Leadership by Middle Managers and Their Impact on the Performance of Frontline Employee

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ABSTRACT

In this study we try to explore the concept of middle managers’ leadership in a holistic context. The main focus of the research is on transformational leadership skills of middle managers and its relation with the performance of frontline employees. The research will be conducted using quantitative methodology. Survey will be conducted from middle managers and frontline employees of twenty 5-star hotels on USA. The transformational leadership skills of middle managers and the determinants of performance will be identified through previous studies. These variables will then be tested using SPSS 16.0 to measure the association between the transformational leadership of middle managers and the performance of frontline employees. Regression Analysis will be done to measure the impact of the transformational leadership of middle managers on the performance of frontline employees.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Transformational leadership (TL) has surfaced as the focus of attention in studies relating to leadership. Studies suggest the TL is related to employee performance (Avolio, 2010; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bass, 1985). But, all these studies are based on the leadership of the immediate supervisor. In fact, mostly all the leadership studies the prime focus is on supervisor-subordinate relationships and no attention is given to examine the leadership from a distance level i.e. from a level or two above the supervisor. Therefore, it is still unclear if the second level leadership superiors can influence the behavior of the frontline employee.

Transformational Leadership influence at any level may be attenuated by various contingencies. We seek to understand such contingencies at middle management transformational leadership level, focusing on the values endorsed to frontline employees (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). In alignment to recognize best leadership effectiveness practices, they require to conclude which proposed conclusions will be searched in utilizing the leadership pattern of influence (Bass, 1985).

Background of the Problem

In recent years American business organizations have been facing significant challenges. These include the development of global market places, rapid innovations in work technologies, shifting workforce and customer demographics, and an increasing demand for quality and flexibility in products and services. In order to meet these challenges, organizations have searched for ways to ‘do more with less’ and to become
more competitive. For many organizations, an acclaimed improvement strategy lies in the concept of frontline employee’s performance (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003). In the management literature, the idea of frontline employees is frequently described as a principal component of enhanced innovation, organizational adaptiveness, improved customer relations and heightened employee satisfaction.

There is some general agreement in both popular and academic writings that frontline employees can contribute significantly to organizational performance (Dvir, Avolio & Shamir, 2002; Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003). Given the challenges faced by today's organizations, leadership’s impact on the performance of frontline employee would seem to be a concept deserving of extensive study.

Despite the growing attention on frontline employee performance as an organizational improvement strategy, surprisingly little empirical research has been conducted to examine the role of middle managers as an independent construct, the contextual or work environment factors that facilitate it, or the relationship of middle manager’s leadership in frontline employee’s performance, There are at least two reasons for this lack of research. First, much of the frontline employee related study to date has focused on supervisor leadership. As noted, there are numerous studies which have examined the management leadership and productivity of frontline employee (Ling & Veiga 2008; Kark & Shamir 2002; Jaques 1990; Howell & Avolio1993). However, these researches have focused primarily on the leader-employee behavior from a closer level and not from a distant level. In these leadership studies, the main focus was on supervisor-subordinate relationships or manager-supervisor relationships, while no attention was given to assess the leadership from a level or two above the supervisor.
This makes it unclear if a distant level leadership has a power to influence the performance of the subordinate. This research will try to assess this relationship by studying middle managers and frontline employees.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many of the writings on performance have discussed conceptually the leader's role in creating a high performing workforce. More specifically, much has been written on transformational leadership and its relationship to a productive workforce (Avolio, 2010; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bass, 1985). However, there has been little empirical research to validate the association between leadership by middle managers and frontline employee performance.

Transformational leadership focuses on shaping the values, attitudes and goals of followers, and inspiring them to transcend their own self-interests for a higher collective purpose. Using such behaviors as developing trust through consistency, demonstrating respect for employees, and creating empowering opportunities, transformational leaders instill values and develop employees in such a way as to enhance employee performance (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Research on transformational leadership has suggested a positive relationship with employees' individual performance, satisfaction and effectiveness, as well as employee locus of control and business unit performance (Walumba, Wange, Lawler & Shi, 2004). A “leadership” leverage method focuses on the mobilization of colleagues in a consensual, collective effort to accomplish the organization's vision.
Bass (1985) noted that transformational leaders have an exceptionally high power need that is expressed in a pro-social manner that empowers and benefits others, as well as the organization. By delegating authority and responsibility, the transformational leader influences the performances of the followers. More explicitly, Kark and Shamir (2002) claim that transformational leaders influence followers by providing them with opportunities to take on, and succeed at, challenging tasks. These task related successes, in turn, result in improved performance (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

Many of the writings on transformational leadership (example Howell & Avolio 1993; Floyd & Wooldridge 1997) have conceptually discussed, but not empirically studied the middle manager’s transformational leader’s role in impacting the performance of frontline employees. Therefore, there is a need to investigate this popular assumption. Hence, the present study examines the relation between transformational leadership of middle managers and the performance of frontline employees.

**Purpose of the Study**

The objective of the present study is to understand better the middle manager’s leadership and frontline employees’ performance. Specifically, this study investigates: how the leadership of middle manager associates with the performance of employee and how perceptions of middle manager leadership associate with perceptions of employee performance.

Transformational leadership is often cited as an enabler of worker performance because of the leader's focus on building followers' self-confidence and providing them with opportunities to take on, and succeed, at challenging assignments. However, as
noted earlier, there is no prior research that has investigated empirically this association using the most recent measures of employee performance. Hence, one key purpose of this study is to examine how specific transformational leadership behaviors of middle manager associate with the performance of the front-line employees. This research contributes to the transformational leadership literature by providing increased insight into the relationship between specific leader behaviors and characteristics and the performance of frontline contributors. Furthermore, this research also contributes to the middle management literature by providing increased insight into the significance of middle managers and how organizations can effectively use their middle managers to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

While drawing causal conclusions on these relationships is difficult, the research does shed some light on how transformational leadership by middle managers correlates with, and may be predictive of, performance results. This research explores the assumption that transformational leadership of middle managers leads to enhanced employee performance. The study not only contributes to the emerging middle management leadership literature, but is also relevant to organizations seeking to improve employee productivity by using middle managers effectively.

Much of the transformational leadership literature (e.g. Jaques 1990; Bass 1985) views the concept from a relational view, that is, managers sharing power and authority with direct subordinates. Recent transformational leadership research, however, has approached the concept from a more motivational view. Despite the differing views, there has been no empirical research that has examined the relationship through middle managers perspectives. Remember that the use of leadership as a pattern of leverage
doesn't preclude the use of other leverage methods for example overseer, supervisor, partner, or supervisor. The distinction holds our discussion concentrated when utilizing these concepts. Such examination contributes to the empirical middle management leadership literature by providing insight on how the aspects of transformational leadership by middle managers associate with the performance of the frontline employees.

**Research Design**

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between middle manager’s leadership and the performance of the frontline employee. Data collection techniques focus on secondary research through library search strategies and primary research through surveys. Secondary research will help to develop the literature of the study; whereas the primary research will be useful in determining the association between leadership by middle managers and the performance of the frontline employee.

Questionnaires will be used to conduct this research. The research will conducted in 4 stages: (a) a literature review of journals and books in the topic area, (b) data collection, (c) data analysis and interpretation, and (d) the formation of conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

**Research Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research is to evaluate the impact of the leadership by middle managers on the performance of frontline employees. In the light of this aim, the author will accomplish the following objectives:
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- To highlight the importance of middle management in overall productivity of the organization
- To highlight the importance of middle manager as a leader
- To identify the relation between leadership and performance
- To determine the importance of frontline employees in an organization
- To identify the factors to measure the performance of frontline employees
- To determine how a middle manager can influence the performance of the frontline employee

**Significance of the Study**

Since there are no studies conducted on leadership from a distant level i.e. from a level two above from supervisor, the current study fills this void in the literature by analyzing the role of middle managers’ leadership in relation to the performance of frontline employees. American organizations have tried many initiatives to improve productivity and competitiveness, including Total Quality Management, de-layering, right-sizing, cross-functional teams, self-managing teams, business process re-engineering and concurrent engineering (Avolio, 2010). Most have had only limited success.

Authors such as Avolio (2010) argue that frontline employees are the key to organizations successfully adapting to global competition, rapid developments in technology, and increased demands for quality and flexibility. Furthermore, the leadership of superiors can influence the performance of frontline employees to achieve organizational objectives. However, as noted previously, little empirical research exists...
on the influence of middle managers on the frontline employees. Therefore, much of what has been written about the middle manager’s influence on frontline employees has not been rigorously validated. Many organizations, have committed considerable resources, ego communications, training, time, money, etc., to promote and ‘implement’ the middle manager leadership. This has been done with the belief that middle managers can bring a positive change in the performance of the frontline employees. Yet, the empirical evidence and quantitative data about the association between leadership by middle manager and performance of frontline employee, is minimal. Hence, there is a significant need for research to determine the influence of middle managers on the performance of the frontline employees.

The major contribution of the present research lies in testing the assumptions that: transformational leadership empowers non-manager employees. The findings from this research are intended to help organizations be more knowledgeable about the type of leader behaviors and organizational strategies that can facilitate organizations to achieve their goals. In turn, this information may influence: how organizations use their middle managers; what leadership behaviors organizations establish as ‘role model’ in order to foster the frontline workforce; the focus of leadership development efforts; and the criteria used for manager evaluation and succession planning.

This study is also intended to help organizations have more realistic expectations of the linkage between middle management and frontline employees. The findings from this study will provide quantitative data to describe more specifically how the performance of frontline employees is associated with the leadership of middle managers. This in turn may have significant implications on: how organizational researchers and
practitioners diagnose and address specific performance issues; and what they can expect, individually and organizationally, from increased efforts to develop a productive workforce.

**Research Questions**

The research will answer the following research questions:

Main Question:

- What is the relationship between middle managers’ transformational leadership and the performance of frontline employees?

Sub Questions:

- What is the importance of middle management as a leader?
- What is the relationship between leadership and performance?
- What is the importance of frontline employees in an organization?
- What are the factors that are required to measure the performance of frontline employees?
- How can a middle manager influence the performance of frontline employees?
- What is the relationship between middle management and the overall productivity of the organization?

**Assumptions and Limitation**

General assumptions were made regarding the participants and processes used in the study. Participants will act professionally answering all survey questions honestly and accurately. An inherent limitation of self-reported data is that it may contain intended or
unintended inaccuracies. Potentially fearful of reprisals from middle managers, participants may not tell the truth or properly recall information.

This study has several limitations. They consider that most effective leaders are those who are both task and person oriented, while the smallest effective leaders are those who are neither task neither person oriented. According to Rallet, in Nelson and winter, the question of how firms acquire the ability to explore the potential is unclear. Certainly the external environment is crucial in the process of change, but the role of agents is limited to ownership of the change is obvious. Research suggests that organizations tend to select and retain managers with similar personality types (Jaques, 1990) or personal values (Avolio, 2010). In the same way, managers with similar leadership behaviors may be more likely to be promoted and retained within organizations. However, ASA assumes within-organization variances to be smaller than between-organization variances.

**Definition of Terms**

*Performance*: While management is interested in this, planning, organization and control, and is concerned with stability of the organization, leadership is often associated with the development of a vision and change management. Performance in this study will refer to measures at the individual level. Individual performance will include frontline employees ratings of employee technical skills, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

*Middle managers*: Middle managers manage first level managers, and are typically responsible for four to eight teams, which is considered a department.
middle managers generally report to the unit vice president. Bono and Anderson (2005) broadly define middle manager, as “a manager between top manager and the first line personnel with supervising authority.” The reason for using this definition is that middle managers are exceptionally dissimilar employees. Their responsibilities differ quite a lot depending on the organization they are working for and some organizations do have very dissimilar tasks to their own middle managers.

Idealized influence: When a leader is trusted and respected by his/her subordinate, this type of leader will tend to put his/her subordinates’ needs before his/her own (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

Inspirational motivation: This is shown in a leader when he/she acts in a way that causes subordinates to perform better by instilling a sense of meaning in their work (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

Individualized consideration: This type of leader is usually thought of as a coach or mentor, he/she tends to be concerned for each of their subordinates’ independent needs (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

Intellectual stimulation: This dimension is exhibited when a leader asks questions to increase innovation and creativity (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

**Expected Findings**

It is expected that the leadership by middle manager does impact the performance of the frontline employee. Furthermore, if organization use their middle managers in the right manner, and keep them in contact with the frontline employees, it can help increase
the performance of the frontline employees, thereby increasing the overall organizational performance.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Transformational leadership has been variously labeled as transformational, transformative and visionary. While there are conceptual differences, such as the role played by charisma, each refers to a new view of leadership that emphasizes empowering others, pro-social use of power, creation and communication of vision, and high levels of leader self-efficacy. This new view of leadership also stands in contrast to the more traditional "transactional", exchange-oriented style of leadership that has, in essence, been the subject of most leadership research prior to 1980 (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002).

Leadership Models: Theory and Research

Antonakis & Atwater (2002) developed a learning system for managers that is centered on analysis of leadership contexts and is known as situational leadership. The major premise of Antonakis and Atwater’s situational leadership theory is that leader effectiveness is strongly related to leadership style adaptability and to the subordinate's occupational maturity level. This model envisions a manager developing leadership skills in understanding, diagnosing, and influencing human behavior at work. The purpose of this approach is to develop personnel who contribute to achieving organizational results and success, by building on employees' current mastery of necessary skills and possession of willing attitudes.

Path-goal, or expectancy, theory offers insight into key leadership processes. In the Bono and Anderson (2005) formulation of leadership referred to as path-goal theory, the effective leader is one who helps subordinates recognize and understand what their
respective task and role requirements are, so that they can achieve desired outcomes.

Chen and Aryee (2007) indicated that the effectiveness of leaders depends to a certain extent on their personality and charisma, not solely on their control over organizational structures.

Recent developments in formal thought about leadership have moved beyond the foundational theories of the trait, functional, and situational approaches, with leadership studies for the past decade focusing on the transformational/transactional approach.

Transformational leadership as a theoretical approach was initially identified by Burns (2005), who labeled traditional leadership as transactional and a more patient, complex type of leadership as transformational. The definition and concept of transformational leadership were later refined and extended by Bass (1987).

Leaders possess the following essential qualities (Bono & Anderson, 2005): loyalty, courage, desire, emotional stamina, physical stamina, empathy, decisiveness, anticipation, timing, competitiveness, self-confidence, accountability, responsibility, credibility, tenacity, dependability, and stewardship. The qualities underlying effective leadership are: energy and stamina, vision, intelligence, assertiveness and dominance, integrity, creativity and imagination, tolerance of stress, and adaptability and flexibility.

Bruton and Lau (2008) noted that leadership within a complex organization is achieved through three sub-processes:

1. Establishing direction: Some strategic leadership qualities may be innate, but it would be wrong to believe that strategic leadership is mainly innate. Several qualities, skills and competencies associated with it are acquired.
2. Aligning people: Management strategy occurs at three primary levels within the organization, which are the corporate level, the business level, and the functional level. Corporate Strategic planning involves assessing the organization’s portfolio of business to determine whether an appropriate mix exists.

3. Motivating and inspiring: The transformational leadership strategy area is composed of several trends that have evolved through time. Influences academic, research and challenges managerial influenced this evolution.

The Middle manager

Delmestri and Walgenbach (2005) argue that investment in human capital is an important source of economic growth. Employees with good health and skills are more productive, then employees with reduced skills and medical capacity. Firms and government invests in human capital differently. The government in general prefers programs, job training or education, while firms in higher degree invest through on-the-job training. Dvir, Avolio and Shamir (2002) express that improved personnel management and implements of technologies and the like can reduce costs, make the production more efficient and increase the measured productivity. Floyd and Wooldridge (1997) illustrate that despite this fundamental statements have middle managers earlier when a top-down approach was more usual, faced difficulties. Senior managers who used this approach often viewed middle managers as barriers for future success, instead of a resource.

In the literature today middle managers are viewed as important for the organizational performance. Johns (2006) and Howell and Shamir (2005) argue that they
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actually play a key role in translating strategic change into operations. They are in their actual position forming a bridge between the organizations employees, who are located in upper and lower levels. Furthermore, they have crucial insights in management and vital sources for the organizations achievement. This provides them with unique skills that become useful when both senior management and subordinates are in need for advice (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

**Middle Managers as a Leader**

In the literature, the middle manager has often been singled out as the main reason for resistance to organizational change (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). However, increasingly, research and practice have shown that middle managers’ roles do not only center on the planning, controlling and monitoring of their units’ activities, but they also can influence strategy in both upward and downward directions (Kark, Shamir & Chen, 2003). This is also true for middle managers in USA. There are three primary reasons why today’s middle managers in USA need to play the role of leader; the critical position of the middle manager, leadership continuity, and motivation issues.

First, middle managers are serving in critical positions in today’s organizations in USA. The external environments for USA’s organizations are characterized by incredible competitiveness and complexity. It is often middle managers rather than the top managers who have their hands on the “pulse of the organization” and are closer to customers and other stakeholders (Koene, Vogelaar & Soeters, 2002).

In conclusion, the critical nature of the position and the leadership continuum require middle managers take on the role of leader. At the same time, the middle
managers themselves also have strong motivations to be more engaged in leadership. Although there are also other related issues, these three are the most influential reasons for the leadership competencies of middle managers to be an important topic with social and academic significance.

**Frontline employees**

Frontline employees hold a unique position in the organization in that they continually observe customer reaction to the firm’s service product and prescribed delivery process. Their constant interaction with customers should give them over time a strong sense of what customers like and don’t like about the firm’s core product attributes and support services. As a result, frontline employees should be a good source of ideas for product improvements, and occasionally, radical product innovations (Bass, 1985). Their frontline exposure and essential role in the service delivery process qualify them to contribute to the development and testing of service, process and marketing program designs.

**Performance of Organization**

The topic of performance is not a straightforward one. An organization is judged by its performance (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). The word “performance” is utilized extensively in all fields of management. Despite the frequency of the use of the word, its precise meaning is rarely explicitly defined by authors even when the main focus of the article or book is on performance (Walumba, Wange, Lawler & Shi, 2004. The correct interpretation of the word performance is important and must never be misread in the
context of its use. Often performance is identified or equated with effectiveness and efficiency (Basset al., 2003).

For more than a decade, organizational environments have experienced radical changes. As a result of greater competition in the global marketplace the majority of organizations have greatly streamlined their operations (Beatty & Lee, 1992). Every moment presents a diverse set of challenges and obstacles: laws and regulations are evolving, the economy is altering, and, most importantly, no one is aware of what problems or obstacles will arise. Furthermore, organizations can also perform well or poorly due to external forces, such as interest rates and taxation. To remain competitive in such an environment, an organization needs to get the most out of its assets, especially the human assets (Bono & Anderson, 2005).

**Theoretical Gap**

From the literature review, a theoretical gap has been identified about the relationship between the leadership of middle managers and the performance of the frontline employees. Therefore, the research will try to fill this gap by assessing the relationship between middle manager’s leadership and the performance of frontline employees.

**Theoretical Framework**

*Leadership*

The theoretical framework for the present study is based on Glomb and Welsh (2005) leadership practices, which they had found to be common among successful
leaders. The basic assumption underlying the present study is this: "These practices are not the private property of the leaders ... they are available to anyone ... " (Glomb & Welsh, 2005).

Many studies conducted in the U.S. have used the Leadership Practices Inventory (Gibson, Waller, Carpenter and Conte, 2007). In one such study, Gundlach, Zivnuska and Stoner (2006) attempted to determine whether traditional leadership practices differed from nontraditional leadership practices, in relation to the gender of the leader. In Giberson, Resick and Dickson (2005) study, the LPI was used to identify leadership characteristics of Community Development Corporation (CDC) executive directors. The effective leadership practices incorporated into the LPI were listed by Posner and Kouzes (1987) as the following:

1. Communicating the Vision
2. Being a Role Model to Subordinates
3. Intellectual Stimulation
4. Individualized Consideration
5. Mentoring
6. Motivating the employees
7. Achieving Group Goals
8. Empowerment

Frontline Employee's Performance

Basset al. (2003) states that, “the effective management of individual performance is critical to the execution of strategy and the organization achieving its strategic
objectives.” Performance cannot be left in anticipation that it will develop naturally, despite the employee’s natural desire to perform and be rewarded for it. This desire needs to be accommodated, facilitated and cultivated (Bono & Anderson, 2005). In return for this performance, organizations extend themselves in various forms of acknowledgement (Delmestri & Walgenbach, 2005). Individual performance has become a topical issue in today’s business environment, so much so that organizations go to great lengths to appraise and manage it (Dvir, Avolio & Shamir, 2002).

Howell and Shamir (2005) stated that individual performance is the product of ability multiplied by motivation. Furthermore, Howell, and Avolio (1993) concur with the belief that performance is ultimately an individual phenomenon with environmental factors influencing performance primarily through their effect on the individual determinants of performance – ability and motivation. The diagram below, adapted from Cummings and Schwab (1973), illustrates individual performance determinants.

*Figure 1: Individual Performance Determinants*
Furthermore, Howell and Shamir (2005) identified the variables that determine the performance of a frontline employee. These variables are:

1. Attitude towards work
2. Attitude towards supervisor and coworkers
3. Attendance punctuality
4. Dependability
5. Quality of work
6. Job knowledge and skills
7. Productivity
8. Responsibility

**Conclusion**

Ultimately it is the individual employee who either performs, or fails to perform, a task. In order for an organization to perform an individual must set aside his personal goals, at least in part, to strive for the collective goals of the organization (Howell & Shamir, 2005). In an organizational context, the very nature of performance is defined by the organization itself (Dvir, Avolio & Shamir, 2002). Employees are of paramount importance to the achievement of any organization. Thus, effective leadership enables greater participation of the entire workforce, and can also influence both individual and organizational performance (Delmestri & Walgenbach, 2005).
Chapter 3: Methodology

Polit and Beck (2006) stated that the purpose of all research is to understand. We pursue answers to the questions; we investigate variables to come to a greater understanding of the world in which we live. Creswell (2005) stated that there are three major components of the activity of understanding. Those include observing and describing, discovering regularities and order, and formalizing and generalizing the regularities. As we observe and describe occurrences, we find order and that order helps us generalize and form theories. Social science research has been described as having these three purposes: measuring social phenomenon, discovering social regularities, and creating social theories (Creswell, 2005). This is the process of scientific inquiry.

This study fits this model. It describes the levels of each variable in the workplace and, through that; I will seek to better understand the phenomenon of participation and its related variables. I also will attempt to uncover and explain relationships or patterns between these variables. The use of a simple random sample facilitated generalization of the results to the larger population. The method chosen for this study is survey research. This study will include two questionnaires; one to measure middle managers’ TL behaviors and one to measure frontline employee performance. The following is an introduction of this method and a defense of its appropriateness for this project.

Overview of Quantitative Research Approach

Quantitative research uses scientific methods to investigate phenomena and address issues and problems (Davies, 2007; Sanchez, 2006). These methods utilize an
objective manner that enhances the reliability of the information and reduces biases (Davies, 2007; Sanchez, 2006). Qualitative research answers questions and explores new knowledge in a natural environment (Creswell, 2005; Davies, 2007; Sanchez, 2006). This approach attempts to understand all aspects of people’s behaviors, attitudes, and experiences (Davies, 2007; Sanchez, 2006). To address the research questions, the qualitative approach depends on four main data collections strategies: participation, observation, interviews, and analysis (Davies, 2007).

**Research Method and Design Appropriateness**

In order to address the research problem and answer the research questions indicated in Chapter 1, a quantitative method approach will be the most appropriate for this study. The aim is to assess the impact of middle manager’s leadership on the performance of the frontline employee. Data gathered for literature reviews will aid in developing a questionnaire to explain the relationship between middle manager’s leadership and frontline employee’s performance.

The variables included will be leadership skills and employees performance determinants. The transformational leadership variables are: (a) communicating the vision, (b) being a role model to subordinates, (c) intellectual stimulation, (d) individualized consideration, (e) mentoring, (f) motivating the employees and (g) achieving group goals. While the frontline employees’ performance variables are: (a) attitude towards work, (b) attitude towards supervisor and coworkers, (c) attendance punctuality, (d) dependability, (e) quality of work, (f) job knowledge and skills, (g) productivity and (h) responsibility.
A different sample from the identified population will receive the questionnaire. Burns & Grove (2005) argued that survey research can go beyond the initial observation of a correlation between two variables and examine the role played by several intervening variables. With this study, the author will seek to understand a number of variables simultaneously and will be interested in discovering any positive or negative relationship between them.

The study addresses the central question: What is the impact of transformational leadership by middle managers on the performance of frontline employees? To address this question, the research study will investigate the relationships between middle managers’ leadership behaviors, and performance of frontline employees. Following hypotheses provides the foundation for examining these relationships:

H$_1$: There is a positive relationship between middle management leadership and organizational performance

H$_2$: There is a significant impact of “communicating the vision” on frontline employee performance

H$_3$: There is a significant impact of “being a role model to subordinates” on frontline employee performance

H$_4$: There is a significant impact of “intellectual stimulation” on frontline employee performance

H$_5$: There is a significant impact of “individualized consideration” on frontline employee performance

H$_6$: There is a significant impact of “mentoring” on frontline employee performance
H₇: There is a significant impact of “motivating the employees” on frontline employee performance.

H₈: There is a significant impact of “achieving group goals” on frontline employee performance.

**Research Design and Process**

The proposed study will involve quantitative research stage, which will employ a questionnaire. This quantitative method research approach will be correlational in nature (Creswell, 2005). Correlational Study is defined as a scientific study in which the researcher develops a link between variables. Correlational studies are conducted in order to find out the association of one variable with another. This type of research enables the researcher to analyze which variable can be related and which variable cannot be related. Nevertheless, the fact that two variable are correlated or related to each other does not mean that there a causal relationship between them. It becomes important for the researcher to understand and create distinction between causation and correlation. Hence, two variables can be correlated without forming a casual relationship. The quantitative method approach is most appropriate to address the research questions and achieve the proposed study goals.

**Participants**

Participants in this study will include 30 middle managers and 100 frontline employees of twenty 5-star hotels. Since the research requires managers who possess transformational leadership skills, a survey will be conducted to find those middle
managers. Employees within the hotel industry will be surveyed to identify the transformational middle managers within their organizations. The leaders that will receive the highest score will be considered suitable for our research.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study will be questionnaire. The two questionnaires will contain different rating scales. The frontline employee questionnaire had a scale of 0 to 4 and the middle manager questionnaire had a scale of 1 to 5. The 0 to 4 scale will be used for the frontline employee questionnaire to be consistent with published past research.

Pilot Study

The questionnaire will be tested by 2 middle managers and 10 frontline employees. An evaluation of the questionnaire and comments provided by the middle managers and employees will help determine if there is a need to change parts of the questionnaire particularly changes in demographic section and the amount of time needed to complete the questionnaire.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is an important component of research and is an integral part of the research process (Burns & Grove, 2005; Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2005; Polit & Beck; 2006). Researchers should educate their participants in order for them to make an informed decision regarding their participation in the research (Burns & Grove, 2005;
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Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2005; Polit & Beck; 2006). Participants must provide informed consent freely and without force (Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2005) and with clear comprehension of what participation entails (Burns & Grove, 2005).

For the proposed study, the researcher will implement practical steps to ensure that all participants are educated about the proposed study in order to make an informed decision. Participation will be voluntary and individuals have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw from either phase of the proposed study at any time.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an important component that requires focused attention within the research process (Burns & Grove, 2005; Creswell, 2005; Neuman, 2005). The researcher will carefully consider confidentiality in the proposed study for the quantitative phase. The quantitative sample will include a purposeful selection of samples based on their knowledge of the central phenomenon. The selection will ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. Only the researcher will approach potential participants.

**Validity**

Validity assesses whether the meaning and interpretation of an event is sound or whether a particular measure is an accurate reflection of intent. The validity of data needs to be carefully checked (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Burns & Grove, 2005). Classifying the data can help the researcher reach important conclusions and uncover the results that led to such conclusions (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Neuman, 2005).
Researchers may check for validity in several ways (Gerrish & Lacey, 2006). These include comparing findings of one instrument with findings from other instruments and conducting joint observations or collaborative marking of the same tests (Gerrish & Lacey, 2006). Checking validity could also include returning draft reports to respondents for accuracy checks, considering opposing explanations for the issue or question, and conducting multiple observations of the same event (Creswell, 2005). The researcher can also enhance respondent validity by asking the participants to check their interpretations of the information provided or observed (Gerrish & Lacey, 2006).

**Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure, score, or test. Reliability occurs more often in statistical quantitative studies and less frequently in qualitative studies (Cooper & Schindler, 2006; Gerrish & Lacey, 2006). Since the world of research with human subjects is not perfect, researchers developed a number of techniques for estimating reliability or the degree of error in measurement (Creswell, 2005; Burns & Grove, 2005). One such technique is called the reliability coefficient, a measure which ranges from $r = 0$ (not reliable) to $r = 1$ (perfect reliability) (Polit & Beck, 2006).

For the quantitative part of the proposed study, the questionnaire will undergo a pilot test. Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha (Gerrish & Lacey, 2006) will measure internal consistency for reliability. This measurement will apply to the quantitative instrument questionnaire because the questionnaire will use a Likert-type scale. A Likert scale uses a specific range from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha
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offers a coefficient that approximates the consistency of scores on a particular instrument (Creswell, 2005; Burns & Grove, 2005).

**Data Analysis**

Within research, there are different statistical processes for designing a study. Statistical analysis for example, gives meaning to the numbers collected within a particular study (Scanlan, 2001). The categories of statistical procedures include descriptive, associative, and inferential. Descriptive statistics depict events or individuals with some predetermined characteristics (Creswell, 2005). Associative statistics attempt to determine meaningful interrelationships among or between data (Burns & Grove, 2005). Inferential statistics determine and assess the characteristics or attributes of a particular sample to generate generalizations about a specific population (Neuman, 2005; Polit & Beck; 2006). The meaning of statistical information depends on the clarity and precision of the problem and questions addressed within the topic under investigation (Neuman, 2005; Scanlan, 2001).

The data collected will be analyzed by using the descriptive, correlation, chi-square test and multiple regression analysis.

*Appropriateness of Correlation, Chi-square test and Multiple Regression Analysis*

The rationale for using multiple test is that the research requires to assess the impact of leadership by middle managers on the performance of frontline employees. Therefore, we will have to identify these important variables and show its association within and between dependent and independent groups. This will be done using
descriptives and correlation. A correlational research design will be appropriate, because it is used to test the association or relationship between two variables. Therefore, correlation test will be helpful in testing the degree of association or relationship between the independent variables (determinants of middle manager leadership) and dependent variables (determinants of frontline employee performance). The results will identify the important leadership variables of middle manager that affects a frontline employee’s performance.

Furthermore, hypotheses will be tested using the chi-square test. The results will tell us the kind of association or relation the independent and dependent variables have with each other. Therefore, Chi-square test will be appropriate for the study, because the test is used to measure the association between independent and dependent variables. Therefore, this test will be appropriate to assess the degree of association or relationship between middle manager leadership and frontline employee performance. All the hypotheses will be tested using chi square test.

Finally, multiple regression analysis will be appropriate because it is used to test the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. This is the most important test for this research. The above mentioned tests will help us lead to this test. Therefore, the multiple regressions analysis will be helpful in testing the impact of middle managers’ leadership on the performance of frontline employees.
REFERENCES


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