Relationships between leadership style and organizational commitment: The moderating role of the system of work

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: THE MODERATING ROLE OF THE SYSTEM OF WORK

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ABSTRACT. The article fills a crucial gap in the literature in the area of relationships between leadership style and organizational commitment. In spite of the actuality of the theoretical nature and growing practical importance of the issue, no attempt has been made to examine the relationship in the context of its moderation by the work system in light of the widespread increase in remote working in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and post-Covid digitalization of the working environment by now. As a result, the key purpose of the paper is to investigate the moderating role of the work system in the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. The work system is understood as remote or onsite working. The empirical research is based on the survey done for Poland in the year 2022. The obtained primary data were analyzed within the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analytical framework. The main findings prove that transactional leadership has a greater impact on the organizational commitment of remote workers, while transformational leadership has a stronger impact on the organizational commitment of employees who work onsite. Therefore, from the practical perspective, organizations can increase the organizational commitment of their employees by adopting appropriate leadership behaviors by leaders. These behaviors should be adapted to the work system, depending on whether employees work remotely or on-site. Based on these results, organizations can better design working conditions contributing to greater employee commitment, which in turn will translate into organizational performance.

Łucjan, K. et al.

Introduction

Leadership style and organizational commitment traditionally are the subjects of many studies (Moorman *et al.*, 1993; de Vries *et al.*, 2010; Choudhary *et al.*, 2013), but it is considered still as the area of most up to date scientific investigation and the core of the empirical management sciences (Qing *et al.*, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2022; Anand *et al.*, 2023). Leadership is especially widely studied in the context of organizational behavior, which proves the huge importance of this topic (Stoker *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2022; Thompson *et al.*, 2022; Alon *et al.*, 2023). This issue is of fundamental nature in the case of building entrepreneurial potential of organizations both in the case of small and medium enterprises at different stage of development, but also big scale mature companies operating in the global environment (Civelek *et al.*, 2021; Meluzín *et al.*, 2018; Wach & Głodowska, 2021). To clarify the concepts, it is considered that leadership style is directly connected with a leader's behavior, while organizational commitment refers to employee behavior and the extent to which they stand with the organization and the goals adopted by it (Nahak & Ellitan, 2022; Zbierowski & Gojny-Zbierowska, 2022). Effective leadership results in employee commitment to the organization (Hai *et al.*, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2022; Cizrelioğulları & Babayiğit,2022). The position of the leader plays an extremely important role in the company, and even the personality of the leader can affect the culture of the organization (Chun & Davies, 2009; Thanh & Quang, 2022). Thus, there is no doubt that leadership style is strictly related to organizational commitment (Cho *et al.*, 2019; Thanh & Quang, 2022).

Other studies claim connections between organizational commitment, leadership style, and job satisfaction or productivity (Bloom *et al.*, 2014; Silitonga *et al.*, 2020; Khalik *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, according to Contreras *et al.* (2020), remote work itself requires appropriate leadership, which, if properly selected, will then yield positive results in terms of firm productivity, while omitting this aspect will result in the opposite effect.

This paper deals with two leadership styles: transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Transformational leaders motivate employees by emotionally linking them to the organization's vision and focusing on employee needs by creating a space where employees want to work (Jackson *et al.*, 2013). According to a well-established theory, transactional leadership refers to the exchange relationship between a leader and a follower to advance their interests. These transactions can be monetary and non-monetary (Bass, 1999).

The system of work has also been studied in many aspects, including employee engagement. However, various studies have yielded differing results. Some of them claim that remote work brings many opportunities for organizations. Because of greater control over the time spent on work and family life, the level of employees' concentration increases, and consequently, their satisfaction, sense of emotional attachment to the organization, and organizational commitment also improve (Alshibly *et al.*, 2022; Montenero & Cazorzi, 2022). A study by Bloom *et al.* (2014) indicated that working from home resulted in a 13% increase in employee productivity while also increasing job satisfaction and reducing employee absences and turnover. Another study suggests that remote work did not affect employee productivity (Anand & Acharya, 2021). However, working remotely can also bring many difficulties. While employees must be engaged and develop themselves when working on site, remote work does not guarantee that employees will exert themselves. This problem has been empirically confirmed based on massive remote working time during Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns (Mihalca *et al.*, 2021) Thus, developing employees and taking care of their engagement becomes optional. Interactions within the team and opportunities for individual development have decreased during remote work, making work monotonous, boring, and not very creative (Yadav *et al.*, 2020, Borisov & Vinogradov, 2022). Work-life balance has also been questioned

within the framework of remote work, and this has become the reason for numerous papers (Mihalca *et al.*, 2021). However, it can be considered that thanks to developed technology, employees can meet this challenge (Anand & Acharya, 2021). Not only that, but also many factors, such as setting limits and maintaining contact with other employees, which determine the maintenance of work-life balance, should be taken into account (Shirmohammadi *et al.*, 2022).

Nevertheless, to our knowledge, no study to date has examined the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment in such a way that the moderator of this relationship could be the system of work, which is a gap that needs to be researched. From the empirical perspective this problem has not been investigated in Central European business environment. Many authors have noted the essence of remote working, which is mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but no one has made the connection between it and leadership and organizational commitment (Mihalca *et al.*, 2021; Waizenegger *et al.*, 2020).

Based on the presented weaknesses of the current state of the art literature, which was only shortly discussed above, there is still a gap in studies on the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment moderated by the system of work. Thus, the authors have analyzed this relationship, which was the main aim of this paper. The theoretical framework concerns leadership style, organizational commitment, and the system of work. Then, the methodology (the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analytical tools, and empirical framework are described. Next, the results are discussed. The authors also described the main limitations of the study and ideas for future studies that are opened thanks to the current contribution.

Although previous studies have focused on the mentioned aspects, only this study has indicated that the system of work differentiates the need for an appropriate leadership style reflected in a specific type of organizational commitment. These are crucial findings from the point of view of organizations operating in Central and Eastern Europe, which, by applying the solutions proposed in this article to their businesses, will better match the organizational environment with their employees. This, in turn, leads to their increased organizational commitment and, consequently, better company outcomes.

1. Literature review and hypotheses development

Leadership style and organizational commitment

Various typologies of leadership style and organizational commitment can be found in the literature (Nguyen *et al.*, 2021; Szostek *et al.*, 2023). This study examines two types of leadership: transformational leadership (TFL) and transactional leadership (TCL). A three-dimensional model of organizational commitment is used, which distinguishes affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Already in the second half of the 20th century, Bass (1985) defined the four components of transformational leadership: charisma or ideal influence (gaining the respect of employees), inspirational motivation (encouraging creative and broad thinking), intellectual stimulation (encouraging innovation, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving), and an individualized approach (supporting the needs of followers). In other words, transformational leadership aims to guide and inspire individual efforts by transforming and motivating employees (Jensen *et al.*, 2019). Transformational leaders use individual considerations to meet the needs of employees, which contributes to strong commitment (Nazir & Islam, 2017).

Transactional leadership is directly about the exchange between the leader and the employees. The leader explains what followers must do to avoid punishment or receive a reward (Thanh & Quang, 2022). In this type of leadership, contingent reward leadership is used (CR; employees are rewarded for achieving the desired goal), as well as management by exception (MBE), which refers to a leader noticing and correcting employee errors. Management by exception-active means that the leader intervenes before the problem becomes very serious but still reminds employees of mistakes in order to prompt them toward the goal (Avolio & Bass, 2002). However, management by exception-passive assumes that the leader intervenes only when there are problems (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The literature of the 20th century concludes that leaders in organizations usually show patterns of both transformational and transactional leadership, but each leader adopts them in a different way (Avolio *et al.*, 1999; Bass, 1985). Furthermore, according to previous research, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between transactional leadership and transformational leadership. There is a complementary relationship between these two leadership styles (Tejeda *et al.*, 2001; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Xenikou, 2017).

Organizational commitment is a key element that influences the performance of the organization. Involving the entire team in such a way that they undertake certain activities voluntarily can play a key role in the organization achieving a competitive advantage (Szostek, 2018; Parmar *et al.*, 2022). Engaged employees are emotionally committed, loyal, and productive, which results in better customer service. The opposite are disengaged employees, whose work negatively affects the organization's performance; they have higher absenteeism rates, lower participation, weaker customer service, and a generally negative attitude toward work and colleagues (Canavesi & Minelli, 2022; Szostek *et al.*, 2023; 2022a; 2022b). The behavior of the team leader is not insignificant to employee engagement. It is the manager or the leader who is responsible for creating a highly committed team (Tripathi & Sharma, 2016; Aránega *et al.,* 2023). In this regard, such leaders' qualities as warmth and professional competence are crucial for forming committed teams (Kuráth et al., 2023). Employees characterized by affective commitment (AC) are emotionally attached to their organization, are committed to it, and feel that they are part of it. Continuance commitment (CC) relates to employees who continue to work in the organization because they are aware of the potential costs of leaving it, and thus consider it a duty to stay. Employees with normative commitment (NC), on the other hand, feel a certain obligation to continue working in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The general task of a leader in a team is to direct employees tactfully so that goals are achieved. The method that the leader chooses to accomplish this task can significantly affect employee behavior (Lyndon & Rawat, 2015). Supported by the right leadership style, employees are more engaged (Wallace, de Chernatony & Buil, 2013). An example can be matching a leader and a subordinate in terms of, for example, their demonstrated conscientiousness which results in higher job satisfaction and thus lowers the willingness to leave a job (Guay *et al.*, 2020). The same conscientiousness among employees makes them less likely to exhibit counterproductive behavior that could negatively affect the performance of the organization as a whole (Szostek *et al.*, 2022a; 2022b).

The existing studies show the relationship between leadership style, organizational commitment, and other organizational behaviors. The detailed research conducted by Zhang *et al.* (2022) shows that authentic leadership is positively related to all positive organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, work engagement, job autonomy, job satisfaction, or workplace trust. Furthermore, it is found to be negatively associated with perceived negative effects such as stress, or emotional exhaustion. This indicates that a leader who directs people and the work they do is a key factor in the smooth functioning of the

organization. The study highlighted one type of leadership but did not examine its impact on any specific type of organizational commitment. Nevertheless, the authors point out the aspects for which authentic leadership is vital. The main thing is that authentic leaders, by involving subordinates in the decision-making process, indicate trust in them and allow autonomy to some extent. Autonomy, in turn, is essential for reducing work stress, which can help improve organizational commitment (Li *et al.*, 2020; Marlina *et al.,* 2023).

Another study focused, among other things, on the relationship occurring between ethical leadership and affective commitment. As it turns out, there is a significant and positive relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment. Ethical leaders, because of their trustworthiness, can establish good relationships with their subordinates, which in turn contributes to employees' intentions to stay in the organization (Qing *et al.*, 2020). These dependencies have been proven in pandemic crisis when ethical leaders helped to improve many functions in an effective and professional manner (Sarihasan et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership is also found to have a positive impact on affective commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Jiatong *et al.*, 2022; Park *et al.*, 2022). Transformational leaders are the ones who always believe in their subordinates and actively contribute to their commitment to the company's performance (Thanh & Quang, 2022). They go beyond economic needs and motivators, which in turn translates into employee retention. Employees then take pleasure in being part of the organization, which in turn is an indicator of affective commitment (Jiatong et al, 2022).

Furthermore, transactional leadership is also found to have a significant and positive impact on organizational commitment (Ramli *et al.*, 2019; Winiastuti *et al.*, 202l; Nurjanah *et al.*, 2020; Islam *et al.*, 2021), although some sources indicate that it is less influential on organizational commitment than transformational leadership (Thanh & Quang, 2022; Ismail *et al.*, 2021). Thus, not only the power of influence, but also the type of organizational commitment influenced by a transactional leader may differ from the one that will be influenced by transformational leadership. In the case of transactional leadership, which focuses on punishments and rewards, employees may be less creative but more task-oriented because of the supervision they receive (Thanh & Quang, 2022).

It follows that the leader's approach can condition how employees will engage in the organization. Hence, this study hypothesized that a specific leadership style affects a specific type of organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *The type of leadership style adopted by the leader affects the type of organizational commitment of employees.*

System of work and its relationships

As times change and technology progresses, employees can take up a variety of work systems. Traditional or remote work is available to them. Remote work consists in working out of the office but nowadays offers opportunities to stay in constant and ongoing contact with the company, supervisors, and colleagues. This contact is maintained via special communicators, email, or telephone (Anand & Acharya, 2021). Overall, remote working is more and more popular: according to a study conducted by Owl Labs in 2021, as many as 81% of respondents would like to work remotely or in hybrid mode. Only 29% of those surveyed prefer to come to the office full-time. Undoubtedly, the coronavirus pandemic greatly popularized remote working (Mihalca *et al*., 2021). At that time, as many as 69% of employees worked remotely and one in three persons (32%) said that they might quit if employers prevented it after the pandemic (Owl Labs & Global Workplace Analytics, 2021). These findings are not unexpected,

as, according to Anand and Acharya (2021), remote work has many benefits for employers and employees alike. The pluses for the organization are reduced facility maintenance costs (lower electricity bills, reduced operating costs, etc.), as well as improved employee productivity. Employees, on the other hand, can maintain a work–life balance and achieve their goals, making them more fulfilled. These benefits have often been explored in employer value proposition development (Samoliuk et al., 2022).

According to Taboroši *et al.* (2020), remote workers show greater commitment to and trust in the organization for which they work than those who work onsite. The vital point was the precision of tasks and deadlines in remote working. By contrast, direct contact between the leader and the employee can present numerous gaps and inaccuracies in communication. These dependencies may also result from the leader's behavior, which is crucial in organizing the work of subordinates. Referring to the beforementioned theory, the transactional leader determines what should be done to get a reward or avoid punishment, while the transformational leader focuses on the individual needs of employees, motivating them to work (Thanh & Quang, 2022; Jensen *et al.*, 2019). Managing a remote-working team is certainly different from managing people with whom the leader has direct contact. According to a study from 2022, leaders who encourage remote employees to independently set goals, increase the chance that these goals will be achieved and improve employees' involvement in their implementation as compared to leaders who themselves set goals for remote employees (Monzani *et al.*, 2022). In any case, managing remote workers requires efforts from leaders to keep employees motivated (Raišienė et al., 2021).

On the other hand, the relationship between the leader and the employee is the key to employee engagement, which increases profitability (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). The more successful enterprises demonstrate deeper employee engagement and more developed social relations in teams (Mishchuk et al., 2023). The increased number of interactions between supervisors and employees improves their communication, which in turn is necessary to strengthen employee engagement. When employees are dispersed across different locations due to remote work, they cannot celebrate their successes or birthdays together; nor can they integrate socially. The need for self-development is self-evident to the conventionally employed, but is optional and difficult to control and enforce for remote workers. This problem may particularly affect new employees, who will encounter difficulties in getting to know the team they are to work with, and, thus, their work may turn out to be more difficult and less efficient (Yadav *et al.*, 2020).

Noteworthy results were obtained in a paper from 2021. As it turns out, during the COVID-19 pandemic, new faces and challenges of remote working were diagnosed. The paper shows how important role clarity, self-efficacy, and task interdependence are for remote workers. To maintain employee well-being, it is important to design high-quality workplaces, for example, by clarifying their responsibilities and supporting self-efficacy. Organizations dealing with emotional exhaustion should take care to mitigate role ambiguity in remote working. This is achievable by clearly defining responsibilities or making feedback clear. Additionally, self-efficacy is a buffer between the negative effects of work overload and employee exhaustion only when roles in the organization are clearly defined. Therefore, organizations should take care of the high sense of self-efficacy of employees working remotely. It is through self-efficacy and high role clarity that the exhaustion of remote workers can be reduced (Mihalca *et al.* 2021).

Employee engagement is influenced by many factors, which could explain why there is such a wide range of opinions and results. One of the factors is leadership styles, which determine employee engagement. They have not been investigated in detail yet in terms of the impact on employee engagement through the moderating variable of remote work.

Research on these data has been carried out in various contexts – national, sectoral, type of profession, or in general terms referring to organizational commitment. (Bakotić, 2022; Ashraf, 2020; Ozbag & Arslan, 2018; Konya *et al.*, 2016, Jena, 2015). The area should also be studied in the demographic context. Therefore, the study will explore how individual employee demographic variables moderate the relationship between leadership style and employee commitment to the organization. In light of the above, the following hypotheses were set:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *The system of work moderates the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The influence that leadership style has on organizational commitment is impacted by the demographic characteristic of employees: (H3a) sex, (H3b) age, (H3c) length of service, (H3d) economic sector of employment.*

As a result, Figure 1 presents the framework for hypotheses development in the current empirical investigation.
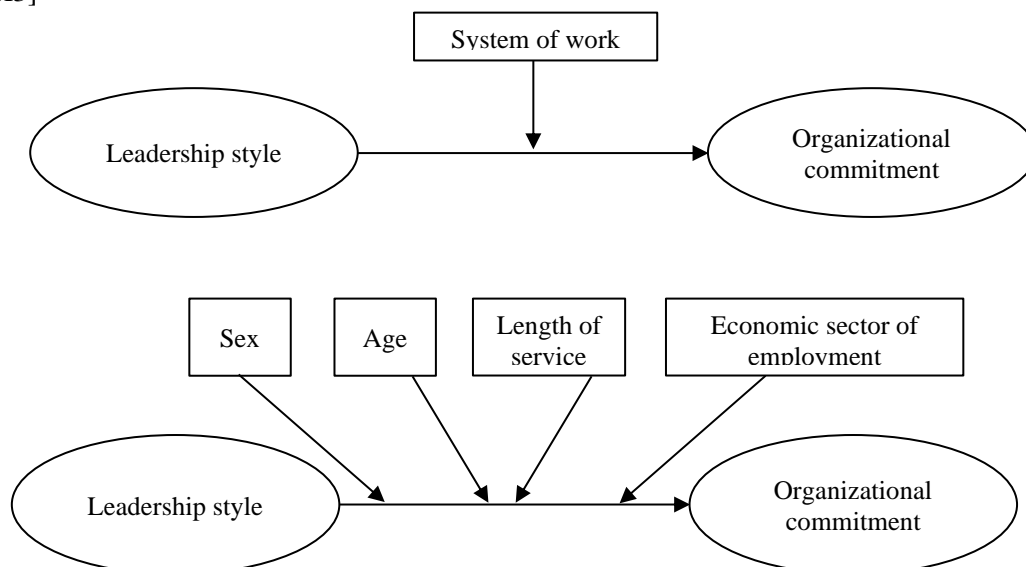
[H1]

[H2]; [H3]

Figure 1. Visualization of hypotheses
Source: *Authors' own research results*

2. Research methods

Sampling methods and participant characteristics

The data were collected from May to July 2022 using an online internet survey. The analysis was of 341 correctly completed questionnaires out of 376 received. The respondents were professionally active Poles. Non-random selection was used to select them for the study. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample

Sex	F	65.98%	225			
	M	34.02%	116			
Age	18–25	22.58%	77			
	26–33	41.06%	140			
	34–65	36.36%	124			
Company sector	public	19.06%	65			
	private	80.94%	276			
Length of service	Less than 5 years	67.16%	229			
	5 years or more	32.84%	112			
Work position	Assistant	11.44%	39	Lower position	69.21%	236
	Expert	7.04%	24			
	Specialist	50.73%	173			
	Manager	17.30%	59	Higher position	22.87%	78
	Director/management board member/owner	5.57%	19			
	Other	7.04%	24			
	N/A	0.88%	3			

Source: *Authors' own research results*.

Measurement scales

The three-component model of commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) was applied in this study based on the scale presented by Lee *et al.* (2001) (see Appendix A). Items AC1–AC6 described affective commitment, while CC1–CC6 related to continuance commitment and NC1–NC6 to normative commitment. Items with inverted values are underlined in Appendix A. Employee perception of leadership was determined on the leadership scale operationalized by Jensen *et al.* (2019), which was presented in Appendix B. Items TFL1–TFL7 related to the perception of transformational leadership and TCL1–TCL12 described the perception of transactional leadership. Items with inverted values are underlined in Appendix B. (The abbreviations AC, CC, NC, TFL, TCL, and underlines were invisible to respondents.) All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 meant strongly disagree and 5 meant strongly agree. Moreover, in the analysis, a *t*-test was used to compare calculated parameter estimations.

Data analysis strategy and schematic model

The obtained empirical data was processed with application of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. The method provides a merger between confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis used in econometrics. The SEM modeling is currently commonly used in management and behavioral studies mostly due to it high applicability for phenomena of latent character, which are described with intangible variables (Balcerzak & Pietrzak, 2016;

Pietrzak & Balcerzak, 2016; Cong Doanh *et al.*, 2021; Ismail *et al.*, 2023; Chang & Ku, 2023). From the perspective of social sciences, the important advantage of the method relates to its higher elasticity than the case of standard regression analysis (Brown, 2006; Kuczewska & Tomaszewski, 2022; Dabija *et al.*, 2022; Szostek *et al.* 2023; Wach *et al.*, 2023).

Figure 2 shows a theoretical SEM model developed for current research. It illustrates the hypothetical relationships between the variables. The model assumes that the leadership style used by the leader influences the organizational commitment undertaken by the organization's employees. There are also relations between the leadership styles themselves, without indicating the direction of influence between them.
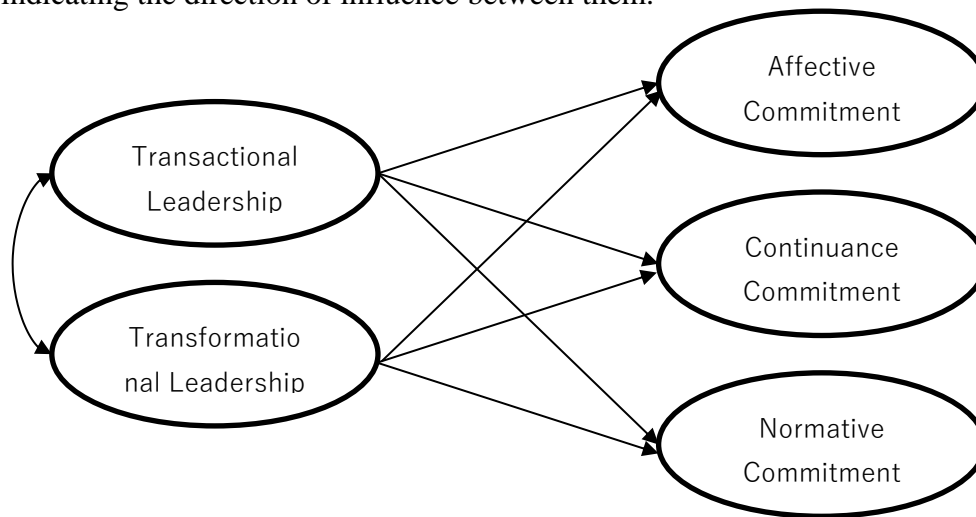

Figure 2. Schematic SEM model diagram
Source: *Authors' own research results*

3. Results

Model verification

A total of 341 correctly completed questionnaires were collected and then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and IBM SPSS Amos v. 28. The results of confirmatory factor analysis allowed the variables with the highest factor loadings to be selected from the scales. It was very important to conduct further analysis using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). Table 2 shows latent variables and their observable variables with calculated statistics of Cronbach's Alpha and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 2. Latent variables with their measurable variables and Cronbach's alpha statistics

Latent variable	Measurable Variables (Components)	Cronbach's Alpha - *internal consistency*	AVE - *convergent validity*
Affective commitment (AC)	AC2, AC3, AC4, AC5	0.867	0.754
Continuance commitment (CC)	CC1, CC2, CC3, CC5	0.775	0.754
Normative commitment (NC)	NC2, NC3, NC4, NC5	0.827	0.658
Transformational leadership (TFL)	TFL1, TFL2, TFL3, TFL6	0.925	0.552
Transactional leadership (TCL)	TCL1, TCL2, TCL4, TCL6	0.923	0.501

Source: *Authors' own research results*

Discriminant validity was calculated using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)

	TCL	TFL	CC	NC	AC
TCL					
TFL	0.630				
CC	0.266	0.234			
NC	0.346	0.335	0.113		
AC	0.368	0.331	0.118	0.158	

Source: *Authors' own research results*

For most variables, Cronbach's alpha values were greater than 0.7, which proves the good reliability of the scales used for the measurement. AVE outcomes for all latent variables are higher than 0.5, thus guaranteeing accuracy and therefore that the research tool diagnoses well a specific criterion and only that criterion. Analyzing the results of HTMT, it should be highlighted that all values are below 0.9, which confirms no discriminatory validity issues. Observable variables measure the corresponding latent variables.

Hypothesis testing

The variables presented in the theoretical model in Figure 2 are also listed in Table 4. The Table presents the results of the SEM factor analysis of the external model. From the results, it has to be concluded that the factor loadings for all measurable variables describing latent variables are statistically significant. For some items, the *p*-value could not be calculated, so it was not listed in the table.

Table 4. Results of external SEM model estimation

Relationship	Parameter	Evaluation of Parameter	p
TCL6 ← Transactional Leadership	α1	0.790	0.000
TCL4 ← Transactional Leadership	α2	0.868	0.000
TCL2 ← Transactional Leadership	α3	0.913	0.000
TCL1 ← Transactional Leadership	α4	0.898	-
TFL6 ← Transformational Leadership	α5	0.770	0.000
TFL3 ← Transformational Leadership	α6	0.770	-
TFL2 ← Transformational Leadership	α7	0.959	0.000
TFL1 ← Transformational Leadership	α8	0.954	0.000
AC2 ← Affective Commitment	α9	0.527	0.000
AC3 ← Affective Commitment	α10	0.916	-
AC4 ← Affective Commitment	α11	0.929	0.000
AC5 ← Affective Commitment	α12	0.807	0.000
NC2 ← Normative Commitment	α13	0.627	0.000
NC3 ← Normative Commitment	α14	0.768	0.000
NC4 ← Normative Commitment	α15	0.724	-
NC5 ← Normative Commitment	α16	0.836	0.000
CC2 ← Continuance Commitment	α17	0.856	-
CC1 ← Continuance Commitment	α18	0.549	0.000
CC3 ← Continuance Commitment	α19	0.803	0.000
CC5 ← Continuance Commitment	α20	0.569	0.000

Source: *Authors' own research results*

Among the following tables, those that contain information about the relationships between variables also have some rows in bold type. These are the indications of statistically significant relationships based on *p*-values (assuming $p \leq 0.05$).

H1: *The type of leadership style adopted by the leader affects the type of organizational commitment of employees.*

Table 5 shows the estimation results of the internal SEM model. These outputs indicate that transformational leadership does not have a significant influence on continuance commitment (β5). Moreover, according to the Evaluation of Standardized Parameters, the strongest relationship has been reported between transactional leadership and affective commitment (β1). All parameters (except β5) are statistically significant, thus proving that the type of leadership style adopted by the leader affects the type of organizational commitment of employees. It turns out that a transactional leadership style has a stronger impact on all types of organizational commitment (comparing β1 with β4, β2 with β5 and β3 with β6) than does a transformational leadership style.

Table 5. Results of internal SEM model estimation

Relationship	Parameter	Evaluation of Parameter	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	*p*
Transactional Leadership → Affective Commitment	**β1**	**0.307**	**0.315**	**0,000**
Transactional Leadership → Continuance Commitment	**β2**	**0.249**	**0.259**	**0.003**
Transactional Leadership → Normative Commitment	**β3**	**0.205**	**0.266**	**0.002**
Transformational Leadership → Affective Commitment	**β4**	**0.196**	**0.166**	**0.035**
Transformational Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β5	0.134	0.115	0.183
Transformational Leadership → Normative Commitment	**β6**	**0.206**	**0.221**	**0.009**

Source: *Authors' own research results*

H2: *The system of work moderates the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment.*

The results of the moderation assumed in Hypothesis 2 are presented in Table 6. The table shows that, for onsite work, the impact of transactional leadership on affective and continuance commitment (β1 and β2) and the impact of transformational leadership on normative commitment (β6) are statistically insignificant. By contrast, for remote working, these relationships turned out to be significant. The opposite is true of the relationship between transformational leadership and affective and continuance commitment (β4 and β5): these relationships are not statistically significant for remote working but are statistically significant for onsite work. In the case of parameter β3, the relationship between transactional leadership and normative commitment turned out to be significant for both systems of work; it seems to be much stronger for remote working, and the *t*-test result confirmed the significance of differences between parameter estimates (*t*>2.0).

Table 6. Results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by the system of work

Relationship	Parameter	Remote work			Onsite work			T-test result
		Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	
Transactional Leadership → Affective Commitment	β1	**0.323**	0.09	**0.002**	0.244	0.128	0.063	0.505
Transactional Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β2	**0.331**	0.105	**0.004**	0.013	0.134	0.922	1.868
Transactional Leadership → Normative Commitment	β3	**0.361**	**0.099**	**0.037**	**0.010**	**0.119**	**0.002**	**2.267**
Transformational Leadership → Affective Commitment	β4	0.142	0.094	0.169	**0.232**	0.117	**0.048**	-0.600
Transformational Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β5	0.068	0.105	0.547	**0.419**	0.131	**0.003**	-2.091
Transformational Leadership → Normative Commitment	β6	**0.222**	0.099	**0.001**	0.452	0.126	0.944	-1.435
Measures of model fit		IFI = 0.957			IFI = 0.924			
		RMSEA = 0.060			RMSEA = 0.083			

Source: *Authors' own research results*

H3: *The influence that leadership style has on organizational commitment is impacted by the demographic characteristic of employees: (H3a) sex, (H3b) age, (H3c) length of service, (H3d) economic sector of employment*

The last hypothesis assumed differences in the relationship between the chosen leadership style and the style of commitment exhibited by employees according to the individual characteristics of the respondents. Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 present the results of estimation in subgroups by the demographic characteristic of employees.

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Table 7. Results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by sex

| Relationship | Parameter | Women | | | Men | | | T-test result |
		Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	
Transactional Leadership → Affective Commitment	β1	**0.318**	**0.126**	**0.002**	**0.300**	**0.142**	**0.020**	0.095
Transactional Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β2	**0.235**	**0.143**	**0.039**	**0.281**	**0.168**	**0.039**	-0.209
Transactional Leadership → Normative Commitment	β3	**0.223**	**0.136**	**0.038**	**0.327**	**0.143**	**0.018**	-0.527
Transformational Leadership → Affective Commitment	β4	0.166	0.136	0.099	0.158	0.132	0.213	0.043
Transformational Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β5	0.113	0.146	0.315	0.166	0.161	0.214	-0.244
Transformational Leadership → Normative Commitment	β6	**0.282**	0.136	**0.009**	0.119	0.146	0.369	0.817
Measures of model fit		IFI = 0.893			IFI = 0.894			
		RMSEA = 0.098			RMSEA = 0.097			

Source: *Authors' own research results*

Table 7 presents the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment in terms of employee gender. Parameter estimates are statistically significant for β1, β2, and β3 in both groups. Parameters β4 and β5 are not significant for either women or men, and the last relation contained in parameter β6 is significant only for women. Although the relationship between transactional leadership and all types of organizational commitment is statistically significant for both women and men, the differences between the subgroups are small and were not confirmed by the *t*-test.

Table 8. Results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by age

Relationship	Parameter	18-25			26-33			34-65			T-test results		
		Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	P	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	P	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	P	t (18-25 and 26-33)	t (18-25 and 34-65)	t (26-33 and 34-65)
TCL→ AC	β1	0.355	0.220	0.033	0.304	0.129	0.005	0.342	0.337	0.039	0.200	0.032	-0.105
TCL→ CC	β2	0.253	0.267	0.166	0.297	0.145	0.014	0.120	0.390	0.489	-0.145	0.281	0.425
TCL→ NC	β3	0.373	0.275	0.052	0.292	0.155	0.014	0.182	0.375	0.241	0.257	0.411	0.271
TFL→ AC	β4	0.121	0.226	0.467	0.182	0.130	0.085	0.087	0.349	0.595	-0.234	0.082	0.255
TFL→ CC	β5	0.035	0.276	0.849	0.035	0.138	0.767	0.313	0.392	0.046	0.000	-0.580	-0.669
TFL→ NC	β6	-0.153	0.268	0.406	0.248	0.142	0.034	0.416	0.376	0.009	-1.322	-1.232	-0.418
Measures of model fit		IFI = 0.865 RMSEA = 0.113			IFI = 0.897 RMSEA = 0.094			IFI = 0.914 RMSEA = 0.089					

Source: *Authors' own research results*

Table 8 presents the results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by age. The β1 parameter turned out to be statistically significant in all age groups. Parameters β2 and β3 are significant only for the middle age group (26–33), parameter β5 is significant in the oldest group, and, additionally, the parameter β6 is statistically significant for the age groups 26–33 and 34–65. Parameter β4 is not significant for any of the groups. Particular attention should be paid to the excessively high RMSEA indicator value of 0.113 in the first subgroup. It indicates that the model is an insufficient fit for the sample, which is probably due to the small sample of the 18–25 age range (77 respondents). In this case, interpretation should be approached with extreme caution. The impact of transformational leadership on normative commitment and continuance commitment (β5, β6) is strongest among people aged 34–65.

In general, the transactional leader's approach is most influential in the 26–33 age group. In this group, it affects all types of organizational commitment, notwithstanding it has a slightly stronger effect on affective commitment in the group of the oldest respondents. Moreover, in general, the influence of transformational leadership on organizational commitment is the strongest in people aged 34 to 65.

Table 9. Results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by the length of service

Relationship	Parameter	<5 years of service			5+ years of service			T-test results
		Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	
Transactional Leadership → Affective Commitment	β1	**0.302**	**0.127**	**0.002**	**0.398**	**0.127**	**0.003**	**-0.535**
Transactional Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β2	**0.263**	**0.143**	**0.021**	**0.296**	**0.161**	**0.031**	**-0.153**
Transactional Leadership → Normative Commitment	β3	**0.295**	0.138	**0.008**	0.226	0.148	0.076	0.341
Transformational Leadership → Affective Commitment	β4	**0.201**	0.124	**0.040l**	0.042	0.148	0.745	0.823
Transformational Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β5	0.091	0.147	0.413	0.169	0.157	0.213	-0.363
Transformational Leadership → Normative Commitment	β6	0.130	0.141	0.224	**0.417**	**0.13**	**0.002**	-1.496
Measures of model fit		IFI = 0.905 RMSEA = 0.091			IFI = 0.880 RMSEA = 0.103			

Source: *Authors' own research results*

Table 9 shows the results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by length of service. The RMSEA in the group of respondents working for 5 years or more in a given company is too high. However, these respondents number over 100 people, and the RMSEA only slightly exceeds the acceptable limits, so these interpretations should be approached with some caution. Parameters β1 and β2 are significant in both groups, but, theoretically, the effect is stronger in people with longer seniority, which was not confirmed by the *t*-test, so the differences between the estimates are slight. Parameters β3 and β4 are statistically significant only in the group of respondents who have worked for the company for less than 5 years, and parameter β6 in the opposite group. The β5 parameter is not statistically significant in any of the groups. Taking into account the RMSEA, it can be cautiously stated that the transactional

leader has a stronger influence on affective and continuance commitment in the group of respondents with 5 and more years of service, while this leadership has a stronger influence on normative commitment among those of shorter service. This statement is supplemented by the fact that the normative commitment among those of 5 or more years' service is more influenced by transformational leadership than by transactional leadership.

Table 10. Results of internal SEM model estimation in subgroups by economic sector of employment

Relationship	Parameter	Private			Public			T-test results
		Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	Evaluation of Standardized Parameter	S.E.	p	
Transactional Leadership → Affective Commitment	β1	**0.293**	**0.099**	**0.000**	0.417	0.292	0.059	-0.402
Transactional Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β2	**0.316**	0.112	**0.000**	-0.131	0.535	0.562	0.818
Transactional Leadership → Normative Commitment	β3	**0.268**	0.104	**0.003**	0.162	0.535	0.480	0.194
Transformational Leadership → Affective Commitment	β4	0.218	0.097	0.100	-0.060	0.313	0.779	0.848
Transformational Leadership → Continuance Commitment	β5	0.092	0.111	0.321	0.373	0.521	0.095	-0.528
Transformational Leadership → Normative Commitment	β6	**0.237**	0.106	**0.009**	0.215	0.313	0.343	0.067
Measures of model fit		IFI = 0.906 RMSEA = 0.091			IFI = 0.850 RMSEA = 0.119			

Source: *Authors' own research results*

Table 10 presents relationships between leadership styles and organizational commitment in terms of the economic sector of employment. Due to the high RMSEA, interpretation in the "public" subgroup must be made with extreme caution. The low fit of the model is probably due to the small "public" sample of only 65 respondents. The parameters β1, β2, β3 and β6 are statistically significant for the private sector. β4 and β5 showed no significance in any of the sectors, which may be related to the RMSEA result.

Considering the above, although additional research should be carried out on an increased group of respondents, the summary of the hypotheses is presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Summary of hypotheses

Hypothesis	Decision
1	Confirmed
2	Confirmed
3	Confirmed

Source: Authors' own research results

4. Discussion

The study attempted to determine the role of the work system as a moderator of the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. Three hypotheses based on grounded theory were tested to investigate this relationship. Previous research indicates the existence of a relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment (Mwesigwa *et al.*, 2020), and this study filled the previously existing gap of a lack of research on the role of the work system.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) was confirmed, thus warranting the continuation of the study. The conclusion from H1 is that the transactional leader generally influences organizational commitment more than the transformational leader. This finding stands in opposition to some studies that claim that transactional leadership has less impact on organizational commitment than transformational leadership (Thanh & Quang, 2022; Ismail *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, the relationship between transformational leadership and continuance commitment is not statistically significant. This is a very interesting statement which could suggest that the transformational leader's efforts, focusing on the individual needs of the employees, do result in them feeling emotionally attached to the organization or seeing their work there as a kind of obligation.

However, the main finding of the study is that transactional leadership influences the organizational commitment of remote working employees, while transformational leadership affects the commitment of onsite working employees. Based on the theory previously discussed, this observation is consistent with logic. The relationship between a transactional leader and a subordinate is based on an exchange. The employee receives clear information about what he or she needs to do to receive a reward or punishment (Thanh & Quang, 2022). Thus, this approach is applicable to remote workers. In some ways, this system limits the possibility of a relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate, despite evolving technology. Clear messages from the leader are, therefore, very helpful in the execution of assigned tasks.

The results of this study are also supported by the theory put forward by Contreras *et al.* (2020), remote work provides employees with greater autonomy and freedom of action. Organizations in remote work are less centralized, and employees are involved in the decision-making process. Leaders who head teams working remotely should practice clear communication and provide appropriate feedback (Cortellazzo *et al.*, 2019; Roman *et al.*, 2019). These findings, combined with the theory on leadership, indicate the validity of our research and the implication of transactional leader behavior for managing a team working remotely.

Looking more closely at the subgroups in question (remote employees and onsite employees), a leader with a transactional approach has the greatest impact on normative commitment in the first group, while a transformational leader influences continuance commitment in the second group. As is well known, the period of the COVID-19 pandemic forced remote work on a significant portion of enterprises, and a study conducted during this period indicates that transformational leadership does not have a significant impact on employee productivity (Meiryani *et al.*, 2022; Stacho *et al.,* 2022). Moreover, another study of onsite hotel workers confirms the positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Jiatong, 2022). These findings seem to be related to the results of the present work. Thus, the transactional manager leads remote employees to feel obliged to continue working for an organization, while the transformational leader influences onsite employees to stay with the company because of the realization of the losses associated with departure. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, aims to motivate employees to work

by tapping into their personal characteristics, emotions, and self-interest, which is consistent with a recent empirical contribution provided by Jensen *et al.* (2019). Such management of subordinates seems to be much easier when the manager and the employee see each other in person at work. In this way, the supervisor can get to know his or her team better and choose the right motivational tools for each individual (Gavurova *et al.,* 2022).

Setting the onsite–remote division aside, the demographic characteristics of the respondents proved to be the point at issue. Gender did not appear to have an impact on the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. However, caution should be demonstrated when interpreting other demographic characteristics. Nonetheless, it appears that a transformational leader has a greater impact on the engagement of employees aged 34–65, while a transactional leader has a greater impact on the engagement of younger employees. Certainly, many factors may influence this relationship, but it is likely that older people who have been in the labor market for many years need motivation based on their individual preferences, which could lead to less job burnout, among other things. Careful caring by a leader with the appropriate leadership style for older people is also especially vital because of their agreeableness, which increases the tendency to counterproductive work behaviors against the organization (Szostek *et al.*, 2020). Younger people, on the other hand, who value autonomy, may want to decide for themselves how to complete their tasks, so clear instructions from their supervisor are sufficient for them to take the appropriate action to complete tasks. Similar conclusions can be drawn about relationships moderated by the length of service.

As an alternative interpretation, perhaps an environment such as remote working limits communication, and thus requires that communication be reduced somewhat to its "essentials". In this context, employees with more years of experience need less input on what needs doing and how so the broadly-speaking inspirational aspects of the transformational leader's approach are more likely to be perceived as valuable. By contrast, less-experienced, younger employees may be more likely to respond positively to the clear focus on the "what, how, and when" of tasks that characterize the transactional supervisor. Whether either of these postulated mechanisms turns out to be more veridical, or some other, what is clear is that people who have worked in an organization for a shorter period are more susceptible to transactional leadership.

The demographic issue certainly needs to be developed, as other research shows inconclusive results. Some of them find no significant relationship between respondents' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment (Gopinath, 2020), or demonstrate their indirect impacts on organizational commitment through the mediation of compensation structure and job satisfaction (Ashraf, 2020), and even indicate that the role of leadership in organizational commitment is differentiated by demographics in a way that it is most significant for women, people aged 20-30, junior staff singles and those with less than 5 years of experience (Abasilim *et al.*, 2019).

The last demographic characteristic analyzed is the sector in which the organization operates. Since too few respondents assign their organizations to the public sector, it is not possible to accurately interpret this subgroup. However, in the private sector, the transactional leader influences employee engagement more than the transformational leader. Perhaps the transformational leader would emerge influential in the public sector, where motivation that targets employees' personal qualities and emotions would prove essential to their commitment. The Grego-Planer (2019) study showed that the level of organizational commitment is high for both public and private organizations, highlighting that it is slightly higher for public organizations, with affective commitment dominating in both sectors. By contrast, this study, despite too few respondents, demonstrated a different result indicating that leadership has the greatest impact on continuance commitment, to be followed by affective commitment.

However, a different relationship was studied, which certainly determines the levels of organizational commitment.

The conclusions of Hypothesis 3 have opened a very interesting field of research. Perhaps more important are non-demographic characteristics related to personality and individual behavior. These are worth testing to expand knowledge in this context and further tailor leadership behaviors to employees' needs and preferences in order to maximize their engagement.

Conclusion

The study focused on filling a gap in the literature regarding the lack of empirical research considering the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. The main goal of the paper was to investigate the moderating role of the work system in this relationship within the context of Central and Eastern European cultural and social contexts. It was established that the work system differentiates the leadership style that should be implemented in the team of employees. Transactional leadership has a greater impact on the organizational commitment of remote workers, while transformational leadership has a stronger impact on the organizational commitment of employees who work onsite. These are very important results that can be applied to the practice of organizations in the Central and Eastern European environment, especially when selecting appropriate training for organizational leaders (the leader of a team working remotely should learn about transactional behavior, while the leader of a team working onsite should participate in the training concerning transformational leadership), or when solving problems with too low organizational commitment in the company (inappropriately adapted leadership style to the employees' system of work will be counterproductive). In conclusion, it is important to emphasize the relevance of the results obtained for human resource management practice among organizations operating in Central and Eastern Europe.

Limitations

The work contains several limitations. The subgroups were not sufficient, which likely resulted in an overly high RMSEA in some models. Future research should consider larger samples to allow for higher statistical quality model fitting.

The sample, which was non-random, limits the representativeness of the results and the possibility of generalizing them. However, this fact can be considered to be mitigated by the diversity of the sample in terms of age, position at work, and the organization's industry. Nevertheless, future studies should consider larger samples.

It is also important to be aware of the limitations that may arise from the self-evaluation that questionnaires rely on. This, in turn, may have resulted in the rejection of some valuable measurable variables for the study. However, the selection was necessary for the proper use of the Structural Equation Model.

And finally, the survey did not include multiple other variables such as non-demographic characteristics of respondents that might prove to be fundamental to the relationship between a leader's chosen leadership style and employee engagement. Future studies should be extended to include additional variables.

However, the authors claim that the above limitations do not detract from the value of the work for the current state of the art literature. As it has been already stressed, the article brings vital implications to the human resources management practice of organizations operating in the Central and Eastern European area. Applying guidance on the proper leadership

style will contribute to increased organizational commitment, and thus to improved organizational outcomes.

Future studies

As mentioned above, it is crucial to examine in future studies how non-demographic characteristics moderate the relationship between leadership and commitment. It is particularly worthwhile to ensure that subgroups are larger to avoid weakening model quality. Of course, there may also be differences in the relationships due to personality traits between subgroups. Employees with certain personality traits may be more engaged by a particular leadership when working remotely, whereas other employees may be more committed to a particular leadership when working onsite. In addition, the comparison of extroverts and introverts could certainly be an interesting aspect, as it seems that more closed individuals may correspond better with transactional leadership while extroverts may better cooperate with transformational leadership. Proper matching of the leader's behavior with the employees' profile can result in the elimination of counterproductive work behavior, and thus better performance of the entire organization. This, of course, needs to be explored and analyzed in depth in future work (Szostek *et al.*, 2022b).

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Appendix

Appendix A. Scale of the three-component model of organizational commitment

		1	2	3	4	5
AC1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.					
AC2	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.					
AC3	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.					
AC4	I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization.					
AC5	I do not feel like part of a family at my organization.					
AC6	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.					
CC1	Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.					
CC2	It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.					
CC3	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.					
CC4	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.					
CC5	If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere.					
CC6	One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.					
NC1	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer					
NC2	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.					
NC3	I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.					
NC4	This organization deserves my loyalty.					
NC5	I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.					
NC6	I owe a great deal to my organization.					

Source: Own prepared based on Lee *et al.* (2001)

RECENT ISSUES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Appendix B. Scale of employees' perception of leadership

		1	2	3	4	5
TFL1	My leader concretizes a clear vision for the organization's future.					
TFL2	My leader communicates a clear vision of the organization's future.					
TFL3	My leader makes a continuous effort to generate enthusiasm for the organization's vision.					
TFL4	My leader has a clear sense of where he or she believes our organization should be in 5 years.					
TFL5	My leader seeks to make employees accept common goals for the organization					
TFL6	My leader strives to get the organization to work together in the direction of the vision.					
TFL7	My leader strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieving the organization's goals.					
TCL1	My leader rewards the employees' performance when they live up to the leader's requirements.					
TCL2	My leader rewards the employees depending on how well they perform their jobs.					
TCL3	My leader points out what employees will receive if they do what is required.					
TCL4	My leader lets employees' effort determine the rewards received.					
TCL5	My leader gives individual employees positive feedback when they perform well.					
TCL6	My leader actively shows his or her appreciation of employees who do their jobs better than expected.					
TCL7	My leader generally does not acknowledge individual employees even though they perform as required.					
TCL8	My leader personally compliments employees when they do outstanding work.					
TCL9	My leader gives negative consequences to the employees if they perform worse than their colleagues.					
TCL10	My leader makes sure that there are consequences for employees if they do not consistently perform as required.					
TCL11	My leader takes steps to deal with poor performers who do not improve.					
TCL12	My leader gives negative consequences to his or her employees if they do not perform as the leader requires.					

Source: Own prepared based on Jensen *et al. (2019)*