



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN ABUJA

Olugbami Mary Oluwatoyin¹ and Ibrahim Ali Aliyu²

¹Department of Business Administration, University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Email: olugbamimary2020@gmail.com

²Department of Business Administration, University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Email: alialiyyu@uniabuja.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT: *Transformational leadership has long been recognized as a key driver of employee commitment, capable of shaping employee attitudes and strengthening commitment. Yet, it remains unclear how transformational leadership influences employee commitment in Abuja hospitality industry, both directly and indirectly through organizational culture. The study population consists of 1,510 employees drawn from ten (10) selected hotels within the Federal Capital Territory. Using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, a sample of 316 employees was determined. However, to improve representation and ensure an adequate response rate, an additional 20% (63 questionnaires) were added, bringing the total number of questionnaires administered to 379. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire with transformational leadership measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MQL) and analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS). This approach was employed using SmartPLS software for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships among the variables. The findings reveal that transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee commitment, with a standardized path coefficient of $\beta = 0.41$. The mediation analysis reveals that transformational leadership has a significant indirect effect on employee commitment through organizational culture, with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.482$. The study therefore concluded that transformational leadership is a critical driver of employee commitment, and organizational culture plays a central role in translating leadership behaviour into sustained employee commitment.*

KEYWORDS: Transformational Leadership, Employee Commitment, Organizational Culture, Hospitality Industry, Leadership Behaviour.



INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing service sectors globally, driven by increased tourism, globalization, business travel, diplomatic engagements, and the expansion of leisure and entertainment activities. Characterized by high levels of customer contact and service personalization, the industry relies heavily on human capital to deliver service quality and create memorable customer experiences. Consequently, employee motivation, engagement, and commitment are central to organizational effectiveness and competitiveness within the hospitality sector (Ohunakin et al., 2019). Beyond providing basic services such as accommodation, food, and recreation, the hospitality industry plays a strategic role in connecting people, cultures, and economies, while simultaneously contributing significantly to employment generation and economic development. In recent decades, the industry has undergone rapid transformation due to technological advancements, changing consumer expectations, and increasing competition. Customers have become more sophisticated, demanding not only functional service delivery but also emotional engagement, responsiveness, and consistency. These evolving expectations place considerable pressure on hospitality organizations to maintain a committed and motivated workforce capable of delivering discretionary effort and sustained service excellence (Baum, 2006).

However, the sector is widely known for persistent human resource challenges, including high employee turnover, emotional labor, job insecurity, and inconsistent service quality, which threaten organizational performance and long-term sustainability. In Nigeria for instance, the hospitality industry has experienced notable growth, particularly in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, and one of Africa's fastest-growing capital cities. Abuja's status as the political and administrative center of Nigeria, coupled with its role as a hub for international diplomacy, conferences, tourism, and business activities, has led to a proliferation of hotels, restaurants, and related hospitality establishments. The sector contributes significantly to national income through tourism receipts, foreign exchange earnings, and employment creation, with Abuja hosting over a thousand registered hotels across different categories. Despite this expansion, the industry continues to grapple with challenges such as high employee turnover, fluctuating service quality, and declining employee morale, which undermine customer satisfaction and organizational reputation (Umar & Ibrahim, 2021).

Among contemporary leadership approaches, transformational leadership has received significant attention due to its emphasis on inspiration, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Transformational leaders articulate compelling visions, serve as role models, encourage innovation, and attend to employees' developmental needs, thereby motivating followers to transcend self-interest for collective organizational goals. This leadership style is particularly relevant to the hospitality industry, where emotional labor, teamwork, and discretionary service behaviors directly influence customer experiences and organizational outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In contexts characterized by high turnover and service pressure, transformational leadership has been associated with improved job satisfaction, enhanced commitment, and reduced intention to leave. However, leadership does not operate in isolation. Organizational culture, which encompasses the shared values, norms, beliefs, and practices that shape "how things are done" within an organization, provides the context within



which leadership behaviors are interpreted and enacted (Schein, 2010). Culture influences employee perceptions, guides behavior, and establishes expectations regarding performance, relationships, and decision-making. Leaders play a central role in shaping organizational culture through their actions, communication patterns, and value priorities, while culture, in turn, reinforces or constrains leadership effectiveness. As an organization-level phenomenon, culture has the potential to mediate the relationship between leadership styles and employee outcomes.

Despite the growing global literature on transformational leadership and organizational culture, empirical evidence examining their interaction within the Nigerian hospitality industry remains limited, particularly in Abuja. Most existing studies have focused on Western or Asian contexts, with relatively few investigations addressing service organizations in African economies, where institutional conditions, cultural expectations, and labor market dynamics differ. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that employees reciprocate supportive and inspiring leadership with loyalty and commitment, and informed by the Competing Values Framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how leadership behaviors translate into employee commitment through cultural processes. By empirically testing this mediation model, the study contributes to leadership and organizational behavior literature while offering practical insights for improving employee retention and service quality in Abuja's hospitality sector.

Statement of the problem

The hospitality industry in Abuja occupies a strategic position in Nigeria's service economy, contributing substantially to employment generation, tourism development, and national revenue. However, despite its rapid expansion, the industry continues to experience persistent human resource challenges, particularly high turnover low employee commitment, declining morale, and inconsistent service quality. (Baum, 2006; Umar & Ibrahim, 2021). Leadership has been identified as a central organizational factor capable of shaping employee attitudes and strengthening commitment. In particular, transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, has been associated with positive employee outcomes such as increased motivation, trust, and commitment in various organizational contexts (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Despite this theoretical and empirical support, it remains unclear whether transformational leadership directly influences employee commitment within the specific context of Abuja's hospitality industry. Many hospitality organizations in Nigeria continue to rely on transactional or authoritarian leadership approaches, which may be insufficient in meeting contemporary employee expectations for empowerment, recognition, and meaningful engagement. This lack of context-specific empirical evidence necessitates an examination of the direct relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment.

Most critically, existing studies tend to examine transformational leadership and organizational culture independently, with limited attention to their interactive effects on employee commitment. Organizational culture is increasingly recognized as a key mediating mechanism through which leadership behaviors influence employee attitudes and behaviors (Schein, 2010; Cameron & Quinn, 2011). However, empirical investigations that test organizational culture as a mediator



between transformational leadership and employee commitment remain scarce, particularly within the Nigerian hospitality industry. This gap constrains hospitality managers' ability to design integrated leadership and cultural interventions aimed at improving commitment and reducing turnover. Consequently, there is a pressing need to empirically determine whether organizational culture mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment in Abuja's hospitality industry.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- i. To what extent does transformational leadership directly influence employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja?
- ii. To what extent does organizational culture mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of organizational culture.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the direct effect of transformational leadership on employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja.
- ii. Evaluate the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

- i. H₀₁: Transformational leadership has no significant direct effect on employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja.
- ii. H₀₂: Organizational culture does not significantly mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes theoretically, practically, and contextually to leadership, organizational behavior, and human resource management, particularly within the hospitality industry in Abuja, Nigeria. The hospitality industry is a service-driven sector that thrives on human interaction, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement. In such a context, the ability of leaders to



inspire, motivate, and retain committed employees becomes central to organizational success. Practically, this study has several implications for hospitality managers, HR practitioners, and policymakers. The findings provide hotel managers in Abuja with evidence-based strategies on how transformational leadership behaviors, such as inspiring a shared vision, providing individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and serving as role models, can shape a strong organizational culture that aligns employees with the organization's mission and values. This, in turn, enhances employee commitment, reduces turnover, and improves service delivery, which is critical in a highly competitive industry where customer satisfaction is paramount.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership remains one of the most extensively studied leadership styles in modern organizational behavior. Originally conceptualized by Burns (1978) and refined by Bass (1985), Transformational leadership is the process whereby leaders influence followers by creating alignment between individual goals and organizational objectives through inspirational communication, which is characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, aimed at developing followers' potential and fostering innovation. (Kim et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to transcend their personal interests for the collective goals of the organization. It emphasizes vision creation, value alignment, and the development of employees' potential. Contemporary scholars view transformational leadership as particularly effective in dynamic and service-oriented environments such as the hospitality industry, where employee attitudes and discretionary behaviours significantly influence organizational outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Recent studies highlight transformational leadership as a critical determinant of employee engagement, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. By articulating a compelling vision and demonstrating concern for employee welfare, transformational leaders enhance employees' emotional attachment to their organizations (Aboramadan et al., 2021). Makumbe (2024) sees it as a leadership strategy that motivates followers to embrace organizational change, develop innovative solutions, and strengthen their commitment to organizational objectives and leader's ability to influence cultural norms through vision-building and empowerment practices. This study conceptualises transformational leadership as a style in which leaders inspire employees to exceed expectations by demonstrating integrity, commitment, and competence; fostering shared values and team cohesion; enhancing self-efficacy and collaboration through knowledge sharing; and promoting engagement, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation by encouraging participation, reducing fear of failure, and providing purpose beyond immediate tasks.



Transformational Leadership in the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry is characterized by high labor intensity, emotional labour, and continuous customer interaction. In such environments, transformational leadership is particularly effective because it motivates employees to deliver high-quality service and remain committed despite job demands (Al-Hawari et al., 2022). Within the Abuja hospitality industry, transformational leadership is crucial for managing a culturally diverse workforce and maintaining service standards in a competitive market. Leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviours can align employee goals with organizational objectives, foster a supportive work environment, and enhance employee commitment (Ojo et al., 2022). This conceptual review establishes transformational leadership as a leadership style that positively influences organizational culture and employee commitment. Through its core dimensions, transformational leadership fosters shared values, innovation, and employee development. In the context of the Abuja hospitality industry, transformational leadership is expected to enhance employee commitment both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of organizational culture.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment is a vital aspect of any thriving organization. It goes beyond mere job satisfaction, encompassing a deeper emotional and psychological connection between an employee and their workplace. In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations recognize the significance of cultivating a committed workforce. Employee commitment refers to the psychological bond that connects employees to their organization and influences their willingness to remain members of the organization and contribute to its success. It reflects the extent to which employees identify with organization goals, feel emotionally attached, and are motivated to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 2020). In organizational behavior literature, employee commitment is considered a key predictor of work-related outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover intention. Highly committed employees are more likely to demonstrate loyalty, discretionary effort, and positive attitudes toward their organization (Robbins & Judge, 2022). In service-oriented industries such as hospitality, employee commitment is particularly important because employees' attitudes and behaviours directly influence service quality and customer satisfaction (Al-Hawari et al., 2022).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the system of shared values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral expectations that guide how members of an organization think, behave, and interact. It is considered a central element of organizational life because it shapes attitudes, influences decision-making, and guides employee behavior. Anwar (2023) defined organizational culture as a deep, complex system of shared assumptions, beliefs, values, and behavioural norms that a group develops over time as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration. According to their model, culture is not merely visible behaviours or stated mission statement; instead, it exists in multiple levels, with deepest level being unconscious assumptions that guide how members perceive, think, feel, and act in an organizational situation (Schein & Schein, 2021). Schein Culture functions as the "social glue" that binds employees together and provides a sense of identity and meaning within the organization (Alshammari, 2022).



Organizational culture refers to the shared values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions that shape how members of an organization behave and interact in pursuit of organizational goals, influence employee attitudes and responses to change, and guide decision-making and organizational processes. In the hospitality industry, where service quality is highly dependent on employee attitudes and behaviours, organizational culture plays a critical role in shaping employee commitment, service delivery, and customer satisfaction. A positive organizational culture encourages cooperation, service excellence, and emotional attachment to the organization, while a negative culture may result in dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and high turnover rates (Al-Hawari et al., 2022).

Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership (TFL) stands as a foundational concept in modern leadership research. It contrasts sharply with Transactional Leadership, which is characterized by contingent reward and management by exception (Bass, 1985). Burns viewed leadership as a process where leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. Critically, he viewed transactional and transforming leadership as mutually exclusive ends of a continuum. Bernard M. Bass (1985) subsequently formalized transformational leadership into a measurable organizational theory. Bass's critical refinement was the argument that Transformational leadership and Transactional Leadership are not mutually exclusive; rather, effective leaders often exhibit both styles, forming the basis of the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) (Alkhalidi & Abu Talib, 2025). Bass defined transformational leadership as improving the performance of followers and developing them to their fullest potential by appealing to their ideals and values (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The core of Bass's theory is operationalized through the Four Components of Transformational Leadership, often termed the "Four I's," which describe the behavioral mechanisms used by transformational leaders to inspire and elevate followers (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Bass, 2004). These dimensions include; idealize influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders actively reinforce norms of fairness, support, and high performance (i.e., Organizational Culture), which provides a stable and desirable work environment that reciprocally binds the employee to the organization. Chukwudi et al. (2022); Alkhalidi & Abu Talib (2025). In the service-intensive hospitality sector, transformational leadership is proven to enhance the employee behaviors that translate into higher service quality, often mediated by organizational commitment (Alkhalidi & Abu Talib, 2025). By fostering a supportive and engaging culture, transformational leadership is theorized to counteract drivers of turnover, such as poor supervisor support, which is a major concern in the Nigerian hospitality sector (Chukwudi et al., 2022).



Social Exchange Theory

This is another theoretical orientation for the study; social exchange theory provides the foundation to understand social interactions and relationships better. Rooted in the work of Balu (1964) and Homans (1958), first defined social exchange theory as an interaction between two or more people that generates an obligation. Social exchange posits that social relationships are governed by an exchange process in which individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs. This exchange is not purely economic but largely social and psychological, involving intangible resources such as trust, support, recognition, and respect. The social exchange theory frames organizational relationships as reciprocal. When transformational leaders' model supportive behaviour (idealized influence, inspirational motivation) they initiate a positive social exchange. In response, employees feel obligated to reciprocate through greater commitment and engagement. The social exchange theory remains central for understanding how transformational leadership impacts employee commitment. The reciprocal nature of leader-follower interactions aligns well with Social Exchange Theory's emphasis on mutual obligations. Cropanzano and Mitchell's (2005) conceptualization shows how positive leader behaviours create a cycle of trust and obligation that shapes commitment outcomes.

Transformational leadership and organizational culture do not operate independently; rather, culture can mediate and moderate social exchange relationships. If organizational cultures aligned with transformational values, employees internalize organizational goals and reciprocate through commitment and discretionary effort, a core prediction of Social Exchange Theory extended into multi-level organizational dynamics.

Empirical Review

Kim et al. (2021) examined the impact of transformational leadership and commitment to change on restaurant employees' quality of work life during a crisis in the United States. An online survey was conducted among full-service restaurant employees in the United States. The survey participants were recruited with a convenience sampling method; the results indicated that transformational leadership increases the commitment to change and quality of work life; moreover, employees' commitment to change mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee quality of work life. Transformational leadership positively influenced all types of employee commitment (affective, continuance, and normative); leadership effects were stronger when a supportive culture was present. The study findings propose ways in which restaurant practitioners can support employees' quality of work life during a crisis.

Burton (2014). Investigated how organizational culture mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and work outcome among the senior administrators working in the NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics department in Indianapolis, USA. The results indicated that group culture partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and affective organizational commitment and fully mediates turnover intentions and job search behaviors. Developmental culture partially mediates affective organizational commitment but does not influence turnover intentions and job search behaviors. Findings contribute to the understanding of the important mediating role of organizational culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and outcome variables in the intercollegiate athletics context.



Nguyen et al (2023) examine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture and the joint effect of both on organizational performance among 903 employees from the Vietnamese Manufacturing sector in Vietnam. The result shows that transformational leadership influences organizational performance and culture, with differing effects based on context. The study also shows that organizational culture directly influences performance and partially mediates the contribution of transformational leadership to organizational performance.

Jiatong et al. (2022) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on affective organizational commitment and job performance with the mediating role of employee engagement in China. The study gathered data from 845 Chinese hotel employees, and the structural equation modeling technique was used to verify the results. The findings indicated that transformational leadership has a positive effect on affective organizational commitment and job performance if the intensity of employees' engagement is higher in the organization. Meanwhile, their results also showed that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership, affective organizational commitment, and job performance. Chukwu et al. (2022) investigated the influence of leadership styles and organizational culture on employee loyalty in Nigerian oil and gas firm. The findings revealed that transformational leadership positively predicted favourable organizational culture perception. Also, Wang et al. (2022) examine a model linking transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment, creativity, and performance in international tourists in Taiwan. The result indicated that both transformational leadership and perceived organizational support were significantly and positively related to employee affective organizational commitment, creativity, and performance, while affective organizational commitment had a significantly positive influence on creativity and performance. Support was also found for the significant and positive mediating relationships between affective organizational commitment and the influences on both transformational leadership and perceived organizational support on creativity and performance.

Most of the literature examined focuses on the impact of transformational leadership on employee commitment, job performance, employee performance, employee commitment, continuance commitment. A few studies explore organizational culture as a mediating variable between leadership and work outcome, transformational leadership, and change management. The review shows that limited studies have focused on the mediating role of organizational culture in transformational leadership and employee commitment in the hospitality industry, particularly in Abuja. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the existing literature by examining transformational leadership and employee commitment with the mediating role of organizational culture in Abuja hospitality industry.



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive–explanatory research design using a quantitative research approach. The descriptive component enables the study to systematically describe the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of key variables, while the explanatory component facilitates the examination of causal and relational links among transformational leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment.

Population of the Study

The population comprises employees working in selected star-rated hotels within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Specifically, the target population consists of 1,510 employees drawn from ten (10) selected hotels ranging from 2-star to 5-star categories in the study area. These hotels were selected because they operate with formal organizational structures and established managerial hierarchies, making them suitable for examining transformational leadership practices and organizational culture.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This study employed a stratified random sampling technique to select respondents from the target population. Stratification was adopted to ensure that employees from each of the selected hotels were adequately and proportionately represented in the sample. Taro Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations was employed to determine the sample size for the study, as it is widely used in social science research:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1510}{1 + 1510(0.05)^2} = 316$$

Thus, a total sample size of 316 respondents was considered adequate for the study, and proportionate distribution was used to allocate the questionnaire across the selected hotels based on their population. Moreso, the proportionate distribution of the sample among the population is presented in Table 1 below;

**Table 1 Proportionate Distribution of Sample Size**

S/N	Name of Hotel	Population (N _i)	Proportion (%)	Sample Size (n _i)
1	Abuja Continental Hotel	700	46.36	147
2	ABC Hotel	75	4.97	16
3	Eat and Rest	75	4.97	16
4	Golden Gate	85	5.63	18
5	Summerset Hotel	140	9.27	29
6	Rock View Hotel	140	9.27	29
7	Ibeto Hotel	120	7.95	25
8	Kachi Hotel and Suites	45	2.98	9
9	Valensia Hotel	66	4.37	14
10	Green Hill Hotel	64	4.24	13
Total		1,510	100	316

Field Survey, 2025

Additionally, to improve representation and ensure an adequate response rate, an additional 20% (63 questionnaires) were added, bringing the total number of questionnaires administered to 379.

Sources of Data

This study relied primarily on primary data to ensure the accuracy, relevance, and validity of the findings. Primary data were obtained directly from employees of the selected hotels, allowing the researcher to capture firsthand information on perceptions of leadership style, organizational culture, and employee commitment.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using electronically administered questionnaires. For hotels with flexible access policies, questionnaires were distributed directly to employees, while for hotels with restricted access, a Google Form link was shared via official corporate emails and professional communication platforms. Follow-up reminders were issued to improve response rates and ensure adequate data retrieval.

Research Instrumentation

The primary instrument for data collection in this study was a structured, self-administered questionnaire designed to measure the key constructs of transformational leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment. The questionnaire was carefully developed based on well-established and widely validated measurement scales in leadership and organizational behavior literature, ensuring conceptual rigor, reliability, and validity.



Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the administered questionnaires were coded, screened, and analyzed using SmartPLS (Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares). The use of SmartPLS allowed a comprehensive analysis of the data in line with the study objectives and hypotheses.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

A total of 316 questionnaires were initially targeted for administration to 10 selected 2-star to 5-star hotels in Abuja. However, to improve representation and ensure an adequate response rate, an additional 20% (63 questionnaires) were added, bringing the total number of questionnaires administered to 379. Out of these, 335 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of approximately 88.6%. After a thorough data screening process to identify incomplete or inconsistent entries, 325 questionnaires, which represent 85.75% response rate, were found valid and suitable for statistical analysis. This level of response is considered adequate and reliable for quantitative analysis, especially within organizational behavior and human resource management studies (Hair et al., 2021).

Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	182	56.0
	Female	143	44.0
Total		325	100.0
Age	Below 25 years	54	16.6
	25–34 years	132	40.6
	35–44 years	86	26.5
	45–54 years	39	12.0
	55 years and above	14	4.3
Total		325	100.0
Educational Qualification	Secondary School Certificate	62	19.1
	OND/NCE	97	29.8
	HND/Bachelor's Degree	132	40.6
	Postgraduate Degree	34	10.5
Total		325	100.0
Years of Service	Less than 1 year	48	14.8
	1–3 years	116	35.7



	4–6 years	93	28.6
	7 years and above	68	20.9
Total		325	100.0
Department	Front Office	74	22.8
	Housekeeping	61	18.8
	Food & Beverage	88	27.1
	Administration/HR	52	16.0
	Security/Maintenance	36	11.1
	Others	14	4.2
Total		325	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, 2025*

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the 325 respondents used for the analysis. The gender distribution indicates that 56.0% of respondents were male, while 44.0% were female, suggesting a relatively balanced gender composition across the selected hotels. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (40.6%) fell within the 25–34 years category, followed by those aged 35–44 years (26.5%). This indicates that the workforce is largely made up of young and middle-aged employees, which is typical of the hospitality industry due to its service-oriented and physically demanding nature. Regarding educational qualification, most respondents possessed HND/Bachelor's degrees (40.6%) and OND/NCE certificates (29.8%), indicating that the workforce is relatively educated and capable of understanding organizational policies, leadership behaviors, and cultural practices. The analysis of years of service reveals that 35.7% of respondents had worked in their organizations for 1–3 years, while 28.6% had 4–6 years of experience. This mix of short- and long-tenured employees provides balanced insights into leadership practices and organizational culture. Finally, respondents were drawn from various departments, with the highest representation from Food and Beverage (27.1%) and Front Office (22.8%). This broad departmental distribution enhances the representativeness of the sample and supports the generalizability of the study's findings within the hospitality industry in Abuja.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed to examine the reliability and validity of the latent constructs used in the study prior to testing the structural relationships. In line with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) procedures, the assessment focused on internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The constructs evaluated include Transformational Leadership (TFL) Organizational Culture (OC), and Employee Commitment (EC).

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (CA), rho_A, and Composite Reliability (CR). According to established guidelines, values of 0.70 and above indicate acceptable reliability.

**Table 3 Construct Reliability and Validity**

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EC	0.922	0.923	0.935	0.617
OC	0.932	0.933	0.943	0.648
TL	0.948	0.952	0.955	0.643

Source: *SMART PLS Output*

The results in Table 3 show that all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold. Employee Commitment recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.922, and Organizational Culture recorded 0.932, while Transformational Leadership recorded 0.948. Similarly, Composite Reliability values were 0.935 for Employee Commitment, 0.943 for Organizational Culture, and 0.955 for Transformational Leadership. These results confirm that the measurement items consistently measure their respective constructs and demonstrate high internal reliability.

Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which measures the extent to which a construct explains the variance of its indicators. AVE values of 0.50 or higher indicate adequate convergent validity. From Table 4, the AVE values for all constructs exceeded the minimum threshold, with Employee Commitment recording an AVE of 0.617, Organizational Culture recording 0.648, and Transformational Leadership recording 0.643. These results indicate that more than 50 percent of the variance in the indicators is explained by their respective constructs, thus confirming adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio to ensure that each construct is empirically distinct from the others.

Table 4 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

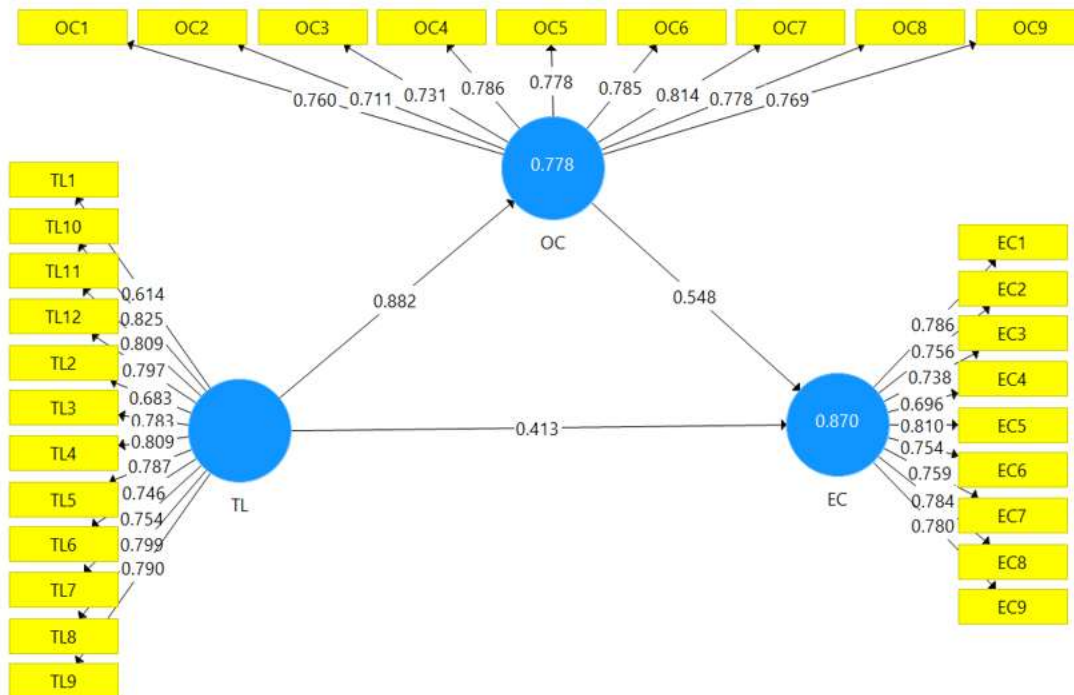
	EC	OC	TL
EC	0.785		
OC	0.953	0.805	
TL	0.896	0.888	0.802

Source: *SMART PLS Output*

Using the Fornell–Larcker criterion shown in Table 4, the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs. Specifically, the square root of AVE for Employee Commitment (0.785), Organizational Culture (0.805), and Transformational Leadership (0.802) exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations. This confirms adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.



Figure 1: Measurement Mode



The cross-loadings contained in Figure 4.1 further support discriminant validity, as all measurement items loaded more strongly on their respective constructs than on other constructs. This indicates that the indicators are appropriately associated with their intended latent variables.

Table 5 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	EC	OC	TL
EC			
OC	1.027		
TL	0.952	0.941	

Source: SMART PLS Output

Discriminant validity was also assessed in Table 5, using the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. While most HTMT values were close to the recommended threshold, the results were considered acceptable within the context of PLS-SEM, particularly given the conceptual relatedness of transformational leadership, organizational culture, and employee commitment. Taken together with the Fornell–Larcker and cross-loading results, discriminant validity was deemed sufficient for further structural model analysis.



Test of Hypotheses

Table 6 Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
TL -> EC	0.414	0.413	0.055	7.577	0.000
TL -> OC -> EC	0.482	0.484	0.052	9.208	0.000

Source: SMART PLS Output

H₀₁: Transformational Leadership → Employee Commitment ($\beta = 0.414, p = 0.000$)

The results in Table 6 indicate that transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee commitment, with a standardized path coefficient of $\beta = 0.414$ and a p-value of 0.000. This relationship is statistically significant, with a t-statistic of 7.577, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H₀₂: Transformational Leadership → Organizational Culture → Employee Commitment ($\beta = 0.482, p = 0.000$)

The mediation analysis was conducted in Table 6 to examine the indirect effect of transformational leadership on employee commitment through organizational culture. The results reveal that the indirect relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment, via organizational culture, is positive and statistically significant, with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.482$ and a p-value of 0.000. The indirect effect is supported by a t-statistic of 9.208, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja. This result strongly supports the empirical evidence reviewed in Chapter Two, which consistently reports a positive association between transformational leadership and employee commitment across diverse organizational contexts. Empirical studies by Awoyemi (2021) in the Nigerian banking sector, Ohaegbulem et al. (2024) in Access Bank Keffi, and Oyediji (2025) in Nigerian deposit money banks all reported that transformational leadership significantly predicts employee commitment. Similarly, hospitality-focused studies such as Jiatong et al. (2022) in Chinese hotels and Kim et al. (2021) in U.S. restaurants found that transformational leadership enhances affective, continuance, and normative commitment among employees. The present study confirms these findings within the Abuja hospitality context, where leadership behaviours such as inspirational



motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation are critical for sustaining employee attachment in a high-turnover industry.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment. This result strongly supports empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Two that position organizational culture as a critical mechanism through which leadership influences employee outcomes. Studies by Burton (2014), Nguyen et al. (2023), Bagga et al. (2023), and Setiawan and Pratama (2023) found that organizational culture either partially or fully mediates the effect of transformational leadership on commitment, performance, or change-related outcomes. Similarly, Kim et al. (2021) and Jiatong et al. (2022) demonstrated that leadership effects on commitment are strengthened when mediated through supportive cultural or engagement mechanisms. The partial mediation observed in this study indicates that transformational leadership enhances employee commitment both directly and indirectly by shaping organizational culture. This finding extends the empirical literature by confirming that leadership behaviours are more effective and sustainable when embedded within a strong cultural framework that reinforces shared meaning, trust, and service-oriented values. In the Abuja hospitality industry, where service delivery depends heavily on collective norms and employee cooperation, culture serves as a powerful conduit for leadership influence.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that transformational leadership is a critical driver of employee commitment in the hospitality industry in Abuja. Leaders who inspire, motivate, support, and intellectually stimulate employees significantly enhance their psychological attachment and loyalty to the organization. Furthermore, the confirmation of organizational culture as a partial mediator suggests that leadership effectiveness in the hospitality industry cannot be fully realized without a supportive cultural environment. Transformational leadership and organizational culture must therefore be jointly leveraged to address persistent human resource challenges such as turnover, low morale, and inconsistent service quality.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that improving leadership practices and nurturing positive organizational cultures are essential strategies for strengthening employee commitment and enhancing service excellence in Abuja's hospitality sector.

The study recommends that hotel managers and supervisors should consciously adopt transformational leadership behaviors, including articulating a clear vision, motivating employees, encouraging innovation, and providing individualized support. Leadership development programs should emphasize these competencies. Also, training opportunities, career development paths, and recognition for outstanding performance should be provided to strengthen employees' sense of value and moral obligation to remain with the organization. Furthermore, HR departments should prioritize transformational leadership qualities when recruiting and promoting managers. Regular leadership training and mentoring programs should be implemented. Lastly, HR policies should



reinforce organizational values by promoting fairness, transparency, and employee participation. Performance management systems should reward behaviors that align with desired cultural norms.

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