenging, fascinating, and gratifying; in turn, this leads to higher levels of productivity and job engagement (Bakker et al., 2011). Saks (2005) also demonstrated that the perceived support from employers anticipates both organization engagement and work engagement. However, the transformational leader probably had a crucial role in influencing the organization's support for the follower, thereby indirectly boosting the follower's job engagement. Clearly, scientific data supports a connection between transformational leadership and follower engagement. In addition, several empirical studies have been undertaken on the connection. This leads to the subsequent hypothesis:

H1. Transformational leadership will be positively related to faculty members' work engagement.

2.5.2 Transformational leadership and psychological empowerment:

Transformational leadership is likely to establish a work climate in which followers feel empowered, confident, and motivated to discover creative ways to execute their jobs effectively. Transformational leadership is characterized mostly by its emphasis on follower development (Avolio, 2002). In addition, the philosophy has constantly placed a premium on the growth of followers' independence and empowerment, as opposed to blind obedience (Graham, 1988). Transformative leaders, according to Bass and Avolio (1990), help their subordinates become more self-reliant thinkers and innovators. Avolio and Gibbons (1988) argued that one of the primary objectives of transformational leadership is to promote the self-development and autonomy of followers. Through such transformative leadership actions, it is plausible that inspired followers feel passionately driven by their leaders. In the previous studies, many scholars have shown that transformational leadership is linked to psychological empowerment in a positive way.

In particular, Boonyarit et al. (2010) discovered that transformational leadership affects teachers' perceptions of empowerment. The research included Thai school teachers as participants. Similarly, research done by Sanak et al. (2015) among Turkish school teachers revealed a substantial positive correlation between teachers' empowerment and transformative leadership.

Individualized attention, recognizing the followers' values and ideas, and intellectually stimulating the followers' ways of thinking are some of the methods used by transformational leaders to offer their followers psychological power (Lan & Chong, 2015). In addition to this, transformational leaders empower workers to cultivate an atmosphere of trust, recognize the significance of the job that they do, and prioritize the requirements of the business above their personal requirements. Coaching and guiding the followers allows them to take on greater responsibility and eventually become leaders. When employees are given greater autonomy, they become more self-assured, enthusiastic, optimistic, and engaged (Lan & Chong, 2015). The evidence revealed above leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Transformational leadership will be positively related to faculty members' psychological empowerment.

2.5.3 Psychological empowerment and work engagement:

Despite the limited evidence, research suggests that psychological empowerment perceived by employees is a substantial source of work engagement. Recent meta-analyses and reviews have found autonomy, one of the basic elements of empowerment, as a reliable determinant of employee engagement (Halbesleben, 2010; Mauno et al., 2010). Engaged people are more likely to have high levels of self-efficacy, a notion that is analogous to the competence component of empowerment (Halbesleben, 2010; May et al., 2004). One of the primary causes for job engagement is the psychological climate in the workplace (Czarnowsky, 2008; O'Neill & Arendt, 2008). In a study

conducted in South Africa, Stander and Rothmann (2010) looked at the association between empowerment and job engagement in numerous manufacturing firms. The researchers observed that the two variables had a statistical connection. The research by Taghipour and Dezfuli (2013) confirms the connection between work engagement and psychological empowerment. Bhatnagar (2012) revealed similar results, showing that psychological empowerment influenced the work engagement of 291 Indian industrial sector managers. In addition, it resulted in a strong feeling of creativity while decreasing the desire to quit the company. The subsequent hypothesis is proposed based on the preceding discussion:

H3: Psychological empowerment will be positively related to faculty members' work engagement.

2.5.4 Mediating influence of psychological empowerment on the association between transformational leadership and work engagement:

The acts and work styles of immediate managers and supervisors inspire employees' sense of empowerment. Transformational leadership is an attitude embraced by supervisors to motivate the employees to outperform their own contributions. In addition, transformational leadership increases employee motivation, organizational loyalty, satisfaction, and job engagement (Judge & Bono, 2001). Furthermore, transformational leadership adds to the success of a business through inspiring personnel (Snaebjornsson & Vaiciukynaite, 2016). Transformational leadership increases employee engagement by fostering a heightened feeling of empowerment (Dvir et al., 2002). Psychological empowerment was found to indirectly influence the connection between leadership practices (transactional and transformational) and followers' workplace identification (Zhu et al., 2012), as well as the relationship between the transformative mentor's conduct and various job dispositions, like innovation and satisfaction at work (Amundson & Martinsen, 2015), and commitment to the organization (Raub & Robert, 2012). Empowering leadership, according

to Zhang and Bartol (2010), has a constructive influence on psychological empowerment that improves both inner drive and enhanced work engagement. Having access to workplace resources may increase a one's feeling of empowerment while they are doing the job. This sense of empowerment is a critical component in elevating one's degree of work engagement (Quiones et al., 2013). Empowering employees psychologically is one way to enhance the well-being of organizations. Consequently, this study suggests the following hypothesis:

H4: Psychological empowerment will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and faculty members' work engagement.

2.5.5 Transformational leadership and knowledge sharing:

Personnel knowledge exchange is essential for the growth of the company's knowledge base. It does not, however, happen at random. Earlier research has shown that this process occurs only under particular or ideal circumstances, where the actions and assistance of leaders can have a big impact on how much and how often people share information (Le & Lei, 2017; Lei et al., 2019). Supervisors with transformational characteristics promote a culture of knowledge exchange by increasing the standards and interests associated to knowledge and information sharing (Birasnav et al., 2011). With regards to boosting employee-to-employee knowledge exchange, transformational leaders concentrate on building a sense of purpose and vision or on creating a workplace of integrity and organizational fairness (Le & Lei, 2017). Under transformational leadership, Choi et al. (2016) found that workers actively acquire and exchange ideas with their colleagues for creative objectives. Furthermore, Xiao et al. (2017) asserted that under the supervision of transformational leaders, individuals get more imaginative and eager to share expert knowledge with others. According to Le and Lei (2019), transformational leadership maintains a positive work atmosphere and offers enough instruments to foster knowledge exchange initiatives

among coworkers. By fostering a culture of knowledge inside a business, Humayun and Gang (2013) revealed that supervisors may impact employees' desires to acquire information. In their investigation of Taiwanese producers of electrical goods, Shih et al. (2012) shown that transformational supervisors may accelerate the information sharing behavior of R&D professionals by fostering an atmosphere of trust. According to Von Krogh et al. (2012), trust, organizational structure, and leadership style were the primary hurdles to the practice of KS activities among workers. Vera and Crossan (2004) revealed that transformative leaders in the higher education industry inspire people to transcend departmental borders and share their experiences. The explanations presented above highlight the significance of transformational leadership in connection to knowledge sharing activities. Thus, this article suggests the following hypothesis:

H5: Transformational leadership will be positively related to knowledge sharing.

2.5.6 Knowledge sharing and work engagement:

Knowledge management systems encourage two-way interaction, employee participation, and involvement, and hence employee engagement, by facilitating knowledge sharing and conversation inside firms. IT tools such as social networking sites (Naim & Lenka, 2017) and information system (Hung Wu & Chen, 2014; Tsai et al., 2013) increase information exchange, openness, and team spirit while promoting communication and coordination (Parry & Solidoro, 2013). Information acquisition, storage, and distribution are made simpler with knowledge management systems. Theoretically, face-to-face contact, IT tools, and social media may all be effective ways to promote information exchange among employees, which in turn will contribute to their professional growth and eventually raise their level of commitment. Engagement may be influenced by a variety of elements, including two-way communication, effective leadership, and

the need for management to foster engagement. The significance of two-way communication suggests that knowledge sharing would improve employee engagement. According to Hayase (2009), internal dialogue factors and employee engagement aspects have a strong connection. An additional finding of the study was the connection between effective internal communication and employee engagement qualities such as willingness to put out discretionary effort and a sense of purpose in their job. The author also found that employee engagement was connected to the satisfaction with communication channels and channel combinations. Thus, this paper proposes the subsequent hypothesis:

H6: Knowledge sharing will be positively related to faculty members' work engagement.

2.5.7 Mediating effect of knowledge sharing on the association between transformational leadership and work engagement:

Individuals' expertise, talents, and experiences may be leveraged and exchanged with the help of transformational leadership. As a result of instilling admiration and respect via idealized influence, it may help to foster an environment of knowledge transfer. Leaders may foster team spirit via inspiring motivation by fostering communication, psychological empowerment (Han et al., 2016), and commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2012). It is typical for employee engagement to grow when a firm's leadership embraces open communication and decision-making culture. Similarly, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing helps to increase employee engagement. Workplace familiarity and teamwork are two of the most important characteristics of an engaged employee. Without the formation of a suitable climate for knowledge exchange, it would not have been feasible. A common vision, goal, and values, for instance, are critical in building emotional and cognitive work engagement (Simon, 2011). By sharing their knowledge, employees may assist an institute's growth and, eventually, the improvement of competitiveness (Jackson et al., 2006). Although

information sharing is not a requirement for employment, it does aid in the development of a superior intellectual asset. As a result, the author contends that sharing of knowledge is a mediating variable that promotes employee engagement. Consequently, this research recommends the following hypothesis:

H7. Knowledge sharing will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and faculty members’ work engagement.

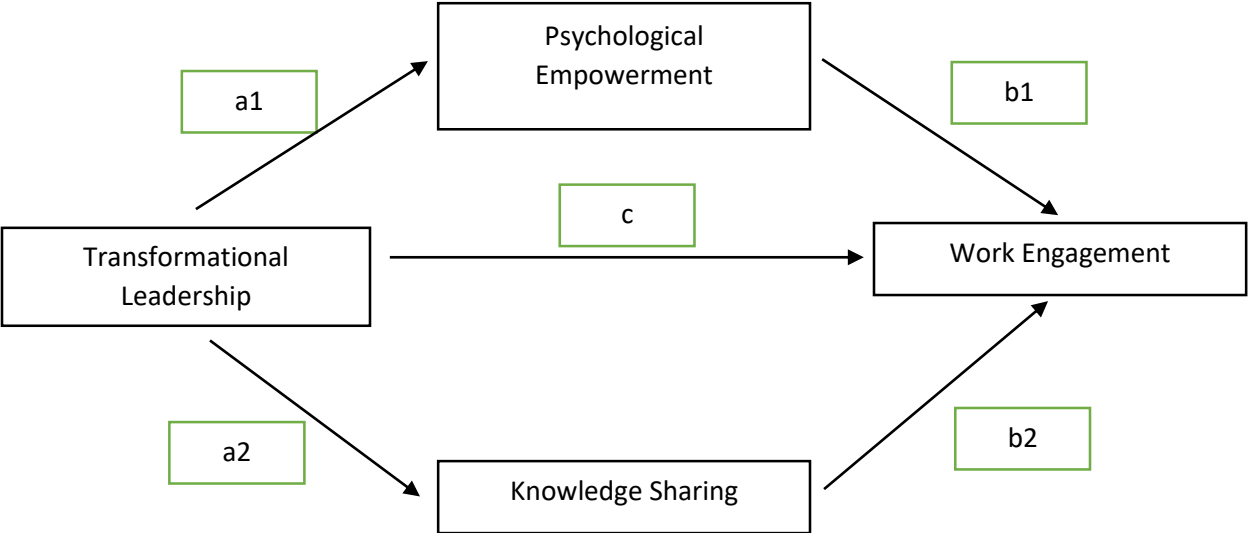


Figure 1: Research Framework

CHAPTER: 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Participants and data collection:

In order to collect information from the participants in this research project, a survey approach based on questionnaires was employed. The participants were full-time faculty members working at Jashore Science and Technology University, a reputed public university in Bangladesh. All the survey respondents were faculty members, including lecturers, professors, associate professors, and assistant professors. While conducting the study, there were 258 faculty members working in 26 departments under 7 faculties. From the target population of 258 faculty members, 150 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling method. The link to a Google Form comprising the questionnaire was included in an invitation letter issued to participants for data collection. 101 faculty members returned the completed surveys before the deadline, reflecting a 67.33 percent response rate.

According to the demographic data shown in table 1, 80.2% (n=81) of the 101 academics are males, while the remaining 19.8% (n=20) are females. Of 101 faculty members, 36.6% (n=37) are aged between 21 to 30 years, most of the respondents, that is 52.5% (n=53), are aged between 31 to 40 years, and the rest, 10.9% (n=11) are aged between 41-50 years. Regarding educational credentials, 4% (n=4) of the respondents had bachelor or equivalent degree, 80.2% (n=81) had master's or equivalent degree, 1% (n=1) had MPhil degree, 11.9% (n=12) had PhD degree, and 3% (n=3) received post doctorate degree. Majority of the respondents (70.3%, n=71) were Assistant Professors, 7.9% (n=8) were Associate Professors, 18.8% (n=19) were Lecturers and the remaining 3% (n=3) were professors. In relation to teaching experience, 61.4% (n=62) had working experience of 0 to 5 years, 23.8% (n=24) had experience of 6 to 10 years, 11.9% (n=12) had work

experience between 11-15 years, and the remaining 3% (n=3) had a teaching experience of 16 to 20 years.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic information

| Measure | Items | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 20 | 19.8% |
| | Female | 81 | 80.2% |
| Age | 21-30 | 37 | 36.6% |
| | 31-40 | 53 | 52.5% |
| | 41-50 | 11 | 10.9% |
| Education | Bachelor/ Equivalent | 4 | 4.0% |
| | Master's/ Equivalent | 81 | 80.2% |
| | MPhil | 1 | 1.0% |
| | PhD | 12 | 11.9% |
| | Post Doctorate | 3 | 3.0% |
| Position | Assistant Professor | 71 | 70.3% |
| | Associate Professor | 8 | 7.9% |
| | Lecturer | 19 | 18.8% |
| | Professor | 3 | 3.0% |
| Teaching experience | 0-5 | 62 | 61.4% |
| | 6-10 | 24 | 23.8% |
| | 11-15 | 12 | 11.9% |
| | 16-20 | 3 | 3.0% |

3.2 Measures

The variables were tested using items designed and utilized in prior research to assure the study's validity and reliability.

Transformational Leadership: This research used “The Global Transformational Leadership Scale” (GTL; substantiated by Carless et al., 2000) to measure faculty members' perceptions of transformational leadership. The GTL assessment consists of seven statements defining different transformational leadership traits, such as "My immediate supervisor treats faculty members as individuals, supports and encourages their development." For each statement, the scale ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

Psychological Empowerment: Based on a 12-item scale, participants' perspectives on psychological empowerment were examined (Spreitzer, 1995). There are four components in this scale: competence (such as, "I have the skills necessary for my job "), self-determination (such as, "I can decide on my own how to complete my work "), meaning (for example, "The work I do is meaningful to me. "), impact (for instance, "I have a significant impact on what happens in my department"). On a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), respondents were requested to assess how they felt about themselves.

Work engagement: The 9-item “Utrecht Work Engagement Scale” was used to measure the variable work engagement (UWES; Schaufeli et al.,2006). Each of the three aspects of work engagement is represented by three statements on this scale. Examples are “I am enthusiastic about my job” (dedication); “At work, I feel bursting with energy” (vigor); and “I get carried away when I am working” (absorption). Responses varied from 1 (never) to 5 (always) on a 5-point scale.

Knowledge sharing: A 5-item scale derived from Akhavan et al. (2013) was used to assess knowledge sharing. Sample items are, “I share my working knowledge and experience with my colleagues”, and “I share new ideas pertaining to my job with my colleagues”. A Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was utilized to assess the statements.

Control variables: The demographic features of faculty members, such as age, gender, educational attainment, and job experience, will be employed as control variables in this study since they may influence the research results. Age, gender, educational attainment, and length of employment have all been shown to be substantially linked with psychological empowerment and work engagement in previous research (Seibert et al., 2011; Quiones et al., 2013). According to Green et al. (1996), demographics of leaders may impact the views of their followers, which can lead to different work behaviors, while the demographic variety of their followers is linked to knowledge sharing (Wang & Noe, 2010).

3.3 Analysis and Results

Table 2 shows descriptive data for each variable. The Q-Q plots in the appendix indicates approximate normality of the variables. The normality of the variables is further confirmed by the skewness and Kurtosis values in Table 2. The Scatter plots among the variables indicate that the variables contain an approximate linear relationship. Table 3 presents the correlations for all the constructs.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

| Variable | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD | Variance | Skewness | Kurtosis | | |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Standard Error | Standard Error |
| Gender | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.20 | .400 | .162 | 1.524 | .247 | .330 | .490 |
| Age | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.73 | .643 | .414 | .322 | .247 | -.672 | .490 |
| Education | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2.24 | .843 | .611 | 2.001 | .247 | 3.625 | .490 |
| Job Position | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1.94 | .623 | .400 | .822 | .247 | 2.419 | .490 |
| Teaching Experience | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1.56 | .818 | .632 | 1.233 | .247 | .576 | .490 |
| TL | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.7218 | .96292 | .927 | -.718 | .247 | -.043 | .490 |
| PE | 2.33 | 2.67 | 5.00 | 4.0026 | .47971 | .230 | -.486 | .247 | .309 | .490 |
| KS | 2.80 | 2.20 | 5.00 | 4.0442 | .59657 | .356 | -.575 | .247 | .240 | .490 |
| WE | 2.56 | 2.33 | 4.89 | 4.0281 | .53336 | .284 | -.954 | .247 | .839 | .490 |

Note(s): N= 101, TL= transformational leadership; PE= psychological empowerment; KS= knowledge sharing; WE= work engagement

Table 3. Correlations among research variables

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. TL | | | | | | | | |
| 2. PE | .395** | | | | | | | |
| 3. KS | .283* | .242** | | | | | | |
| 4. WE | .358** | .317* | .454** | | | | | |
| 5. Gender | .224* | .236* | .184* | .084* | | | | |
| 6. Age | -.208* | -.038 | -.079* | -.274* | -.239* | | | |
| 7. Education | -.150 | -.042 | -.087 | -.110 | -.156 | .556** | | |
| 8. Job Position | -.194 | -.221* | -.004 | -.191 | -.159 | .506** | .569** | |
| 9. Teaching Experience | -.222* | -.036 | -.075 | -.166 | -.087 | .676** | .533** | .599** |

Note(s): N= 101, **p < 0.01 and *p < 0.05 (two-tailed). TL= transformational leadership; PE= psychological empowerment; KS= knowledge sharing; WE= work engagement

Analysis of this study's hypotheses was carried out using an analytical method proposed by Hayes (2013). Hayes' PROCESS macro was used to assess the indirect effects. This approach offers a better choice for conducting a bootstrapping process in assessing the mediation model, which compensates for the limitations of the Sobel test. The level of education, age, gender, and years of work experience of respondents were included as covariates throughout the analyses of this research. According to Table 2, there were no significant correlations between control variables and study variables.

A non-parametric estimation strategy (bootstrapping) utilizing SPSS PROCESS Macro (Model 4) was employed to estimate the mediation effects, following Hayes' (2013) suggestions for evaluating multi-mediator models. As the statistics indicates in Table 3, teachers' job engagement is positively correlated with transformational leadership with, $b = .1096$, $t = 2.0622$, $p < .05$. A

significant positive correlation exists between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment with, $b = .2073$, $t = 4.3643$, $p < .001$. On contrary, there also exists a positive correlation between psychological empowerment and faculty members' work engagement, but the relation is not significant as $b = .1776$, $t = 1.7372$, $p > .05$. However, psychological empowerment does not act as a mediator between transformational leadership and teachers' work engagement. As given in table 3, the indirect effect based 5000 bootstrap samples shows an insignificant indirect positive relation between transformative leadership and teachers' job engagement mediated by psychological empowerment ($a_{11} * b_{11} = .0368$, Bootstrap $CI_{95} = -.0001$ and $.0904$).

As the statistics indicates in Table 3, transformational leadership has a significant positive correlation with knowledge sharing with, $b = .2118$, $t = 3.4237$, $p < .001$. Similarly, there exists a substantial positive relationship between knowledge sharing and academic' job engagement, $b = .3506$, $t = 4.4646$, $p < .001$. However, the association between transformative leadership and teachers' work engagement is partially mediated by knowledge sharing. As shown in table 3, the indirect effect based 5000 bootstrap samples shows a significant indirect positive relation between transformative leadership and faculty engagement mediated by knowledge sharing ($a_{21} * b_{21} = .0742$, Bootstrap $CI_{95} = .0265$ and $.1351$). Moreover, Knowledge sharing as a mediator account for 33.66% of the total effect.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis

| Variable/ Effect | <i>b</i> | SE | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| TL->PE (a ₁₁) | .2073 | .0475 | 4.3643 | .0000 | 2.8588 | 3.5859 |
| TL->KS (a ₂₁) | .2118 | .0618 | 3.4237 | .0009 | .0890 | .3345 |
| PE->WE (b ₁₁) | .1776 | .1023 | 1.7372 | .0855 | -.0253 | .380 |
| KS->WE (b ₂₁) | .3506 | .0785 | 4.4646 | .0000 | .1947 | .5064 |
| TL->WE (c') | .1096 | .0532 | 2.0622 | .0419 | .0041 | .2152 |
| Effects | | | | | | |
| Direct | .1096 | .0532 | 2.0622 | .0419 | .0041 | .2152 |
| Indirect _{PE} | .0368 | .0234 | | | -.0001 | .0904 |
| Indirect _{KS} | .0742 | .0283 | | | .0265 | .1351 |
| Total | .2207 | .0530 | 4.1626 | .0001 | .1155 | .3259 |

Note(s): N= 101, *p < 0.05 and **p < 0.01 (two-tailed). TL= transformational leadership; PE= psychological empowerment; KS= knowledge sharing; WE= work engagement

CHAPTER: 4

Discussion and Implications

4.1 Discussion:

This paper aimed to determine whether and to what degree transformational behavior of leaders has associated with faculty members' work engagement and whether psychological empowerment and knowledge sharing mediate this relationship. This research found that transformative leadership style is a substantial antecedent of work engagement. Other researchers have observed similar results (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018; Hayati et al., 2014). The findings similarly revealed that transformative leadership has a strong connection to increased psychological empowerment. This conclusion is backed up by prior studies (Avolio, 1999; Luthans & Avolio 2004). Psychological empowerment and transformational leadership have been shown to be positively linked in studies by Allameh et al. (2012) and Ozaralli (2002). In contrast to previous studies by Allameh et al. (2012), Afsar et al. (2014), and Dust et al. (2014), this investigation found no substantial correlation between faculty members' professional engagement and psychological empowerment. In addition, results also showed that empowerment had no mediating effect on the link between transformational leadership and job engagement. This may be due to the nature of the work done by faculty members. Faculty members enjoy a considerable amount of autonomy in designing the course outlines they conduct and have substantial influence on the activities of their own department. That's why, they enjoy considerable amount of empowerment in carrying out their daily responsibilities and do not perceive such empowerment as an element of their professional engagement.

However, the research uncovered a significant association between transformative leadership and faculty knowledge exchange. The results are similar to prior investigations carried out by Behery (2008) and Chen and Barnes (2006). Similarly, there was a high correlation between faculty members' knowledge sharing activity and their level of job engagement. Previous studies also found similar results (Hayase, 2009). Finally, this paper revealed that knowledge sharing partly mediate the association between transformative leadership and job engagement.

4.2 Implications:

Individuals devote a big proportion of their lives at work (Schermuly, 2019), thus improving procedures and outcomes for both people and businesses is essential (Andreassen et al., 2010). This paper offers several theoretical and practical contributions. First, as far as I'm aware, it is the first study to look at the impact of transformative leadership on academics' work engagement in Bangladesh's higher education system. Second, the research discovered that knowledge sharing was a potential technique for leaders to influence the work engagement of the subordinates. There has been little empirical evidence on how knowledge sharing mediates between transformative leadership and engagement, therefore this study is a significant contribution to the field.

This study provides practitioners and scholars, particularly higher education leaders, with a grasp of the significance of faculty engagement, mediators, and its causes. Working with transformational leaders increases the likelihood of academics being enthusiastic, devoted, and immersed in the profession. As the results suggest, academic directors who wish to boost faculty engagement over the long run should implement new initiatives and training courses that enhance transformative leadership (Nielsen & Cleal, 2011). Transformative leadership increases faculty knowledge sharing, according to this study, which enhances and substantiates the link between these two concepts. This offers an idea of the most significant elements influencing knowledge

sharing and a hint as to how higher education institutions might boost knowledge sharing activities. The identification of sharing of knowledge as a mediating factor on the association between transformative leadership and work engagement is the study's most important insight. These results complement Lin's (2007) investigation of knowledge-exchange mechanisms as crucial organizational success drivers. Transformational leadership encourages faculty members to share their knowledge, skills, and experience, which leads to increased work engagement. Faculty members that spend more time connecting with others and communicate often with their coworkers report greater degrees of work satisfaction compared to their peers who do not (Chiu et al., 2006). Therefore, organizations that want to engage their staff should create chances for interaction and communication among colleagues.

The research outcomes are crucial for decision-makers in academic administration and public policy. The results illustrate the value of transformational leadership in academic institutions, particularly regarding knowledge exchange and personnel engagement. Therefore, to foster the development of academics, higher education institutions should emphasize the existence of leaders with transformational traits within their communities. By fostering a climate of mutual respect and trust, this sort of leadership would provide the academics with a clear roadmap and objective. As a result, educational institutions need to develop programmes for transformative leadership, the purpose of which would be to educate leaders on how to creatively inspire and cognitively stimulate their colleagues. Academic directors should also incorporate the issue of transformative leadership while designing the succession plan. Given the relevance of knowledge exchange on job engagement., the leaders of higher education institutions are expected to promote knowledge sharing among their colleagues.

Conclusions, limitations, and suggestions for future research:

Academics' psychological well-being has recently received considerable attention. Almost all studies conducted on teachers reveal a rising trend of absenteeism, desire to leave, and early retirement of teachers, all of which reflect their disengagement. This study intends to explore the effects of transformational leadership on faculty members' job engagement through knowledge sharing and psychological empowerment. Following are the conclusions that can be drawn from this investigation: enhancing faculty work engagement requires the adoption of transformative leadership behaviors; transformational leadership actions help develop a culture of knowledge exchange; a positive knowledge-sharing environment mediates the effects of transformational leadership on faculty work engagement; finally, Bangladeshi universities should design leadership training sessions for academic leaders to enhance the job engagement of subordinates.

However, the study has several weaknesses. This study focused on work engagement based on only transformational leadership while taking psychological empowerment and knowledge sharing as possible mediators. As a result, there may be other variables and mediators influencing faculty engagement, and future studies can focus on those factors. Further, this research focused on the higher education sector, and other studies can explore such associations in other sectors. Furthermore, the results may not apply to other universities since this research focused on a particular university. Future studies might expand the scope of the inquiry to include several universities with comparable cultures and structures.

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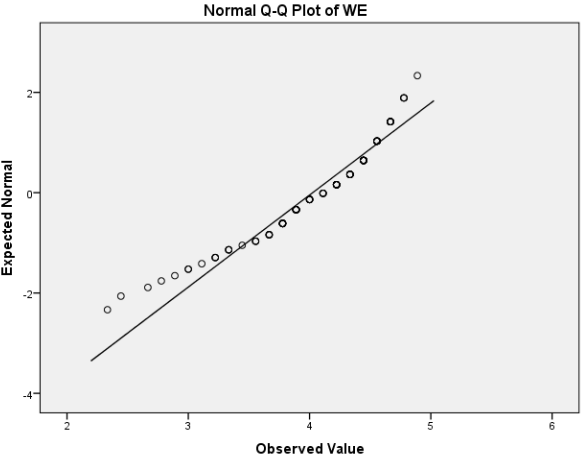
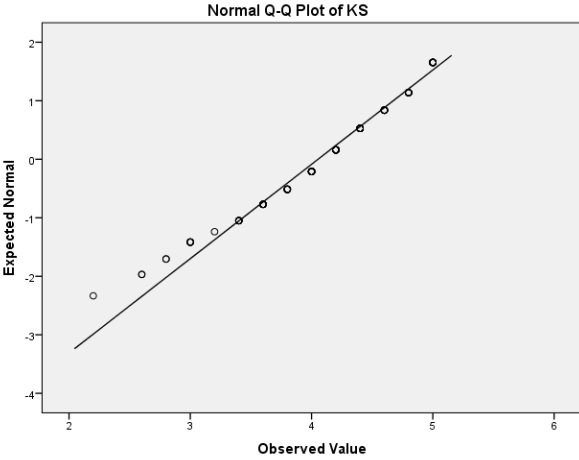
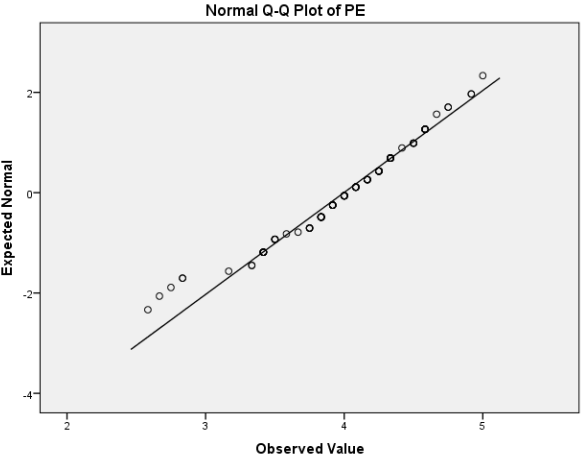
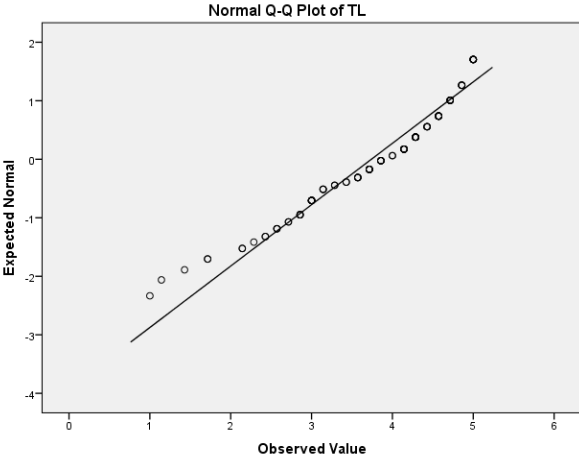
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Q-Q Plots



Appendix 2: Scatterplot between the variables

