

THE LEADERSHIP STYLES AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: *The stress is the main issue that affects individuals' life from each dimension like their social and professional lives. The occupational stress is the employee anxieties and worries about his/her work which is basically result of various dynamic issues like working environment, working load and poor relationships with colleagues and immediate supervisor/leadership. In this connection, leadership is vital concept whose main role is to inspire their followers/employees towards the attainment of certain well-defines objectives. For this purpose, the leaders use the different styles to motivate their employees by considering their needs and resolving their worries at workplaces in which the leadership styles (transformational and transactional) is most comprehensive package for employees' motivation and performance leading to stressless situation at workplace. Therefore, to examine the relationships among the leadership styles, occupational stress and emotional intelligence, the data was collected through questionnaire from the teachers hailing from higher education institutions of KP, Pakistan and analyzed through different tools of the statisticsto obtain answers to research questions. The researcher will offer recommendations to policy makers of higher education institutions about the research variables.*

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Occupational Stress, Emotional Intelligence & HEIs

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Introduction

The leadership is important phenomenon in social and organizational contexts as societies needs the leaders to address the social problems while organizations need the leaders to address the problems related with organizational survival and development. The same is the case in context of higher education wherein the role of leadership is more than important for success of higher education institutions (HEIs)(Knight &Trowler, 2001). The leadership is the main phenomenon that is responsible solely for uppermost standing and highest ranking of theHEIs wherein these institutions are confronting various issues due to technological advancement and the emergence of higher institutions at the private sector (Martin, Prosser & Ramsden, 2005).Leadership is not only responsible for institutions smooth functioning but also responsible for inspiration of workforces by considering their opinions, needs and anxieties (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling, 2008). The leadership is responsible for providing the conducive environment to the workforces wherein they have no hesitancy and burden while performing their occupational tasks (Bass & Bass, 2008).The leadership is the merger of various traits and attributes that combines together to make effective leadership in which transactional and transformational leadership styles were widely endorsed as best styles.

The leadership styles gained momentum during the past decades with respect to the various employees and institutional dynamic outcomes in which transformational and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership is more popular keeping in view their active attributes about the employees' motivation to perform efficiently and to attain effectively the assigned tasks (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transactional leadership is popular by providing the different packages of rewards for the employees' inspirations to achieve the assign tasks. However, effectiveness of particular styles is always based upon context and situation where these leaders are

functioning (Sharma & Singh, 2017). The main responsibility of the leaders is to maintain the trust and confidence of the employees on their leaders which in turn helps in increasing their potentials and self-esteem and reducing their apprehensions and worries about professional affiliations (Odumeru, James & Ogbonna, 2013). The employees, apprehensions lead to higher high level of the job burnout and emotional strain overwhelmed at occupational stress. The occupational stress is critical matter for institutions in managing the employees and leading factor for employees in managing the uneasiness at workplaces.

Consequently, it is the prime responsibility of leadership to consider needs and apprehensions of the employees to get the desired outcomes. The employees are likely to cater undesirable situations through intellectual capabilities (Lyons & Schneider, 2009). leading to higher level of emotional intelligence and for this purpose, emotional intelligence has been used widely as mediator in connecting the leadership and occupational stress. The leadership is also critical in managing employees' abilities leading to psychological strength and confidence overwhelmed at emotional intelligence wherein the leaders try to nurture employees' behavior as per leaders' values and institutional standards (Oshagbemi& Grill, 2003). The emotional intelligence, in this regard, denotes intellectual capabilities of the employees at the workplaces in managing workplace apprehensions and undesirable eventualities that are critical for leadership and institutions in attaining the desired standards (Perren & Burgoyne, 2001). The institutions need the effective leadership in managing the institutional affairs while the leadership needs the efficient employees in achieving the institutional long-term objectives (Chiniara&Bentein, 2018). The employees' intelligence is important for higher education institutions in managing the unfavorable situations which is the consequence of the nepotism and favoritism in the institutions (Yvonne & Shelley, 2004).

Problem Statement

This study aims to survey the relationships between the leadership styles and occupational stress in the higher education institutions context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This study also aims to explore the facilitating role of emotional intelligence with the aim to explore the extent to which the mediator affects the connection between styles of leadership (transactional & transformational) and occupational stress of the faculty members working in southern region HEIs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan which is research gap as well as the foremost theme of current study since limited research is available about the relationships among the variables under study in higher educational context.

Objectives & Hypotheses

- ✓ The study is an effort to examine relationship (association) among leadership styles, occupational stress, and emotional intelligence in higher educational context (H₁).
- ✓ The study aims to examine mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting transformational leadership styles and occupational stress (H₂).
- ✓ The study aims to examine mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting transactional leadership styles and occupational stress (H₃).

Literature Review

The universities (higher education institutions) are different from the other human service organizations due to its functions, importance, standing and roles in the socio-economic and socio-academic development. The universities have inclusive chain of command under the dynamic leadership of vice chancellor and head of different department and section who are the functionaries and responsible for the smooth functioning of the institutions (Haider & Sultan, 2008). On the other hand, the faculties and workforces on administrative positions are also responsible for smooth functioning of the institutional affairs. In this regard, the teachers are basic unit in

university hierarchy who are not only performing the teaching and learning responsibilities but also performing the role as administrators in different units of universities (Akhter & Sharif, 2012). In this connection, leadership role is critical in shaping the teachers' behavior by motivating them towards realizing institutional standards and success in all respects. The role of leadership (head of departments) is critical in determining teacher attitude towards involving in teaching and administrative tasks by developing their capabilities and sense of responsibility to manage the assigned tasks effectively.

In this connection, the universities have been considered as vital sector in contributing to the various sector by providing intellectuals to different sectors on economies (Bakar & Mahmood, 2013). These intellectuals are outcome of effective role of teachers and ultimate responsibility of leadership (Bryman & Lilley, 2009). The teachers as the leaders are responsible in nurturing the students' behavior and developing their capabilities to face the challenges in their academic and professional lives (Graham & Antony, 2017). Therefore, role of teachers is as important as the role of leadership in the universities as the ranking and success of the universities are dependent upon the effective role of leadership supported by the efficient role of the teachers. The leadership through different styles motivate teachers to perform their role actively while the teachers motivate their students to attain their desired outcomes. In this regard, two styles are popular in motivating teacher and employees wherein transactional and transformational styles are more popular and utmost effective (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The transformational leaders inspire the teachers and workforces through effective attributes like inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation to perform the assigned responsibilities effectively by inducing the sense of responsibility (Rukmani, Ramesh & Krishnan, 2010).

The transformational leaders inspire the teachers and employees through idealized

influence and individualized consideration to perform their duties more efficiently leading to higher achievement levels (Sharma & Singh, 2017). The transformational leadership are widely recognized as the most effective leadership styles due to its effective attributes as equated to the transactional leadership style. The leaders through transactional style inspire their teachers and workforces over diverse attributes wherein the most popular are rewards and punishments. The leader offers the diverse nature of rewards to their employees when the tasks are achieved within the desired standards and offers punishments when the desired standards are not met (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasub, 2006). The transactional leaders are popular by following rules and regulations by motivating the workforces to follow the guidelines strictly and to perform their duties enthusiastically (Dai, Chen & Wu, 2013). These leaders also inspire the employees through management by exception active and passive wherein the leaders show their influence based upon situation. The transactional leadership is also effective in determining workforces' attitude and behavior toward the institutional tasks (Silva & Mendis, 2017). Both leadership styles are critical in determining the institutional success and defining the workforces' role by considering their needs and apprehensions.

The workforces' apprehension at workplace is the critical phenomenon that needs additional focus from the leadership as these apprehensions are the results of certain anxieties related to workplace and leading to the occupational stress (Gill, Flaschner & Shachar, 2006). The occupational stress is the leading issue that determines employees' behavior in undesirable manners that affects the employees' motivation and performance. The stressed employees are likely to have lower performance and lower outcomes as compared to the satisfied employees (Lyons & Schneider, 2009). In this drive, prime role of leadership is to eliminate the workforces worried related with their jobs by inspiring them to show

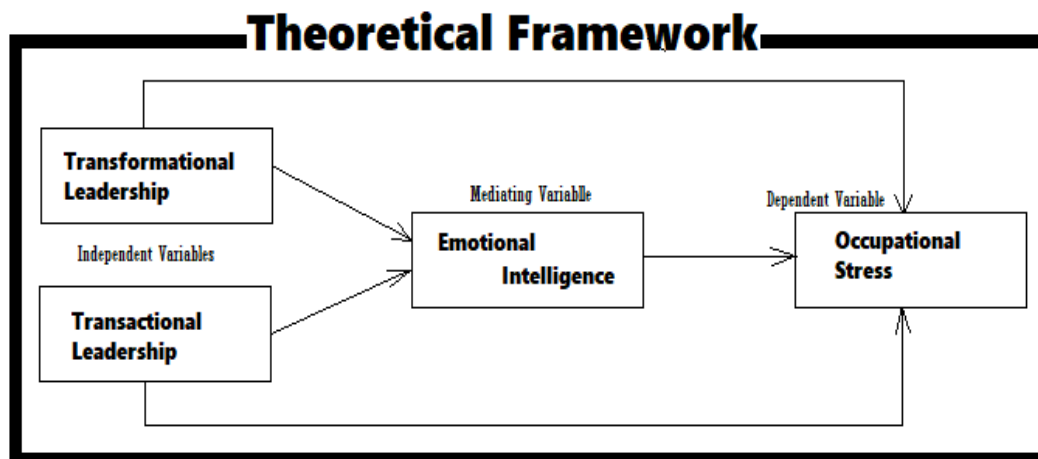
higher performance toward attainment of institutional objectives. The preceding studies show negative impact of occupational stress on employees' job satisfaction and job performance (Harms, Credé, Tynan, Leon & Jeung, 2017). However, the employees may cater the undesirable situation through their emotional intelligence at workplaces. The emotional intelligence represents the intellectual capabilities of the employees to adjust themselves in recent times of uncertainties due to economic and technological changes. The emotionally intelligent employees are likely to have strong will towards institutional vision, readiness towards institutional mission and dedication towards the attainment of the institutional objective more carefully and effectively (Uzair, Ahmed, Abid & Adeel, 2020).

The leadership has significant influence on the employees' attitude and tries to inspire them to show encouraging behavior and intelligence towards the attainment of institutional long-term objectives. The leadership has greater influence of the job behavior of the employees and tries to offer conducive environment where the employees may act and perform in order to achieve the prolonged standing of institutions (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018). The leadership in higher education is direly needed to comprehend the situation by making the employees emotionally balanced and intelligent so that they might be able to attain desired standards more effectively (Kaya, Aydin & Ongun, 2016). Transformational leadership has significant influence on the employees' behavior and inspire employees by considering their needs and encourage them to perform intelligently. Transactional leaders try to inspire employees by offering the different rewards packages to perform effectively and to attain assigned effectively and intelligently. The leadership styles, occupational stress, and emotional intelligence are critical issues/factors that are responsible in influencing the institutional long-term success. Thus, the study aims to survey leadership style role in determining

occupational stress of the faculty members working in HEIs of (KP), Pakistan. The study aims to examine arbitrating role of emotional intelligence in determining

relations amid leadership (transformational & transactional) and occupational stress of the teachers.

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework



Research Methods

The research methods denote the methods and procedures for conducting the research study through support of different tools and supported techniques. These helps in easing researchers in finding out the best solution for the research questions based upon certain assumptions. Consequently, the researcher offered different tools and techniques that are imperative for conducting the research study in order to reach the conclusion of the research study accurately and reliably.

Research Philosophy & Approach

The philosophy is the main phenomenon and considered as the heart of research that pivots around the main theme of research. The philosophy is the attitude supported by the particular theory that acts as guidelines to examine behavior of the particular individual/groups (Joseph, 2005). This study is based upon existing realities with aim to explore further existing realities in a native environment to chase some objectives by applying the statistical procedures, thus, the positivism is the research philosophy adopted in this research study. Similarly, the approach is the main prerequisite of research studies that denotes researcher approach

towards population of the study. Different approached are available in social research with certain advantages and disadvantages, however, survey approach is widely recommended as the best tool to approach the respondents of the study (Robert & Dennis & Saccuzzo, 2005).

Population & Sample

The social research is always based on exploring some realities in existing environment by examining the views of the respondents from population (Boyd, Westfall & Stasch, 1977). Without the population, the researcher will not be able to examine the realities and to find the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The population of this study comprises the teaching faculty from different universities of KP with population of 790 from which sample (265) was drawn by using statistical procedures (Yamani, 1967). Thus, 265 questionnaires were distributed and 232 were recollected. In social research, different sampling techniques are available based upon the requirements of the research studies however, in this research the simple random technique was used which provide the equal representation to the entire population.

Table 1 Formula (Sample-Size)

Formula Used	E	N (790)	Sample Size
$n = N/1 + Ne^2$	0.05	$n = 790 / (1+790 (0.0025)) = n = 265.54$	265.54

Data Collection & Analysis Methods

In research, without the required data, the decision cannot be undertaken. The collection of data is imperative part of the research studies to conduct the study more systematically and thus two types of data collection are mostly used where one is the primary data and “second is secondary data” (Goode &Hatt, 1952). The secondary data provides the information about the research issues as “conducted by different researchers in different contexts” as available on the different online databases (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Primary data was collected through questionnaire that has been adapted from the different existing studies and was analyzed through statistical procedure to conduct the study carefully and to find out answer of the “research questions” systematically. Consequently, without the data analysis, researcher may not be able to extract desired information about the “relationships among the research variables”.

Questionnaire Design

The design and measurement of questionnaire that will be used for primary data collection is an important phase of the systematic research studies. The researcher offered the approach of questionnaire for “collecting the primary data from” population of study through the sample. The questionnaire will be adopted from previous studies by bringing some desired changes as per requirement and context of study. For this drive, questionnaire for research variables have been adapted from existing studies like leadership styles (Bass &Avalio, 2004), occupational stress (Clark, Michel, Early &Baltes, 2014), and emotional intelligence (Li, Saklofske, Yan, Bowden & Fung, 2012). The questionnaire was measured through the validity and reliability tools to ensure its applicability and internal consistencies.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

S.No	Research Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha
1	Transformation Leadership Style	08	.723
2	Transactional Leadership Style	08	.814
3	Emotional Intelligence	08	.833
4	Occupational Stress	08	.791
5	Questionnaire	32	.882

Data Analysis & Discussions

The results of the study that are mainly related with answering of research questions in the form of compact hypotheses extracted from theoretical framework about the relationships of the research variables have

been presented in the data analysis section. This is the main section from which the conclusion has been drawn. It offers the information about the empirical data obtained through statistical procedures.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational Leadership	232	1.83	6.13	3.6979	.89789
Transactional Leadership	232	1.92	7.00	4.7395	1.31497
Emotional Intelligence	232	2.15	6.49	4.5008	.96122
Occupational Stress	232	2.65	7.03	4.8970	1.06445
Valid N (listwise)	232				

The descriptive results are important in offering the data about research variables in terms of standard deviation, mean, response rate about different statements in measuring the variables that are critical in determining the describing nature of variables

(transformational leadership, transactional leadership, emotional intelligence and occupational stress). The descriptive table in this regard it self-explanatory which provide sufficient information in describing the research variables of the study.

H₁: Correlation among Research Variables (Association)

Table 4 Correlation Analysis

		Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	Emotional Intelligence
Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N			
Transactional Leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.371**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	232		
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	0.405**	0.397**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	232	232	
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	-0.508**	.613**	-0.435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	232	232	232

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The first hypothesis (H₁) was extracted from theoretical framework to examine the association among research variables (transactional leadership, transformational leadership, occupational stress and emotional intelligence). The correlation results show the significance of association of predicting variables with criterion variable. Results show that transformational leadership has significant and negative association occupational stress (R = -0.508 & P = .000), negative and significant association was evident between emotional intelligence and occupational stress (R = -0.435 & P = .000), however, the positive and significant association was found between transactional leadership and occupational stress (R = 0.613 & P = .000). Similarly, positive and

significant association was found between transformational and transactional leadership styles (R = 0.371 & P = .000), transformational leadership and emotional intelligence (R = 0.405 & P = .000) and the transactional leadership and emotional intelligence (R = -0.508 & P = .000). From the results, the H₁ is accepted. The results are in line with the results of existing research studies (Gill, Flaschner&Shachar, 2006; Munir, Nielsen & Carneiro, 2010; Erskine & Georgiou, 2017; Abbasi, 2018). Thus, the study validated the results from the previous studies as similar to some extent.

H₂: Mediation Model 1 (Transformational, Intelligence & Occupational Stress)

Table 5 Regression Analysis (Model Summary) (Path-a)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	F	Sig.
1	.435 ^a	.541	.539	.65295	270.718	.000 ^b

Table 6 Regression Analysis (Coefficients) (Path-a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.688	.209		3.289	.001
	Transformational Leadership	.676	.041	.735	16.453	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership
 b. Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

Table 7 Regression Analysis (Model Summary) (path b, c & ĉ)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	F	Sig.
1	.511 ^a	.430	.429	.50787	1123.678	.000 ^b
2	.633 ^b	.570	.569	.44535	765.695	.000 ^c

Table 8 Regression Analysis (Coefficients) (path b, c & ĉ)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.864	.163		-5.923	.000
	Transformational Leadership	.871	.032	.811	33.521	.000
2	(Constant)	-.923	.146		-8.376	.000
	Transformational Leadership	.516	.041	.495	19.752	.000
	Emotional Intelligence	.377	.045	.294	8.373	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence
 c. Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

The first mediation model was about the mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting transformational leadership and occupational stress by using the Barren and Kenny (1986) mediation procedure that offers four step process. The first path of mediation in model 1 (a) shows 54.1% variance in emotional intelligence is due to the transformational leadership style with significance (Beta = .676 & P = .000). the remaining paths ((path b, c & ĉ) provide the significant information in deciding mediation by providing two summary models. The model 1 (table 7) shows the direct relationship where 43% variance is evident occupational stress is due to transformational leadership with significance level (Beta = .871 & P = .000). In model 2 (table 7), 57%

change is evident in occupational stress is due to transformational leadership and emotional intelligence with significance level (Beta = .516 & P = .000). The decrease in Beta from (.871) to (.516) revealed that emotional intelligence partially mediated the link amin transformational leadership and occupational stress. The H₂ is thus accepted and results are supported by existing studies (Ryska, 2002; Lee & Chuang, 2003; Vahid, Ghasemi&Aslani, 2011; Erskine & Georgiou, 2017; Hussain, Akhtar, Afzal & Gillani, 2017) and thus validated the results.

H₃: Mediation Model 2 (Transactional, Emotional Intelligence & Occupational Stress)

Table 9 Regression Analysis (Coefficients) (Path-a)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	F	Sig.
1	.379 ^a	.406	.404	.60459	354.028	.000 ^b

Table 10 Regression Analysis (Model Summary) (Path-a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.784	.173		5.102	.000
	Transactional Leadership	.542	.045	.479	18.816	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership
 b. Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

Table 11 Regression Analysis (Model Summary) (path b, c & ê)

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	SEE	F	Sig.
1	.308 ^a	.452	.451	.72638	431.742	.000 ^b
2	.455 ^b	.531	.529	.64001	311.700	.000 ^c

Table 12 Regression Analysis (Coefficients) (path b, c & ê)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.165	.208		.792	.429
	Transactional Leadership	.817	.054	.608	20.778	.000
2	(Constant)	-.341	.194		-1.763	.079
	Transactional Leadership	.635	.075	.459	8.414	.000
	Emotional Intelligence	.572	.070	.448	8.202	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership, Emotional Intelligence
 a. Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress

In second mediation model, the path (a) provides the information about the predictability of the emotional intelligence due to the transactional leadership. The summary table (9) shows 41% variance in emotional intelligence due to transactional leadership by showing its significance (Beta = .542 & P-value = .000). The other paths (path b, c & ê) offered two mediation models wherein 45.2% variance in occupational stress is due to the transactional leadership with the significance (Beta = .817 & P-value = .000) while in the second model, 53.1% variance in the occupational stress is due to the transactional leadership (Beta = .635 & P-value = .000) and emotional intelligence (Beta = .572 & P-value = .000) by providing significance. It is evident from the analysis that Beta in direct relationship has been decreased from (.817) to (.635) after the arrival of emotional intelligence as mediator. The results show that emotional intelligence partially mediated the link between transactional leadership and emotional intelligence. Thus, H2 is accepted and

validated through previous studies (Erkutlu&Chafra, 2006; Rowold&Schlotz, 2009; Baah& Emmanuel, 2015; Tran & Ramsay, 2015; Bashir, 2017) and thus validated through results of different studies.

Conclusion

The study was aimed to examine the mediating role of emotional intelligence in connecting the leadership styles (transformational & transactional) and occupational stress in the context of higher education institutions. The data collected from teachers about the leadership styles was analyzed by using emotional intelligence as mediating variable. Results show that leadership styles have significant association with occupational stress (-.508 & 613). The mediation model shows that emotional intelligence partially mediated the relationships between leadership styles (transformational & transactional) and occupational stress in both the models. It is evident from the results that transformational leadership has lesser role in creating the occupational stress among the teachers due

to their active and supportive attributes in inspiring the workforces while the occupational stress is created to some extent due to transactional leadership due to their transactional behavior at workplaces. The emotional intelligence is vital in determining the workforces' attitude at workplaces therefore, it helps as facilitator in connecting the styles of leadership and occupational stress. Therefore, the results have provided significant data in deciding the nature of relationships among the research variables (transactional leadership, transformational leadership, occupational stress and emotional intelligence) in the educational sector. The study offered some recommendations emerged from the results of the current study and future directions.

Recommendations

- ✓ The study revealed that transformational leadership is weak predictor of occupational stress therefore, in the presence of transformational leaders, there are little chances of creating occupational stress. The institutions are required to ensure the transformation in nurturing the behavior of the workforces.
- ✓ The transactional leadership is the strong predictor of occupational stress as the chances of stress exists due to the transactional behavior of the leadership. The institutions are required to ensure the fairness in the transactional behavior of the leaders towards the employees to get them inspired to assigned tasks.
- ✓ The occupational stress is vital phenomenon as it creates the physical fatigue as well as emotional imbalance among the employees. Therefore, institutions are required to take measures to develop the strategies so as to make the workforces emotionally intelligent to take their responsibilities more effectively.
- ✓ The future researchers may add certain moderators in connecting the

leadership styles and occupational stress in other sectors to highlight the main issues related with the leadership styles, occupational stress and emotional intelligence in tailor made format to cater to the situation and ensure maximum outcomes.

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