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# Do or Die: A Challenging State for Strategic Leaders in Globalization

#### **ABSTRACT**

In this world where everything has become globalized, organizations are facing problems towards sustaining market shares, maintaining profits, higher Return on Assets and Investments. These challenges force the leaders to become strategic leaders and to adopt useful strategies to gain competitive advantages compared to other firms in the market. Moreover, the current emerging issue in globalization is creating and adopting innovative culture in organizations for stable market shares. This study analyzes the influence of Strategic Leadership trait on Organizational Performance having a moderating role Innovativeness. Telecom sector of Pakistan is focused and a sample size of 300 employees of Mobilink and Zong Franchises in Lahore is taken. Results confirm the influence of Strategic Leadership on Organizational Performance. Also, this endorses that innovativeness has a strong influence on the relationship.

**Keywords:** Strategic Leadership, Innovativeness, Organizational Performance

# **■** Background

n current times, organizations are feeling the necessity of rapid changes at organizational level in order to seek competitive advantage. However, without being an effective leadership and having adaptive qualities of employee, these rapid changes cannot be catered for Stakeholders (being leadership as the vital

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part on management-side) are keep concentrating on improving processes, gaining customer loyalty and improving organization's profits (Chatterjee & Kulakli, 2015).

Organizations are also realizing the economic trends and change in economic environment rapidly because productions are becoming high and processes are become shorter and shorter. This makes the firms to accommodate the appropriate leadership style, strategy and innovative culture in them as the survival is fiercer. In this regards, Ye, Junye, and Yan (2011) have also arisen the question and placed in front of researchers and entrepreneurs that "as the globe has developed into knowledge-based economy, how they will face these challenges and how they can develop in a changeable situation forever?" Organizations. Entrepreneurs, CEOs and Managers must do continuous progress and keep struggling for building innovative environment as it would be a good recipe for the current times. Now, innovation has become the significant dimension and an unavoidable measurable indicator for organizational development. In this respect, an American Company 3M is practicing inventing the convenient stickers and these have become the symbol of innovation. In the variable that influence the achievement of organizations is the leadership styles (Ye et al., 2011). These styles are one of the large environmental factors which affect the workforce morale and satisfaction and encourage the subordinates' achievements to create innovative environment.

In these times, the leadership having innovative behavior is far much necessary as compared to any time before because each organization is sensing the globalization impact, natural environment change, knowledge revolutions and technological change etc. The innovation strategies bring out added values in organization and explore/develop the workforce base. If an organization wants to improve its reputation and to gain competitive advantage, it is imperative that it shall follow the innovation strategies (Slimane, 2015). In addition, current economic scenario is also enforcing to adopt product and process innovations as it has also become an unavoidable factor in influencing the strategic planning of the organization.

Most of the empirical researches on Leadership topic have focused the questionnaire constructed by Bass and Avolio (1994) using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and there are positive and negative aspects shown with respect to Transformational and Transactional traits of leaders as well as in different contexts. However, still Transactional have been given less attention as compared to Transformational.

It is very interesting aspect the Bass and his colleagues proposed that transactional leadership is the main prerequisite for Transformational leadership to become more effective and to develop relationship among employees of a business firm. Therefore, if the leadership found deficiencies of transactional qualities, there are probabilities of ambiguities and glitches in Transformational also. The reward is an alternative way of given to employee encouragement on achieving desired performance at desired level. Passive Management by Exception (PBE) seems as intervention when a problem arises whereas Active Management by Exception (AME) is termed as looking for mistakes of the workforce. In addition, contingent rewards are the most studied aspect in ML questionnaire(Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008).

### Innovativeness

Different definitions of innovativeness have been found in the literature. García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012)Defined innovation as "a new idea, method, or device. The act of creating a new product of process". However, these acts are of two dimensions which is 1- Inventions itself and 2-the efforts which are necessary to become those inventions or ideas into a complete formBelliveau, Griffin, and Somermeyer (2002). Another researcher, Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, and Herron (1996) defined innovation as "a successful implementation of creative ideas within the organization".

On the basis of above definitions, when a tool is created, invented, constructed and built, it is actually innovation and it may be deduced that we become the tool or device if we do not invent any tool or device. Therefore, creativity, invention, construction are also a part and fundamental factors of innovation through which competitive advantages can be gained and survival of organization remains(Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

The significance of innovativeness is prominently growing and a survey reveals the almost 90% of the firms give the innovativeness as their first priority because, even though efficiency and effective are also, it is becoming the major factor in wealth creation and sustainable growth of business(Slimane, 2015). Also, its significance is highlighted from different theories e.g. Marketing Theory in which firms ponder the innovation' speed for obtaining and capturing huge market gains(García-Morales et al., 2012). They also mentioned that Strategic theories, being first mover and adopter of innovativeness, firms create isolation mechanisms because other competitors do not aware of the innovation knowledge.

## Leadership

The leader where he bring social change also bring change in organization and creates an innovative environment among subordinates because she inspires and give motivation through words, action, and behavior. In order to bring out innovative culture, she uses one or both of the Institutionalized and Individualized qualities(Slimane, 2015). Usually, institutionalized dimension of leadership belongs to rank and role in the organization. Resultantly, as the organization's structure grows, the rank or role automatically vests to the leader. Leader brings innovative realities into existence by employing best of her efforts. Therefore, it may supposed that a leader without innovation capabilities cannot bring positive change in the business.

Among others, the most common leadership theories are Transactional and Transformational. Although these approaches are classified into two but there are some researchers (Lussier & Achua, 2009) who explicitly deal with Tasks and People. Lussier and Achua (2009) focus that whether a leader should deal with and pursue with the tasks or the people who actually realize them. Irrespective of different theories, approaches and different aspects, we have focused on most popular two traits: Transactional and Transformational. Both of these concepts were first presented by Burn in 1978 (Burns, 1978). Later, Bass and his coworkers enhanced the concepts and presented Transactional and Transformational theories in 1985 (Bass, 1985).

## ■ Transactional Style of Leadership

As different tasks are performed by the employees in a firm so leader with Transactional style focus on task related exchange of actions and rewards between leader and follower. She promotes employee's individual interests for performing and completing certain tasks up to the mark, satisfaction level and contractual obligations(Bass & Avolio, 1994). This trait is composed of three components: first is Contingent Rewards, second is Management by Exception-Active and third is Management by Exception-Passive.

The coordination among followers in order to fulfill and achieve assigned or targeted tasks is the main focus of Transactional leader (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013). Resultantly, they may be termed as Task-oriented or managerial-leadership. Contingent Rewards component influence the leader having setting up rewards for followers in response to completing their targeted work. In response to in placing rewards, followers put their extra efforts in achieving the goal(Birasnav, 2014). The leader actively supervises the work performance, in order to avoid delays, of subordinates under MBE-Active component. However, she intervenes when any mistake is occurred by the subordinates during performing activities. This behavior comes under MBE-Passive component of Transactional Leadership. Followers gain a good understanding about their leader considering the above three components in business operations.

Motivation of workforce for achieving expected and defined results, transactional leader provides the role to the subordinates and build exchange interrelation. They find their executives as transactional leader after realizing and perceiving leader's motivation which make positive effect on relationship between leader and followers(Ye et al., 2011).

# ■ Transformational Style of Leadership

A leader, who has transformational traits, is considered as peopleoriented leader. Leader with Transformational Style keeps align the subordinates' needs and high-level organizational goals, tasks and activities. They give importance to individual identities by providing subordinates with the supportive atmosphere and learning opportunities. Transformational Leadership theories are based on psychological aspects because emotions, values and individual differences are emphasized(Bass, 1995). In followers, perceptions, believes, emotions, and values are created and enhanced by the leader giving the visions as well as satisfaction of followers' desires and needs(Lussier & Achua, 2009).

The different components of Transformational Leadership include: (a) Idealized Influence, (b) Individualized Consideration, (c) Intellectual Stimulation and (d) Inspirational Motivation. However, in the beginning of the theory, Burns (1978) and Bass (1995) introduced Charismatic Role Modeling instead of Idealized Influence. Transformational Leaders motivate their followers by giving them inspiration, learning atmosphere, opportunity for knowledge sharing and promote intelligence towards achieving market gains, share, stability and better performance (García-Morales et al., 2012). On the other hand, not only leaders raise their followers' motivation and morality but also it is done conversely.

Jung and Sosik (2002) revealed that the leader with transformational style empower the subordinates and followers. Moreover, they provide the opportunity and build the innovative climate in the organizations(Jung & Sosik, 2002). Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009) conducted the study and provided the evidence from software development industry of Turkey that this type of leaders have developed and enhanced the creative performance of followers in order to gain competitive advantage. In the point of view ofGumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009), transformational leader plays immense role towards creative efforts of employees and overall enhancement of innovative practices at organizational level.

# ■ Strategic Leadership

Although both types of Leadership styles are different but Bass (1985) recognized that the leaders might use one for different perspective and situation or both styles depending on the environment. Therefore, it is the strategy of the leader that which leadership traits would be best fit and in what circumstances e.g. Task complexity, organizational type, size etc. because a range of outcomes are under consideration of a leader. This actually creates a strategic leadership. It would be the strategy of the leader to focus on people-oriented (in which emotions and values are focused) or task-oriented (rational processes are focused) approach(Yukl, 1999)for the achievement of a goal.

Strategic leadership is a combination of Transactional and Transformational traits and behavior and may be termed as "Incorporated" or "Situational" leader. This incorporation approach is also termed as "full range leadership theory" (Bass & Riggio, 2006). As both traits are different in several factors, they relate the leadership and social theories.

## Organizational Performance

The ultimate purpose of Innovativeness and Strategic Leadership is to enhance quantity as well as quality of performance. In this respect, businesses keep moving on achieving customer support, creating and maintaining customer base and improving sales. Organizations can increase their strategic capabilities, competitive advantage, and financial outcomes by following the Leadership strategy and maintaining innovation culture. Overall, the behaviors and attitudes of the workforce, innovation, leadership and organizational strategies help gaining long-term and stable performance(García-Morales et al., 2012). Strategic leader sets the goals and make policies to achieve future performance of the organization. These organizational variables are difficult to copy and imitate and give rise to firm values. Along with developing technological, production, and other resources, the building of innovative environment among employees make an organization unique and inimitable in the market. The measures of organizational performance include Return on Assets, Return on Investment, Return of Equity, Economic and Financial stability, huge market shares, increase in production and sales.

## Innovativeness and Organizational Performance

Despite of many studies on the relationship between Innovativeness and Organizational Performance, firms mostly are unable or cannot deploy innovative culture (García-Morales et al., 2012). However, the studies conducted by (Clercq, Thongpapanl, & Dimov, 2011; Samad, 2012; Yıldız, Baştürk, & Boz, 2014) show that there is a positive relation between Organizational Innovativeness and Performance. Also, Lööf and Heshmati (2002) showed a positive link, in an empirical study, using econometric methods. It has also been proved from the previous literature that

successfully deploying the innovation strategy lead to better firm's position, better market response, competitive advantage and market stability (Calantone, Cavusgil, & Zhao, 2002).

On the other hand, business get production drawbacks and difficulties and gain negative effects on Performance (Lööf & Heshmati, 2002). Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009)showed that considering innovativeness as a competitive weapon, a leader with Transformational traits achieves creation of valuable products and services within the business firm.

#### **Conceptual Framework**

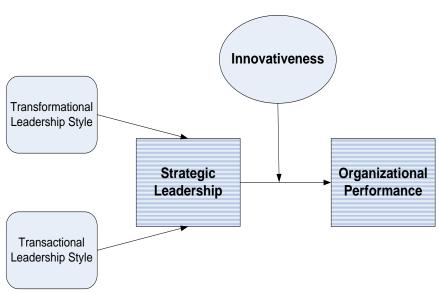


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

## **Hypotheses**

After reviewing the literature, we have framed the following hypotheses:

**H**<sub>1</sub>: Strategic Leadership has a positive impact on Organizational Performance.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Innovativeness plays moderating role between Strategic Leadership Styles and Organizational Performance.

## Methodology

For this study, quantitative approach of research has been adopted and it is based on correlational nature. We have chosen Telecom sector of Pakistan for this study. A survey is conducted and questionnaire is distributed among 200 employees working in Mobilink and Zong franchises. However, the survey is conducted only in Lahore city. Data is collected using Simple random sampling technique. Total 187 employees have participated in this survey which is a significant ratio of respondents. Questionnaire items are adopted from previous studies and the sources are mentioned in Table 1.

#### Results

In order to consider the acceptable reliability value, we have followed the guidelines of (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013) i.e. 0.6. On the basis of acceptable value for reliability, it may be concluded that all the items have maximum reliability: Transactional Leadership = 0.826, Transformational Leadership = 0.840, Innovation = 0.731, Strategic Leadership = 0.881 and reliability of Organizational Performance is 0.794 as shown in Table 1. Items of the questionnaire have been rated on 5-point Likert scale from 5=Strongly Disagree to 1=Strongly Agree.

Table-1: Scale Reliability (N=187)

| Variable          | Cronbach's<br>Alpha | No of items | Source                  |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Transactional     | .826                | 4           | (Yıldız et al., 2014)   |
| Leadership        |                     |             |                         |
| Transformational  | .840                | 7           | (Yıldız et al., 2014)   |
| Leadership        |                     |             |                         |
| Innovation        | .731                | 6           | (Yıldız et al., 2014)   |
| Organizational    | .794                | 5           | (García-Morales et al., |
| Performance       |                     |             | 2012)                   |
| Strategic         | .881                | 11          | (Yıldız et al., 2014)   |
| Leadership Styles |                     |             |                         |
| Total             | .906                | 22          |                         |

Reliability of scales provided us the way to go for further analyses which are Correlation and Regression Analyses so that relationship between Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance and the impact of Innovativeness on this relationship can be analyzed.

Table-2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation (N=187)

|                                   | Mean  | S.D   | Tran.  | Trnfr. | Innov. | OP     | SLS |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| Transactional<br>Leadership       | 14.31 | 3.169 |        |        |        |        |     |
| Transformational<br>Leadership    | 25.41 | 5.238 | .610** |        |        |        |     |
| Innovation                        | 21.80 | 4.000 | .469** | .623** |        |        |     |
| Organizational<br>Performance     | 18.24 | 3.785 | .299** | .452** | .608** |        |     |
| Strategic<br>Leadership<br>Styles | 39.72 | 7.598 | .838** | .944** | .625** | .436** |     |

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the Regression analyses which have been depicted in Table 3, it can be deduced that Strategic Leadership value= 6.592 is statistically significant at 0.000 so the first hypothesis becomes true that Strategic Leadership has a positive impact on Organizational Performance. Moreover, Innovativeness value=7.004 is also significant statistically which reveal that second hypothesis is also true and hence innovativeness has a moderating role between the relationship of Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance.

Table–3: Moderated Regression among SLS, Innovation and OP (N= 187)

| Model      | R2   | Δ R2 | β    | t     | Sig. |
|------------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| SL         | .436 | .190 | .436 | 6.592 | .000 |
| Innovation | .601 | .170 | .945 | 7.004 | .000 |

**Dependent Variable:** Organizational Performance

### ■ Conclusions

After thorough analysis, we have found from the above results that although Strategic Leadership Style has an impact on Organizational Performance but innovativeness culture in the organization increases the impact and hence and strong role. Along with qualities of Transformational and Transactional leadership in a leader, creation of innovative environment also plays significant role in the welfare, development and performance of the firm as well as industry. Literature also point out that Transformational trait of a leadership is related to innovativeness to some extent therefore, Transactional Leadership might have less influence in Strategic Style of leadership.

#### ■ Limitations and Future Directions

This study also has some limitations and future directions. Data has only been collected from Mobilink and Zong Franchises in Lahore City. This method does not cover the whole population of telecom sector therefore results may vary if in-depth study will be carried out representing the whole population and cities. Only traits of Transformational and Transactional leadership have been covered and treated as Strategic Leadership. In future, other traits of leadership should also be considered and become a part of Strategic Leadership and see the effects. Moreover, the effects of other variables that can moderate or mediate the relationship of Strategic Leadership and Organizational Performance should also be studied.

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