



Psychological contract and organizational commitment

The mediating effect of transformational leadership

Transformational
leadership

299

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate, within a non-western context, the impact of the psychological contract, relational psychological contract (RPC) and transactional psychological contract (TPC), on organizational commitment (OC) as mediated by transformational leadership (TL). In addition, the paper also explores contractual status: does the theory fit, whether one is employed on a full or part time basis.

Design/methodology/approach – The empirical part of the article is based on self-administrated questionnaires completed by 433 respondents from across a range of service industries in the UAE.

Findings – The results indicate that both RPC and TPC are positively related to TL. The study did not identify any meaningful relationship between TL and OC. The study also suggests that TL has, at best, only a partial mediating role in relation to the RPC, TPC, and OC. As respondents' contractual status was employed as a control moderator, the paper can also report that part versus full time employment does not influence the outcome regarding the aforementioned relationships.

Research limitations/implications – The findings suggest that practitioners and academics alike should note that the nature of the psychological contract employed will impact commitment and retention. Also, consistency of approach is very important when one is searching for sustainable employee commitment. The principle limitations associated with this research relate to the self reporting nature of the study: it both negates meaningful triangulation and qualitative interrogation of the results. Further, the industry level, services, and investigation precludes inter industry comparison, and the context, the UAE, may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Originality/value – The paper contributes to the literature by being the first to study the mediation effect of TL on the relationship between RPC, TPC, and OC within a non-western context. In addition, it also suggests that there may be some value in considering employee contractual status with regard to psychological contract and commitment.

Keywords Transformational leadership (TL), Relational psychological contract (RPC), Transactional psychological contract (TPC), Organizational commitment (OC), Work status, United Arab Emirates, Leadership

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

One could describe an organization's relationship with an employee as an exchange of sorts; an employee exchanges his/her labor for economic rent and an employer facilitates the transformation of the labor into a value added return. But such exchanges require that the employee be supported, nurtured, and developed in line with organizational aspirations. This outlay of time and capital, from recruitment onwards, ultimately results in a desire to retain trained and committed staff. There are many factors which will impact an employee's decision to remain with an enterprise, and over the years theories and models have emerged that endeavor to capture the nuances at play. However, most, if not all, research into this topic has drawn upon Western experience and cultural norms. The authors have found it extremely difficult to find any evidence, refereed and audited, that examines employee retention from a Middle East (ME) perspective. Also, most extant literature deals with full time contractual staff. But do the same rules and assumptions apply to part time staff?

To establish both the validity of Western approaches within the ME and to further enhance our understanding of the role of the psychological contract and transformational leadership (TL) styles, both Western concepts strongly linked through the literature to employee commitment and retention, the authors initiated exploratory research within the United Arab Emirates. The research intent was, in short, to explore the connectivity between psychological contracts, TL, and employee commitment: commitment, as noted later, being in some ways a metaphor for potential organizational competitiveness. While doing so, the hope was to shed light on their applicability within the ME.

Among the many factors that have been shown to influence employee retention are psychological contract and managerial leadership styles. A psychological contract provides an explanatory framework for understanding employee-organizational linkages (McFarlane Shore and Tetrick, 1994; Middlemiss, 2011; Parzefall and Coyle-Shapiro, 2011). Organizations should pay attention as their "contractual" behaviors and actions go far beyond the printed word. As it is, managerial actions most directly impact an employee's commitment, so it makes sense to consider, along with the psychological contract, the nature of leadership styles being adopted by management. Given that a TL style is much applauded by Western academics and practitioners (Birasnav *et al.*, 2011), as it is most in tune with a desire to tap into the psychological engagement potential, the research reported in this paper has endeavored to investigate the impact of psychological contact (i.e. transactional and relational) on organizational commitment (OC) mediated by the TL.

The structure of the paper is as follows: by way of background we first introduce a brief literature review that deals with the main constructs, namely, the psychological contract, TL, and employee retention. Please note that our intent was to conduct an indicative, non contentious review of the literature. Given our wish to explore the relevance of Western approaches and paradigms, we decided to limit our reported literature to what may be generally regarded as accepted or perceived wisdom. At this point, we introduce a new variable into the mix, one that is receiving increasing attention, namely contractual status (Carr *et al.*, 2010; Spurk and Abele, 2011). Not only are the concepts and approaches described so far Western, they are also embedded in a world of relatively full employment. What of the group of increasing numbers of part time employees? This question informs the research model, conceptual frame work,

and hypotheses. We next explore the methodology followed by the research results and findings. To close, the findings are discussed with regard to their theoretical and contextual implications. The paper contributes to the literature by being the first to study the mediation effect of TL on the relationship between relational psychological contract (RPC), transactional psychological contract (TPC), and OC within a non-Western context. In addition, it also suggests that there may be some value in considering employee contractual status with regard to psychological contract, commitment, and ultimately competitiveness.

Psychological contracts

Psychological contracts may be defined as a set of reciprocal obligations or promises related to employment relationship (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998, p. 680). The primary focus of the psychological contract is the employment relationship between an employer and an employee at the individual level (Guest and Conway, 2002; Ali *et al.*, 2010). It consists of employees' beliefs regarding what employers owe them and in turn what they owe their employers (Lambert *et al.*, 2003).

Two distinct types of psychological contracts, transactional and relational, have been identified (Rousseau, 2001; Raja *et al.*, 2004). Transactional contracts involve specific economic exchanges between employers and employees. These contracts take place within a specified time period and are often narrow in scope and definition (Rousseau, 2001). In addition, they involve limited connectivity between both parties: a trade/exchange (Raja *et al.*, 2004). In TPCs, job requirements and expectations are likely to be clear and specified in advance, thus permitting individuals to assess personal costs and benefits associated with the exchange and calibrate their contributions accordingly: a rational, objective and transparent process.

Relational contracts, on the other hand, are often based on non-economic/socio-emotional exchanges. They are imprecise and do not cover any specified time period. Relational contracts may change over time and come with ill-defined scopes and variable interpretations (Rousseau, 1990; Suazo and Stone-Romero, 2011). They revolve around trust, respect, and loyalty (De Meus *et al.*, 2001). It is important to note that while the promissory beliefs involved in transactional contracts are indeed a part of work in general; they are limited to these exchanges. Relational contracts may include economic exchanges, but they also cover other non-economic promissory aspects of working life. RPCs are likely to be more complex than transactional in terms of both what is expected from employees and what is expected from organizations, based on social exchange and reciprocity in employment relationships.

Organizations expect commitment beyond the simple execution of assigned tasks. In short they require more than transactional contracts can provide. For example, good citizenship duties that cannot be reasonably codified and standardized take one into the realm of the relational contract (Organ, 1988; Bal *et al.*, 2010). Individual employees may expect organizations to "owe" them for their loyalty and commitment to non-job tasks. Such debts may be paid in a number of non-financial ways, such as retention, personal development, flexible working, and advancement (Hulin and Glomb, 1999; Bal *et al.*, 2010; Parzefall and Hakanen, 2010).

The objective of this paper is to investigate the theoretical mechanism by which psychological contracts affect employees' OC. This is best explained by social exchange theory. Social exchange theory suggests that reciprocity is an important

characteristic of social relationships. Individuals who perceive that they are valued and respected are likely to reciprocate with trust, commitment, and emotional engagement in exchange (Blau, 1964; Ali *et al.*, 2010; Bal *et al.*, 2010). Thus, when organizations demonstrate care and support for employees by promising them favorable or satisfying contracts, employees are likely to reciprocate with stronger feelings toward their organizations. On the other hand, when employees perceive that employers are only nominally interested in them, they are likely to respond with lower loyalty, trust, commitment, and fewer contributions to the firm. Social exchange theory, then, suggests that perceptions of psychological contracts will directly affect employees' OC and therefore, by association, impact upon an organization's general performance and competitiveness (Khandelwal, 2009; Passarelli, 2011). Surprisingly, scholars have not given much attention to antecedents or the triggers for the two types of psychological contracts. The next section stresses the relevance of TL as an example of the antecedents that might affect the employees' psychological contracts.

Transformational leadership

Scholars and practitioners have focused on emotional and symbolic aspects of a leadership (Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001; Fitzgerald and Schutte, 2010) which are built around a leader's behavior and are called neocharismatic theories (House and Aditya, 1997) or transformational theories (Bass and Avolio, 1997). The theory of TL was initially developed by Burns (1978) and further refined by Bass (1985). Transformational leaders increase their followers' self-efficacy, thereby increasing the employees' belief in their capability to organize and execute the actions required to attain a given goal (Shamir *et al.*, 1993; Fitzgerald and Schutte, 2010).

By definition, transformational leaders motivate followers to achieve performance beyond expectations by transforming followers' attitudes, beliefs, and values as opposed to simply gaining compliance (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999, 2006). Bass (1985) identified a number of sub-dimensions of TL including charisma (which was later renamed idealized influence), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. TL pursues organizational goals by focusing on followers' motivations (Burns, 1978), reinforcing the competencies and skills that keep the organization competitive. Such leaders also show personalized attention to ensuring an alignment and commitment to the organizational vision/strategy (Scandura and Schriesheim, 1994; Ismail *et al.*, 2011). TL theorists (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Bass and Avolio, 1994) argue that TL is more proactive and ultimately more effective than transactional in terms of motivating employees to achieve higher performance. This pattern of results has been supported in a number of additional studies (Lowe *et al.*, 1996; Dumdum *et al.*, 2002; Ismail *et al.*, 2011).

More specifically, the connection between TL and organizational outcomes is fairly well established (DeGroot *et al.*, 2000; Singh and Krishnan, 2008). TL has been positively related to OC (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990; Ismail *et al.*, 2011). It has been argued that transformational leaders are more capable of sensing their environment and then forming and disseminating strategic goals that capture the attention and interest of others. Also, subordinates and peers of transformational leaders have been shown to exhibit higher levels of commitment to their organizational mission, a willingness to work harder, greater levels of trust in their leaders, and higher levels of cohesion. In short, commitment leads to enhanced performance and greater competitiveness (Avolio, 1999; Beugr *et al.*, 2006). Further, transformational leaders

motivate employees to do more than what is implied in the employment contract and focus on the employees' higher-order needs (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Birasnav *et al.*, 2011). So this brings us to what enhanced employee commitment actually means and what does it bring?

Organizational commitment

OC is the emotional attachment to the organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979) and has often been defined in terms of an individual's likelihood of leaving the organization. It can be measured in terms of such metrics as absenteeism, staff turnover, sickness absence, developmental engagement, and attitudinal surveys (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Khandelwal, 2009; Ismail *et al.*, 2011). OC is not a new fad. Indeed its longevity permits its evolution to be classified as follows:

- (1) *The early era*: also known as commitment as side-bets is based on Becker's (1960) conceptualization that defines commitment through side-bets theory. According to this theory, employees are committed because they have hidden or somewhat hidden personal/organizational investments (side-bets) that incentivize them to remain in post. The term side-bets refers to the accumulation of investments, soft and hard, valued by the individual that would be lost if he/she were to leave the organization (Becker, 1960).
- (2) *The middle era*: also known as the psychological attachment was advanced by Porter *et al.* (1974). Here the focus of commitment shifts from tangible side-bets to the psychological attachment that an individual holds towards an organization: "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday *et al.*, 1979, p. 226). This exchange theory, which sees most social interaction as exchange, became established as the main explanation for the process of commitment (Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Commitment, in turn, was conceptualized as a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979).
- (3) *The third era*: known for the adoption of the multi-dimensional approach, was advanced by Meyer and Allen (1984). They developed three dimensions to measure organization is characterized by positive feelings of identification with attachment to, and involvement in, the organization. The continuance dimension was designed to assess the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs associated with leaving. Normative commitment was defined as a feeling of obligation to continue employment.

In many ways, the research reported in this paper utilizes input from all three eras. However, as each of the three eras are essentially dealing with what may be termed as psychological attachment (Khandelwal, 2009; Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Middlemiss, 2011), the researchers have focused on measuring the attitudinal notion of commitment.

To summarize we have a psychological contract between the employee and employer that in turn may be influenced by the leadership style that is adopted, both in unison and independently. It may impact upon the degree of commitment to the organization and ultimately its competitiveness, the assumption being that committed employees "give" more and remain loyal longer.

Contractual status

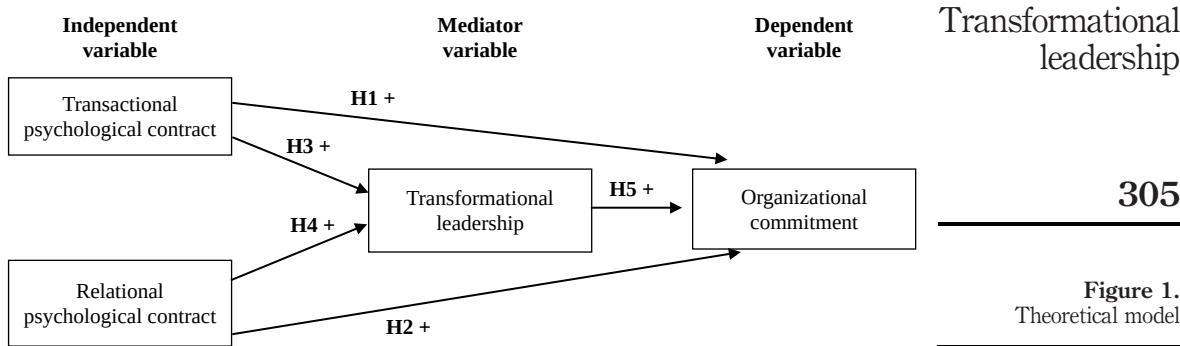
Increasingly, for at least two decades, in a highly competitive, turbulent, and globalized world, organizations have had to respond rapidly to often conflicting environmental pressures (Thorsteinson, 2003), the net result being a need for a more flexible, non permanent, labor resource (Moorman and Harland, 2002) achieved, for example, through the services of temporary workers (Chambel and Castanheira, 2006) or by utilizing part-time workers (Kidder, 1998; Chang *et al.*, 2011). However, the majority of commitment style surveys have been conducted within traditional (i.e. full-time, permanent, or regular) employee settings (Kristof-Brown and Stevens, 2001; Cable and DeRue, 2002; Moen *et al.*, 2011). Over a decade ago, researchers were already recognizing the need to address new forms of contractual engagement: contingent work (McLean Parks *et al.*, 1998; Spurk and Abele, 2011) plus, admitting to the difficulty in such studies, a plethora of contractual forms with transient employment patterns (Kidder, 1998; Moen *et al.*, 2011). Contingent work can be defined as any job in which an individual does not have a permanent full time contract (McLean Parks *et al.*, 1998). Four characteristics distinguish contingent employment: job insecurity, irregular work time, lack of access to benefits, and lack of attachment to the company (Chambel and Castanheira, 2006). The growth in contingent employment or workforce externalization is largely driven by multiple employer objectives including: labor cost reduction, increased scheduling flexibility, and diminished responsibility for employees (McLean Parks *et al.*, 1998; Spurk and Abele, 2011). The literature on organizational behavior has pointed to the need to understand the effects of these temporary contracts on the attitudes and behaviors of individuals at work. In accordance with social exchange theory and reciprocity norms, it can be posited that these temporary workers, because they receive fewer inducements (are not considered for promotion and cannot expect long-term employment), will make a lower contribution to the organization and ultimately impact upon its competitiveness (Marchese and Ryan, 2001; Chambel and Castanheira, 2006). However, research results have been inconclusive and inconsistent. Pearce (1993) did not find any significant differences in the cooperativeness or affective commitment of contingent and regular engineers and technicians in an aerospace firm. Kidder (1998) observes that temporary nurses perform fewer organizational citizenship behaviors, but when they perceive they have a more relational contract, they are more likely to perform these behaviors.

In short, we still lack insights as to how the nature of the contract of employment may impact OC. The next section, dealing as it does with the researchers' underpinning conceptual framework, attempts to make sense of the variables at play and concludes by detailing the research intent and hypotheses.

Theoretical model and research intent

The theoretical model that underpins the research reported in this paper consists of four constructs: two independent variables, TPC, and RPC; a mediating variable, TL; and a dependent variable, OC. Basically, based on both the literature review, past research and managerial experience, the authors propose that the degree to which one's OC is shown is influenced by the transactional and RPCs, mediated by the impact of the TL style adopted (Figure 1).

OC may be seen as the criterion variable and the psychological contract as a predictor. In general, a given variable is said to function as mediator when it can be



associated with the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Here, the core hypothesis is that the impact of the psychological contact on OC will be mediated by TL. In addition, from the literature review and the author’s collective experience, we posit that the contractual work status of the respondents will act as a moderator variable.

Based on the above literature review, the following research proposition has been developed:

P1. Contingent Workers relate negatively to OC. However, permanent workers will positively relate to OC.

In addition, the following relationships are hypothesized:

- H1.* There will be a positive relationship between the perceptions of TPC and OC.
- H2.* There will be a positive relationship between the perceptions of RPC and OC.
- H3.* There will be a positive relationship between the perceptions of TPC and TL.
- H4.* There will be a positive relationship between the perceptions of RPC and TL.
- H5.* TL will be positively related to OC.

Research methods

The sample was drawn from across a number of service organizations operating within the UAE, for example, real estate, transportation, communication, tourism, banking, and legal services. The questionnaire employed was self administered and distributed, having gained prior corporate approval, via inter-organizational mailing systems. Potential respondents were given the researchers’ contact details for any questions regarding, procedure, understanding, and confidentiality. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, the need for which being previously emphasized by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003). Potential respondents were assured that participation was entirely voluntary. Completed questionnaires were returned via a sealed envelope to a secured drop-off box for collection by the researchers only.

Given the exploratory, potentially ground breaking nature of this research study, it was decided that the main priority would be, in a culture not known for its appreciation of and engagement with social science research (Behery, 2011), to ensure a statistically meaningful return was obtained. To this end, the more open, outward looking and engaged service sector was selected as a context. Further, as we were looking to gain a general impression we deliberately grouped all responses as one. As it turned out, responses were reasonably evenly spread across the service categories.

In total, 600 questionnaires were dispatched and 456 returned; a response rate, on the very high side for such surveys, of 76 percent was achieved. Post editing and coding, 433 were found to be usable. To ensure statistical validity the required sample size was determined using Cohen's power analysis procedure (Cohen and Cohen, 1983). The power of a statistical test is the probability that the test will detect an effect in a sample when, in fact, a true effect exists in the population (Aiken and West, 1991). Using a target power of 0.80 and an effect size of 0.10 with an α of 0.05 (Cohen and Cohen, 1983), the estimated sample size for the study was 432 subjects. Therefore, the sample of 433 was satisfactory.

Efforts were made to minimize bias as per McGrath's (1986) recommendations. The researchers did not provide any information on the specific objectives of the research to the respondents. Some of the items in the measurement scales were negatively ordered; the scales were randomly structured within the questionnaire; all the measurement scales were selected from previously established scales. The reliability of the scales was assessed by computing Cronbach's α coefficients, and all of the scales were well within the acceptable range of 0.7-0.8 (Nunnally, 1978).

OC was measured using a modified version of the OC Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday *et al.*, 1979) where the 15-item scale employs a seven-point semantic response format, adapted from Grossbart *et al.* (1986). The end descriptors are varied "good/bad," "unfavorable/favorable," and "negative/positive." This measure has been employed in research for over 20 years and has been found to correlate strongly with leadership and mentoring variables (Barling *et al.*, 1996; Scandura, 1997).

TL was measured using the 20-item scale of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass and Avolio, 1997; Avolio, 1999), which employs five subscales: idealized influence attributed, behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Respondents were asked to judge how frequently their direct manager engaged in the specific behaviors measured by MLQ-5X. Each behavior was rated on a seven-point semantic differential scale (Grossbart *et al.*, 1986). The end descriptors were varied "good/bad," "unfavorable/favorable," and "negative/positive." Prior research indicates that the MLQ subscales of TL may be conceptually but not empirically distinct (Bycio *et al.*, 1995). We followed prior research (Yammarino *et al.*, 1997) and therefore considered TL as a 20-item scale computed by averaging participants' responses to the 20 items comprising the five subscales.

The transactional/RPC was measured by Millward and Hopkins's (1998) psychological contract scale; this 17-item scale was used to describe the types of psychological contract related activities answered, once again, on a seven-point semantic differential scale (Grossbart *et al.*, 1986). The end descriptors being, once again, "good/bad," "unfavorable/favorable," and "negative/positive."

Statistical analysis and results

The statistical analysis and results have been organized within what we have termed “models”. There are two; the first relating to transactional and the second RPC predictors.

Model 1: the mediating effect of TL using TPC as a predictor

The possible mediating effect of TL (the mediator) on the relationship between TPC (the predictor) and OC (the criterion) was assessed. In order for the mediating effect of the transactional leadership to be significant, the four relationships identified as Path A, Path B, Path C, and Path A^{dash}, as shown in Figure 2, must be satisfied.

The first step in the process of determining mediation is to demonstrate a significant relationship between the predictor and criterion identified as Path A. The result presented in Table I provides the R and R^2 values: R is 0.023 representing simple correlation between the TPC and the OC; R^2 is 0.001, suggesting that TPCs account for 0.1 percent of the variation in organization commitment. In other words, if we try to explain why some employees are committed more than others, we can consider the variation in the TPC. There might be many factors that can explain this variation, but our model, which includes only TPC, can explain approximately 0.1 percent, meaning that 99.9 percent of the variation in organization commitment cannot be explained by TPC. Subsequently, Table II exhibits beta weights of 0.023 ($t = 18.52$, $p > 0.05$),

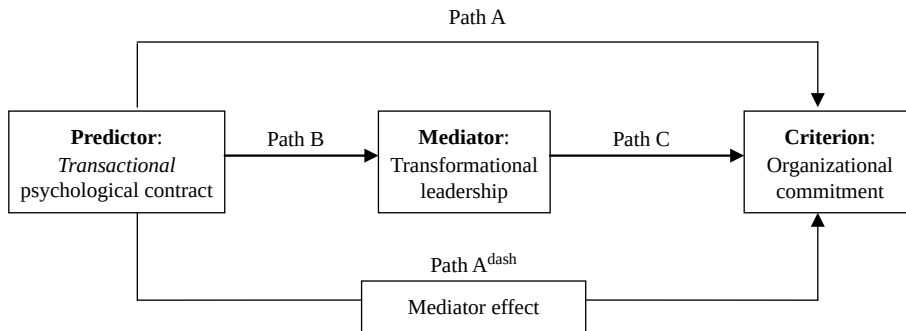


Figure 2.
The mediating effect of
TL – model 1

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of the estimate
1	0.023 ^a	0.001	– 0.001	0.53430

Note: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_TraForm

Table I.
Model summary

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
		B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.264	0.176		18.523	0.000
	T_TraForm	– 0.025	0.053	– 0.023	– 0.469	0.639

Note: Dependent variable: T_Commi

Table II.
Coefficients

indicating a non-significant relationship between the TPC and the OC. Furthermore, the ANOVA summary shows the *F*-ratio is 0.220, which is not significant ($p > 0.05$) as shown in Table III. This statistical result suggests that the TPC does not predict OC. Therefore, *H1* is not supported.

Moving on, the next step was to demonstrate a relationship between the predictor (TPC) and the proposed mediator, the TL (Path B). Table IV provides the *R* and *R*² values: *R* is 0.279 and represents a simple correlation between the TPC and the TL. The *R*² is 0.78, telling us that TPC can account for 78 percent of the variation in TL. Also, Table V's beta value of 0.279 ($t = 6.031$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a significant relationship between the TPC and the TL. Further, the ANOVA summary, Table VI, shows the *F*-ratio is 36.37, which is significant ($p < 0.05$). This result suggests that the TPC predicts TL. Therefore, *H3* is supported.

Table III.
Analysis of variance
summary table

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	0.063	1	0.063	0.220	0.639 ^a
	Residual	123.039	431	0.285		
	Total	123.102	432			

Notes: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_TraForm; ^bdependent variable: T_Commi;

Table IV.
Model summary

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.279 ^a	0.078	0.076	0.36100

Note: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_TraPsc

Table V.
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
		B	SE			
1	(Constant)	2.587	0.119		21.731	0.000
	T_TraPsc	0.216	0.036	0.279	6.031	0.000

Note: Dependent variable: T_TraForm

Table VI.
ANOVA summary

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	4.741	1	4.741	36.377	0.000 ^a
	Residual	56.167	431	0.130		
	Total	60.908	432			

Notes: Dependent variable: T_TraForm; ^apredictors: (constant), T_TraPsc

Moving on to the relationship between the mediator, TL, and the criterion, OC (Path C), as shown in Table VII, R has a value of 0.054 which represents a simple correlation between the TL and the OC. The value of R^2 is 0.003, telling us that TL can account for 0.3 percent of the variation in OC. This means that 99.7 percent of the variation in the OC cannot be explained by TL. Subsequently, Table VIII, a beta value of -0.054 ($t = -1.118$, $p > 0.05$), indicates a negative non-significant relationship between the TL and the OC. Further, the ANOVA summary in Table IX, shows an F -ratio of 1.251, which is non-significant ($p > 0.05$). This result tells us that the TL does not predict OC. Therefore, $H5$ is not supported.

The fourth and the final step requires the researchers to illustrate that when the effect of the presumed mediator is controlled for, the subsequent effect of the predictor (TPC) on the criterion (OC) is minimized, as compared to Path A, or becomes insignificant (Path A^{dash}) (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Grimmer and Oddy, 2007). This was assessed using hierarchal multiple regression in which TL was added to the equation after the TPC to determine if it added significantly to the amount of variance accounted for in OC. As Table X shows, the TPC did not add significantly to the equation (F change = 1.691, $p > 0.05$). Further, the R^2 change was only 0.004, indicating that the amount of additional variation accounted for was minimal. Therefore, it can be concluded that the TL does not have a mediating effect on the relationship between the TPC and the OC.

Model 2: the mediating effect of TL using RPC as a predictor

The possible mediating effect of TL (the mediator) on the relationship between RPC (the predictor) and OC (the criterion) was assessed. In order for the mediating effect

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of the estimate
1	0.054 ^a	0.003	0.001	0.53366

Note: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_TraForm

Table VII.
Model summary

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
		B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.598	0.227		15.854	0.000
	T_TraForm	-0.076	0.068	-0.054	-1.118	0.264

Note: Dependent variable: T_Commi

Table VIII.
Coefficients

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.356	1	0.356	1.251	0.264 ^a
	Residual	122.745	431	0.285		
	Total	123.102	432			

Notes: Dependent variable: T_Commi; ^apredictors: (constant), T_TraForm

Table IX.
ANOVA summary

of the transactional leadership to be significant, the four relationships identified as Path A, Path B, Path C, and Path A^{dash}, as shown in Figure 3, must be satisfied:

The process of determining mediation is to demonstrate a significant relationship between the predictor and criterion identified as Path A. As shown in Table XI, the *R* has a value of 0.036 representing a simple correlation between RPC and OC. The *R*² is 0.001, suggesting that the RPC can account for 0.1 percent of the variation in organization commitment. In other words, if we try to explain why some employees are more committed than others, we can take into consideration the RPC. There might be many factors that can explain this variation, but our model, which includes only RPC, can explain approximately 0.1 percent. This means that 99.9 percent of the variation in organization commitment cannot be explained by the RPC. Subsequent results show a beta weight of 0.036 (*t* = 0.74, *p* > 0.05), as shown in Table XII, indicating a non-significant relationship between the RPC and the OC. Furthermore, the ANOVA summary shows an *F*-ratio of 0.548, which is not significant (*p* > 0.05), as shown in Table XIII. This result tells us that the RPC does not predict organization commitment. Therefore, *H2* is not supported.

Next, the aim was to demonstrate a relationship between the predictor (RPC) and the proposed mediator (TL) (Path B). As shown in Table XIV, the *R* value of 0.162 represents a simple correlation between the RPC and the TL. The value of *R*² is 0.026:

Model	<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i> change	Change statistics		Sig. <i>F</i> change
			df1	df2	
1	0.001 ^a	0.220	1	431	0.639
2	0.004 ^b	1.691	1	430	0.194

Table X.
Model summary

Notes: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_TraPsc; ^bpredictors: (constant), T_TraPsc, T_TraForm

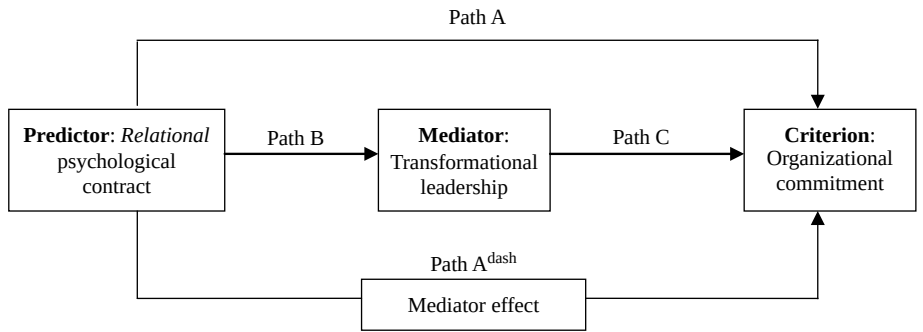


Figure 3.
The mediating effect of
TL – model 2

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	SE of the estimate
1	0.036 ^a	0.001	− 0.001	0.53409

Table XI.
Model summary

Note: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_RePsc

the RPC can account for 2.6 percent of the variation in TL. Also, as shown in Table XV, the beta value of 0.162 ($t = 3.400$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a significant relationship between the RPC and the TL. Further, the ANOVA summary, F -ratio 11.558, suggests significance ($p < 0.05$), as shown in Table XVI. Overall, this set of results suggests that the RPC predicts TL. Therefore, $H4$ is supported.

Transformational
leadership

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	SE			
1	(Constant)	3.237	0.149		21.757	0.000
	T_RePsc	0.032	0.043	0.036	0.740	0.459

Note: Dependent variable: T_Commi

Table XII.
Coefficients

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.156	1	0.156	0.548	0.459 ^a
	Residual	122.945	431	0.285		
	Total	123.102	432			

Notes: Dependent variable: T_Commi; ^apredictors: (constant), T_RePsc

Table XIII.
ANOVA

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of the estimate
1	0.162 ^a	0.026	0.024	0.37098

Note: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_RePsc

Table XIV.
Model summary

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	SE			
1	(Constant)	2.952	0.103		28.559	0.000
	T_RePsc	0.102	0.030	0.162	3.400	0.001

Note: Dependent variable: T_TraForm

Table XV.
Coefficients

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.591	1	1.591	11.558	0.001 ^a
	Residual	59.317	431	0.138		
	Total	60.908	432			

Notes: Dependent variable: T_TraForm; ^apredictors: (constant), T_RePsc

Table XVI.
ANOVA

Finally, we must show that when the effect of the presumed mediator is controlled for, the effect of the predictor (RPC) on the criterion (OC) is minimized as compared to Path A, or has become insignificant (Path A^{dash}) (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Grimmer and Oddy, 2007). This was assessed using hierarchal multiple regression in which TL was added to the equation, after RPC, to determine if it added significantly to the amount of variance accounted for in OC. As Table XVII shows, the RPC did not add significantly to the equation (F change = 0.872, $p > 0.05$). Further, the R^2 change was only 0.002, indicating that the amount of additional variation accounted for was a minimal 0.2 percent. Therefore, it can be concluded that the TL does not have a mediating effect in the relationship between the RPC and the OC.

Discussion, theoretical and managerial implications, and contributions

As previously discussed, the psychological contract provides a plausible means of better understanding behaviors and attitudes towards an employee’s work commitment, in particular for this study, across variable employment contracts (Van Dyne and Ang, 1998; Torka *et al.*, 2010). Previous studies (Millward and Hopkins, 1998; Bunderson, 2001; Raja *et al.*, 2004; Rousseau, 1990; Coyle-Shapiro and Morrow, 2006) have argued that employee’s perceptions of the nature and stability of the contractual relationships will influence loyalty. In contrast, this paper reports on research that has found an insignificant relationship between OC and either relational or TPCs (Bal *et al.*, 2010). This is not necessarily unique (Millward and Hopkins, 1998), but of interest. This study was conducted within a non-Western context and, as such, as far as the authors are aware, provides one of the first insights into the psychological contract and employee commitment conducted in the ME. However, the research was conducted just as we entered a global economic recession and this may have impacted upon the outcome.

Previous research, as noted in the literature review, has produced a range of findings regarding employment status, full or part time, and levels of employee commitment. As shown, in Table XVIII, almost 31 percent of the respondents held part-time contracts. Our analysis suggests that regardless of contract status the impact

Table XVII.
Model summary

R^2 change	F change	Change statistics		Sig. F change
		df1	df2	
0.003	1.251	1	431	0.264
0.002	0.872	1	430	0.351

Notes: ^aPredictors: (constant), T_TraForm; ^bpredictors: (constant), T_TraForm, T_RePsc

Table XVIII.
Work status

	Frequency	%
<i>Valid</i>		
Contingent worker	132	30.5
Permanent worker	301	69.5
Total	433	100.0

of the psychological contract on the organization commitment is the same. This result is consistent with previous, more Western-orientated, studies, for example, Still (1983), McGinnis and Morrow (1990), Krausz *et al.* (2000) and Khandelwal (2009).

The positive relationship between TL and OC is generally well established in the literature (DeGroot *et al.*, 2000; Rangriz and Mehrabi, 2010). Many studies have investigated charismatic and TL and OC and have found reasonably consistently reported positive associations (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Bono and Judge, 2003; Dubinsky *et al.*, 1995; Dumdum *et al.*, 2002; Walumbwa and Lawler, 2003; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2005). However, this study suggests at best only a weak relationship between TL behavior and OC. This finding finds some support, for example, O'Reilly and Roberts (1978), Hampton *et al.* (1986) and Savery (1991). Once again, the recessionary pressures at play during the research period may have had an impact, but so too may the research context (Rangriz and Mehrabi, 2010).

Combining both model 1 and 2 modes of analysis, shown above, we can say that arguably the most interesting finding concerned the null mediating effect of TL on the relationship between the transactional and RPC and OC. Moreover, this research demonstrates that both types of psychological contract do not predict the level of employees' commitment to their organizations (Table XIX).

The theoretical model and empirical findings of the current study provide several interesting insights. Although, the results were inconsistent with our predictions, the present study is one of the first studies investigating the impact of psychological contract on the OC mediated by TL. We see several benefits to retaining a more differentiated leadership model for future research on TL, as discussed by Peccei *et al.* (2011). As many previous independent studies (Lindebaum and Cartwright, 2010; Gill *et al.*, 2011) point out, one of the drawbacks within leadership research has been an oversimplification of the factors underlying the conceptualization and measurement of leadership. Simple one-factor modeling cannot adequately represent the range of factors and variables at play (Middlemis, 2011). More importantly, this research may be seen as an indication that in non-Western socio-economic systems, some of the underpinning logic associated with leadership, psychological contracts, and employee commitment could be seen as being less relevant and therefore the approaches, models, and rationale questionable. The researchers deliberately framed their hypothesis's/research intent in a pro-Western positivistic manner. Although impacted upon by recessionary pressure, there is clear evidence that Western assumptions and paradigms may not directly apply within a Middle Eastern context, which in turn, for those organizations within the region who have "bought into" the positivistic linkages, may impact upon their projected competitive standing.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
<i>Valid</i>				
Senior management	41	9.5	9.5	9.5
Middle management	113	26.1	26.1	35.6
Supervisory level	57	13.2	13.2	48.7
Employee	222	51.3	51.3	100.0
Total	433	100.0	100.0	

Table XIX.
Job level

Future research intent

The study was limited to the UAE and due to its previously noted exploratory intent the aim was to maximize returns. It focused on service industries and was conducted as major recessionary pressures impacted upon the region. The researchers are currently looking to further enhance the sampling frame by securing access to specific employee/managerial levels; adopting a regional rather than country specific approach; increasing responses within sector specific industries; and lastly, in general, up scaling from an exploratory study to one in which contextual, cultural, and theoretical (see below) outcomes will be more generalizable and robust.

In general, previous psychological contract research has examined how sets of mutual obligations and responsibilities provide incentives for employees to remain within the organization. For example, Turnley and Feldman (1999, 2000) and Suazo and Stone-Romero (2011) suggest that highly involving work, valued coworkers, and good relationships with supervisors can help mitigate the negative effects of psychological contract violations. However, especially post recession, commitment may be impacted upon by contract replicability (Ng and Feldman, 2008). That is the extent to which an individual perceives the likelihood that their current psychological contract would be bettered elsewhere. When employees perceive that they cannot replicate their current psychological contracts, commitment to current employers is enhanced (Rousseau *et al.*, 2006; Parzefall and Coyle-Shapiro, 2011; Bal *et al.*, 2010). We intent to combine a more robust investigation of the employee commitment issue within the ME with a contract replicability agenda.

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