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Transformational Leadership and Employee Commitment: The Roles of Conflict Management and Organisational Culture at SNEL_Congo

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of transformational leadership on employee commitment at the Société Nationale d'Électricité (SNEL) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It further examines the mediating function of conflict management and the moderating influence of organizational culture in this relationship. A quantitative methodology was employed to gather primary data from 150 employees, which was subsequently analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership markedly improves employee commitment and favorably affects conflict management. Conflict management was identified as a partial mediator in the association between transformational leadership and employee commitment, indicating that efficient conflict resolution strategies are essential for converting leadership behaviors into favorable employee results. Moreover, organizational culture substantially influences this link, with supportive and collaborative cultures enhancing the effect of transformative leadership. This research enhances the existing literature in three significant aspects. Initially, it amalgamates leadership, conflict resolution, and organizational culture into a cohesive analytical framework. Secondly, it offers empirical findings from a previously under-explored African public sector context. Third, it underscores the significance of contextual and relational dynamics in influencing employee commitment. The results provide actionable insights for enhancing leadership efficacy and organizational success in comparable institutional contexts.

***Keywords**: Transformational Leadership, Employee Commitment, Conflict Management, Organizational Culture, Public Sector, Snel*

1. Introduction

Employee commitment is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness, as it is associated with improved performance, reduced turnover, and greater organizational stability (Kim & Beehr, 2022; Rubel et al., 2021). In public-sector organizations, where resource constraints and structural complexities are common, sustaining employee commitment is particularly important for ensuring consistent service delivery. Despite its importance, the drivers of employee commitment and the conditions under which they operate remain insufficiently understood, especially in developing-country contexts.

Leadership is widely recognized as a central factor shaping employee attitudes and behaviors. Transformational leadership has been extensively studied for its ability to inspire employees through vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio et al., 1999). Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Avolio et al., 1999) asserts that leaders influence followers by bringing together individual values with organizational objectives and enhancing motivation and engagement. Empirical studies consistently indicate a favorable correlation between transformational leadership and employee commitment (Lai et al., 2020; Khuzwayo et al., 2023)

However, this relationship is not consistently observed across contexts. Some studies report weak or insignificant effects, suggesting that transformational leadership does not automatically lead to higher employee commitment (Raveendran, 2021). Other research indicates that this relationship is contingent upon contextual and relational factors, such as job characteristics and perceived organizational support (Mishra, 2022).These mixed findings suggest that leadership effects are neither direct nor universal but instead depend on underlying mechanisms and organizational conditions.

This study uses Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964;Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) to better understand these processes, conceptualizing workplace interactions as reciprocal exchanges of resources. Within this framework, leadership behaviors are interpreted as socio-emotional investments, such as trust, support, and fairness, that employees reciprocate through positive attitudes, including commitment. Transformational leadership, therefore, is expected to enhance employee commitment not only directly, but also indirectly through relational processes that reinforce trust and mutual obligation.

One such process is conflict management. Conflict is an inevitable aspect of organizational life, arising from differences in goals, values, and perspectives (John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020a). When poorly managed, conflict can reduce trust and weaken commitment; however, when managed constructively, it can enhance communication, strengthen relationships, and improve organizational cohesion (Hussein et al., 2022)Transformational leaders, through their emphasis on open communication and collaboration, are expected to foster constructive conflict management practices (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2020). From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, fair and respectful conflict resolution signals organizational support, encouraging employees to reciprocate with higher commitment. Despite this theoretical connection, there has been limited empirical study on conflict management as a mediating mechanism between transformational leadership and employee commitment.

In addition to relational mechanisms, organizational culture represents an important contextual factor shaping leadership effectiveness. Organizational culture embodies collective beliefs, conventions, and practices that shape employees' interpretations and reactions to leadership behaviors (Ginting, 2023; Sitompul et al., 2020). Research suggests that supportive and participatory cultures strengthen the positive effects of transformational leadership by fostering trust, openness, and collaboration (Rahmatullah et al., 2022; Meliala et al., 2023). In contrast, hierarchical or rigid cultures may constrain leadership effectiveness by limiting employee participation and communication (Lokaj & Sadrija, 2020). However, empirical findings regarding the moderating role of organizational culture remain mixed, and most studies are concentrated in Western or private-sector contexts (Belhaj, 2024; Veiseh et al., 2021). This limits the applicability of existing knowledge to public-sector organizations in developing countries.

Taken together, the literature highlights three key gaps. First, the connection between transformational leadership and employee commitment remains inconsistent and insufficiently explained. Second, there is limited empirical attention to conflict management as a mediating mechanism linking leadership to employee commitment. Third, the moderating role of organizational culture is underexplored in public-sector settings in developing countries. Moreover, these variables are rarely examined within a single integrated framework grounded in both Transformational Leadership Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

These gaps are particularly significant when addressing issues about the Société Nationale d'Électricité (SNEL) in the Democratic Republic of

Congo. SNEL operates under significant structural and operational challenges, including infrastructural limitations, financial constraints, and coordination difficulties (Abrahamsen & Obi, 2019). Such conditions may contribute to workplace conflict and difficulties in sustaining employee commitment. In addition, SNEL's hierarchical and bureaucratic structure may influence how leadership practices are enacted and how employees respond to them. Despite its strategic importance, empirical research examining leadership, conflict management, and organizational culture within SNEL remains limited.

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment, while taking into consideration the mediating influence of conflict management and the moderating effect of organizational culture. Accordingly, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on employee commitment.
H2: Transformational leadership has a positive effect on conflict management
H3: Conflict management positively influences employee commitment.
H4: Conflict management mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment
H5: Organizational culture moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment.

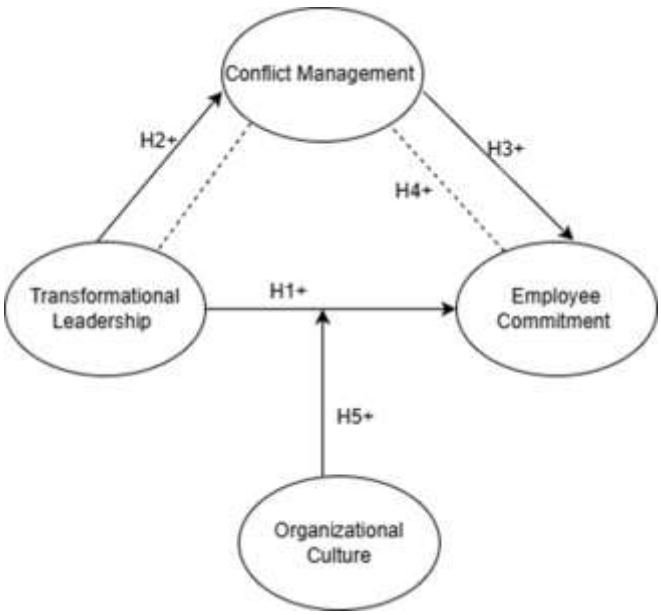

Figure 1. *Framework*

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative methodology to examine the impact of transformational leadership on employee commitment, with conflict management acting as a mediating variable and organizational culture as a moderating variable. The quantitative approach was chosen as it allowed the researcher to measure variables quantitatively, statistically test hypotheses, and accurately detect relationships between constructs. This approach facilitated the systematic and objective evaluation of employees' perceptions through standardized surveys and statistical analytic methods. The quantitative method demonstrated suitability for conducting mediation and moderation studies, providing clear evidence of the influence of conflict management on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment, along with the contribution of organizational culture in enhancing these effects.

2.1. Research object and Subject

This research focused on the Société Nationale d'Électricité (SNEL) – Kinshasa central office, investigating the impact of transformational leadership on employee commitment, while considering the mediating role of conflict management and the moderating effect of organizational culture. The research focused on employees at SNEL–Kinshasa, whose perspectives and experiences related to leadership techniques, conflict management, cultural norms, and levels of commitment were the key data for the study.

2.2 Population and Sample

The study population comprised all employees at the Société Nationale d'Électricité (SNEL) - Kinshasa central office, consisting of 6,500 individuals. This research utilized a non-probability purposive sampling method to choose participants from the SNEL–Kinshasa workforce based on relevant criteria of our research. A purposive sampling was selected to enable the researcher to deliberately identify people capable of supplying pertinent and trustworthy insights on transformational leadership, conflict management, organizational culture, and employee commitment. The sample comprised:

1) Permanent employees with adequate experience in the organization and direct engagement with leadership techniques and conflict management.
2) Employees with more than 2 years' work experience
3) Employee with a bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement

This method guaranteed that the chosen participants had sufficient expertise and experience to appropriately represent the dynamics under investigation in the study. The researcher collaborated with the Human

Resources department to obtain samples that met the criteria. The HR department stated that there were 150 employees who met the criteria.

2.3 Techniques for data collection

The data for this study were gathered using an online questionnaire conducted through Google Forms. This strategy was chosen for its efficiency in reaching numerous personnel at SNEL–Kinshasa, while providing convenience, accessibility, and prompt responses. The online format allowed for efficient distribution of the questionnaire and enabled participants to complete it on their mobile devices or desktops at their convenience. The questionnaire comprised five sections: section one gathered demographic data (gender and age) of respondents; section two examined dimensions of transformational leadership; section three assessed dimensions of employee commitment; section four explored dimensions of conflict management; and section five investigated dimensions of organizational culture. The instrument utilized a Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree, allowing respondents to express their degree of agreement with certain items. The utilization of Google Forms facilitated the automatic recording and structuring of responses, hence streamlining the data cleaning and analysis process. Again, the researcher collaborated with the HR Department to collect the data. The questionnaire was electronically sent to the targeted sample of 150 employees.

2.4 Operational Definitions of Variables

Based on the table below, the main variables in this study are defined in this section along with their importance, measurement tools, and anticipated effects on employee performance.

Table1. Measurements

Variables	Operational Definitions	Indicators
Transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1999)	Transformational leadership is measured by employees' perceptions of their leader's idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and	1) Communicates a clear and inspiring vision 2) Encourages innovation and creativity 3) Treats individuals with respect and consideration for personal feelings 4) Leads by example 5) Motivates to exceed perceived potential

Variables	Operational Definitions	Indicators
	individualized consideration at SNEL	6) Considers personal development in decision-making 7) Encourages questioning of existing processes 8) Expresses confidence in goal achievement
Employee commitment (Hussein et al., 2022).	Employee commitment is operationally defined as employees' psychological attachment, loyalty, and willingness to exert effort toward achieving SNEL's objectives, measured through identification, involvement, and intention to remain in the organization.	1) Strong sense of belonging to the organization 2) Pride in telling others about working for the organization. 3) Desire to spend my career in the organization. 4) Emotional attachment to the organization. 5) Feeling like "part of the family 6) Strong sense of loyalty 7) Strong desire to go above and beyond to meet expectations 8) Obliged to remain in the organization
Conflict management (Rahim, 2005).	Conflict management is measured by employees' perceptions of how conflicts are handled at SNEL through integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising strategies.	1) Prompt conflict resolution in the organization 2) Encouragement of constructive expression of differing opinions 3) Leader's role in resolving team disagreements 4) Finding mutually satisfying solutions in conflicts 5) Conflict handling that improves relationships

Variables	Operational Definitions	Indicators
		6) Prevalence of conflict avoidance 7) Use of open dialogue in dispute resolution. 8) Encouragement to listen to all perspectives during conflict.
Organizational Culture (Irbo, 2018).	Organizational culture is measured by employees' perceptions of involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission within SNEL (Irbo, 2018).	1) Emphasis on teamwork and collaboration 2) Clear values guiding business conduct 3) Employee understanding of mission and goals 4) Leaders acting as role models for values 5) Encouragement of innovation and risk-taking 6) Open information sharing across organizational levels 7) Quick adaptation to environmental changes 8) Mutual respect among employees regardless of position

2.5 Instrument Quality Testing

The principal research tool for this study was a structured questionnaire, constructed based on recognized theoretical frameworks related to transformational leadership, conflict management, organizational culture, and employee commitment. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended items assessed by a Likert scale, facilitating the quantification of employees' perceptions. Every segment of the instrument was developed to measure indications of the study variables, guaranteeing that the constructions could be evaluated consistently and precisely. SmartPLS4 was the principal analytical instrument utilized for evaluating reliability, validity, and for testing mediation and moderation hypotheses. The integration of a structured questionnaire and SmartPLS enabled the

study to produce robust statistical outcomes and analyze intricate correlations among the variables.

2.5.1 Validity test

A validity test in research determines whether the measuring instrument used to obtain data is necessary for the research data retrieval. It indicates the extent to which the item effectively reveals the desired information. An item is considered valid when it demonstrates a significant correlation with the total score (Jaleel et al., 2020).

2.5.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity ensures that indicators of a construct show a strong correlation, thereby validating that they assess the same concept. The Average Variation Extracted (AVE) is often used for evaluation, with an AVE value of 0.5 or above signifying adequate convergence, since it demonstrates that the construct accounts for at least half of the variation in its indicators (Jaleel et al., 2020).

2.5.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures that constructs are separate and assess different ideas. Confirmation occurs when the correlations across constructs are lower than their internal consistency, and when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds the squared correlations with other constructs (Jaleel et al., 2020).

2.5.4 Fornell and Larcker Test

The Fornell and Larcker test is a commonly employed technique for evaluating discriminant validity in structural equation modeling. It assesses the distinctiveness of a construct by comparing the square root of its Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to its correlations with other constructs (Tilahun et al., 2023). To show discriminant validity, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct must exceed its correlations with any other construct (Yusoff et al., 2020). This guarantees that a construct exhibits greater variance with its indicators than with those of other constructs. Failure to meet this requirement indicates possible problems with construct distinctiveness, necessitating further refinement of the measurement model.

2.5.5 The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

In variance-based structural equation modeling, the evaluation of discriminant validity predominantly depends on the HTMT criterion. This criterion stipulates that an HTMT score below 0.90 between two reflective conceptions signifies established discriminant validity (Yusoff et al., 2020).

2.5.6 Reliability test

A reliability test in research assesses the consistency of results when subjected to many evaluations. Reliability indicates the degree to which

the instrument may be depended upon and trusted. The reliability assessment uses Cronbach's Alpha to determine the data's dependability. An instrument exhibits good reliability when the Cronbach alpha value ranges from 0.60 to 0.80. A Cronbach alpha ranging from 0.40 to 0.60 indicates moderate reliability, while values below 0.40 signify low reliability (Jaleel et al., 2020; Khalid et al., 2012).

2.5.7 Cronbach's Alpha

It is a statistic that assesses the reliability of a scale by evaluating the mean correlation among its items. Elevated values indicate enhanced reliability, with classifications commonly defined as outstanding (≥0.9), good (0.8 0.9), acceptable (0.7–0.8), and possibly problematic (0<7). Several factors affect the alpha value, including the quantity of items (a greater number of items generally increases Alpha), item interrelatedness (stronger correlations result in higher Alpha), and scale homogeneity (items must uniformly assess the same concept). A low alpha suggests revising or eliminating extraneous elements to improve internal consistency (Ravinder & Saraswathi, 2020).

2.5.8 Composite Reliability (CR)

It is used to assess the internal consistency of constructs in structural equation modeling. Unlike Cronbach's Alpha, which assumes equal item loadings, CR accounts for the actual standardized loadings and measurement errors of each indicator, providing a more precise estimate of reliability. CR is particularly suitable for PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) because it reflects the varying contributions of each indicator to the construct. A CR value of 0.7 or higher indicates satisfactory reliability, while a value between 0.6 and 0.7 may still be acceptable in exploratory research. Together, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability confirm the consistency and stability of the measurement model (Ravinder & Saraswathi, 2020).

2.5.9 Goodness of Fit

Goodness of fit is used to assess the efficacy of the composite measurement model (Outer Model) and structural model (Inner Model), with values spanning from 0 to 1, interpreted as follows: 0 to 0.25 (little GoF), 0.25 to 0.36 (moderate GoF), and exceeding 0.36 (substantial GoF). SmartPLS offers the following fit indices: SRMR, exact fit criterion d_ULS and d_G, NFI, and Chi-squared (Chi2). The analysis can evaluate the results of a PLS-SEM or PLSc-SEM model estimation, specifically the results report, and the corresponding values of these criteria against established thresholds (e.g., SRMR ≤ 0.08 and NFI ≥ 0.90) for the approximate fit indices SRMR and NFI. Inference statistics may be utilized to evaluate the bootstrap-based test for the precise overall model fit

metrics d_ULS and d_G. Consequently, the bootstrap procedure and the "complete bootstrap" option in SmartPLS must be executed (Schrab et al., 2022).

2.6 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing will be carried out using the multiple linear regression method. Multiple linear regression analysis will be used by researchers with the aim of predicting how the state (ups and downs) of the variables (Biau et al., 2010). The criteria are that if two or more independent variables as predictive factors are manipulated (up and down), there is a decline in value.

2.7 T-Test

A t-test will be conducted to evaluate the study hypothesis concerning the partial impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The T test is a statistical procedure employed to assess the validity of the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no significant difference between the means of two randomly selected samples from the same population. T-statistics are a metric employed to determine the significance level in hypothesis testing. T-statistic values are calculated by a bootstrapping technique. In hypothesis testing, a T-statistic value beyond 1.96 is deemed significant, whereas a value below 1.96 is regarded as inconsequential (Wu & Zumbo, 2008).

2.8 P Value Test

The p-value represents the probability of acquiring a coefficient as extreme as the estimated β, assuming the true parameter value is zero and that the sample distribution of β adheres to a normal distribution with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of σ. This probability is indicated by the area beneath the standard normal curve in the relevant tail. The null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05; else, it is retained. An alternate but related approach is the t-ratio (or t-statistic) test, wherein the t-value is calculated as $t = \beta/\sigma$ and is juxtaposed with crucial values (e.g., 1.64 for a one-tailed test or 1.96 for a two-tailed test) to evaluate statistical significance (Yusoff et al., 2020)

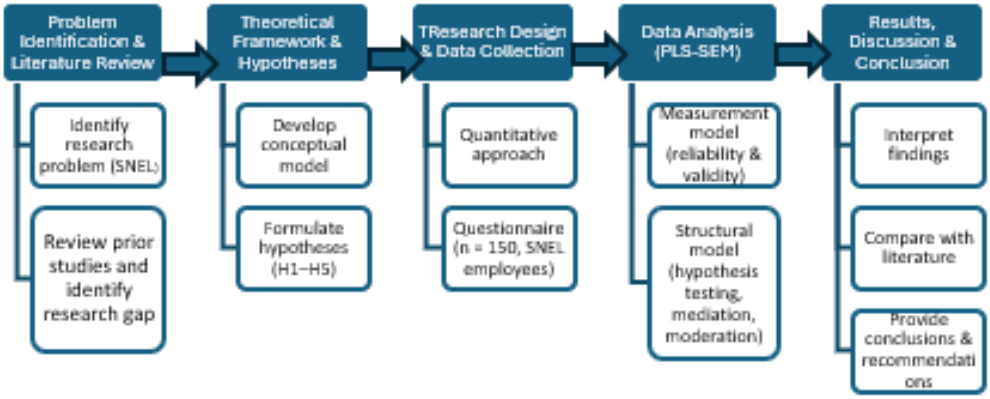

Figure 2. Research Flow Diagram

3. Results

3.1 General Description of Research Object / Subject.

This research focuses on the National Electricity Company of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Société Nationale d'Électricité - SNEL), particularly those in management, supervisory, and operational roles. These units were chosen due to the significance they play in leadership dynamics, methods for resolving conflicts, and organizational culture, factors closely associated with the study variables. This environment offered a pertinent framework for examining the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement and the ways in which conflict management and organizational culture influenced these dynamics. These individuals participated in everyday organizational operations and encountered leadership techniques that influenced their motivation, conflict experiences, and perceptions of corporate culture. The study was based on a total population of 6,500 employees, of whom 150 were selected as the sample using purposive sampling. The sampled individuals encompassed several departments and work units within the firm, enabling the research to obtain a wide array of insights and perceptions concerning transformational leadership, conflict management, and employee commitment. A purposive sampling was selected to enable the researcher to deliberately identify people capable of supplying pertinent and trustworthy insights on transformational leadership, conflict management, organizational culture, and employee commitment. The sample comprised:

1) Permanent employees with adequate experience in the organization and direct engagement with leadership techniques and conflict management.
2) Employees with more than 2 years' work experience
3) Employee with a bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement

3.2. Respondent Characteristics

3.2.1 Gender

The study's findings describe the characteristics of respondents according to gender as follows:

Table 2. Gender Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Female	58	38.7
Male	92	61.3
Total	150	100.0

Source: primary data

The table indicates that, in terms of gender, most respondents were male, with a total of 92 respondents, which represents 61.3% of the sample.

3.2.2 Age

The findings indicate that the characteristics of respondents, categorized by age, can be outlined as follows:

Table 3. Age Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
20-29 years	59	39.3
30-39 years	55	36.7
40-49 years	20	13.3
50 years and above	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: primary data

The table above indicates that most respondents fall within the 20-29 years age category, a total of 59 individuals, which represents 39.3% of the sample.

3.2.3 Education

The findings indicate that the characteristics of respondents, categorized by educational background, can be outlined as follows

Table 4. Education background

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Degree	79	52.6
Master	70	46.6
Doctoral	1	0.6
Total	150	100

Source: primary data

According to the data presented in Table 4, respondents were classified based on their highest level of educational attainment. Out of a total of 150 respondents, the majority held a bachelor's degree, accounting for 79 individuals or 52.6%. Respondents with a master's degree totaled 70, representing 46.6%, while only one respondent, equivalent to 0.6%, had attained a doctoral degree

3.3 Model Evaluation

3.3.1 Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model was performed utilizing several indices, such as Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Reliability. The measurement model is constructed using the PLS Algorithm.

3.3.1.1 Convergent validity

An indicator is considered acceptable if its loading factor is positive and surpasses 0.7. The loading factor value signifies the importance of each indication or item as a metric for the corresponding variable. Indicators with elevated loading factors signify that they are the most influential (dominant) variable metrics. The loading factor value is presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5. Convergent validity test

Variable	CM	EC	OC	TL	EC x TL
TL1				0.885	
TL2				0.869	
TL3				0.895	
TL4				0.892	
TL5				0.894	
TL6				0.895	
TL7				0.831	
TL8				0.844	
EC1		0.845			
EC2		0.864			
EC3		0.871			
EC4		0.834			
EC5		0.853			
EC6		0.835			
EC7		0.857			
EC8		0.863			
CM1	0.848				
CM2	0.848				
CM3	0.892				

Variable	CM	EC	OC	TL	EC x TL
CM4	0.909				
CM5	0.849				
CM6	0.868				
CM7	0.882				
CM8	0.864				
OC1			0.890		
OC2			0.810		
OC3			0.840		
OC4			0.868		
OC5			0.840		
OC6			0.889		
OC7			0.867		
OC8			0.869		

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.3.2.9)

According to Table 5, the loading factor values that result from each indication exceed 0.7. Therefore, these indicators are considered valid to measure latent variables.

3.3.1.2 Discriminatory validity

Discriminant validity describes the degree to which a construct is empirically differentiated from other constructs within the model and is utilized to evaluate the validity of the measurement model. It can be assessed by cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Each indicator must exhibit the maximum loading on its corresponding construct while demonstrating lower loadings on all other constructs regarding cross-loadings. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct must exceed its correlations with other constructs within the model. When these criteria are satisfied, it signifies that the constructs exhibit sufficient discriminant validity.

Table 6. Fornell-Larcker Criteria Values

Variable	CM	EC	OC	TL
TL	0.515	0.575	0.667	**0.876**
EC	0.628	**0.853**		
CM	**0.870**			
OC	0.599	0.702	**0.860**	

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

Table 7. Cross-loading values

Variable	CM	EC	OC	TL
TL1	0.541	0.568	0.637	**0.885**
TL2	0.400	0.540	0.624	**0.869**
TL3	0.492	0.517	0.579	**0.895**
TL4	0.507	0.527	0.609	**0.892**
TL5	0.488	0.499	0.624	**0.894**
TL6	0.436	0.467	0.550	**0.895**
TL7	0.361	0.473	0.507	**0.831**
TL8	0.333	0.418	0.518	**0.844**
EC1	0.567	**0.845**	0.607	0.420
EC2	0.542	**0.864**	0.593	0.507
EC3	0.563	**0.871**	0.650	0.528
EC4	0.551	**0.834**	0.616	0.531
EC5	0.517	**0.853**	0.613	0.482
EC6	0.434	**0.835**	0.513	0.436
EC7	0.506	**0.857**	0.531	0.439
EC8	0.586	**0.863**	0.640	0.564
CM1	**0.848**	0.502	0.518	0.468
CM2	**0.848**	0.507	0.487	0.451
CM3	**0.892**	0.528	0.544	0.453
CM4	**0.909**	0.563	0.562	0.477
CM5	**0.849**	0.600	0.535	0.453
CM6	**0.868**	0.585	0.533	0.440
CM7	**0.882**	0.603	0.523	0.446
CM8	**0.864**	0.477	0.458	0.386
OC1	0.554	0.626	**0.890**	0.619
OC2	0.464	0.623	**0.810**	0.556
OC3	0.494	0.551	**0.840**	0.558
OC4	0.587	0.694	**0.868**	0.632
OC5	0.451	0.523	**0.840**	0.480
OC6	0.537	0.613	**0.889**	0.550
OC7	0.514	0.575	**0.867**	0.596
OC8	0.500	0.596	**0.869**	0.574

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

Tables 6 and 7 indicate that each indicator exhibits the most potent loading on its corresponding latent construct, while cross-loadings on non-

correlated constructs are comparatively lower. This signifies that each item exhibits a stronger correlation with its designated construct than with alternative constructs, resulting in sufficient discriminant validity. The indicator loadings on their respective constructs surpass the required level of 0.70, hence affirming strong indication of dependability.

3.3.1.3 Reliability

Reliability in PLS can be assessed by Cronbach's alpha values and Composite Reliability. A Composite Reliability value over 0.7 and a Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 are considered indicators of reliability. The subsequent table displays the values of Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability.

Table 8. Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AverageVarianceExtracted (AVE)
TL	0.957	0.963	0.767
EC	0.947	0.955	0.728
CM	0.954	0.961	0.757
OC	0.949	0.958	0.739

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

According to Table 8, the composite reliability values for all research variables surpass 0.7, and both the Cronbach's Alpha and AVE values are above 0.7 as well. The results suggest that each variable satisfied the criteria for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, confirming that the overall variable exhibits a high degree of reliability. To facilitate further investigation, the model's quality of fit will be assessed by the examination of the inner model.

3.3.1.4 HTMT

The last validity test involves examining the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value. The HTMT ratio must be less than 0.9 to satisfy the criteria for discriminant validity testing.

Table 9. HTMT Test

Variable	CM	EC	OC	TL
TL	0.530	0.598	0.693	
EC	0.656			
CM				
OC	0.625	0.733		

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio value in Table 4.10 does not exceed 0.9; therefore, it can be concluded that the research model derived from the four variables above is valid.

3.3.1.5 Model to fit

The mean squared root residue (RMSR) is a measure of the average absolute value of the covariance residue. Henseler et al. (2014) introduced SRMR as a goodness-of-fit measure that can be used to avoid a self-specifying model**.**

Table 10. Model to fit

	Saturated model	**Estimated model**
SRMR	0.053	0.105
D_ULS	1.493	5.831
D_G	1.109	1.191
Chi-square	843.543	870.481
NFI	0.840	0.835

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

Based on Table 10, the SRMR value is 0.105, which is higher than the recommended limit of 0.08, and the NFI value is 0.835, which is less than 0.90. This means the model does not meet the required fit criteria and may not properly explain the relationships between the variables.

3.3.2 Structural model (Inner Model)

Following the outer model test, the next thing to do is to perform an inner model test. Internal model testing, or structural model analysis, is performed to assess the connection among constructs, significant values, and the R-squared of the research model. The evaluation of the PLS structural model commences with an analysis of the R-square values for each latent dependent variable. Table 11 displays the outcomes of the R-squared estimate employing Partial Least Squares (PLS).

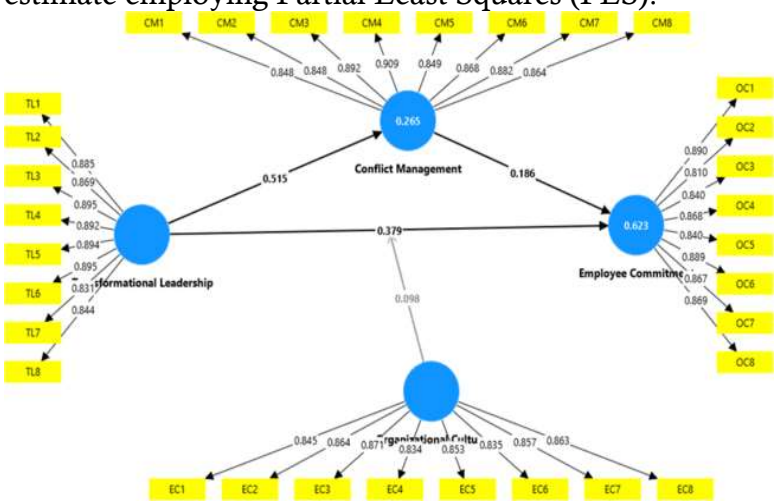

Figure 3. Structural model

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

3.3.2.1 R Square

Table 11. Square Test Results

Variable	R-*Square*	R-*Square Adjusted*
CM	0.265	0.260
EC	0.623	0.612

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

According to Table 11, the R-Square value for the Conflict Management variable is 0.265, indicating that 26.5% of the variance in Conflict Management may be attributed to an independent variable, while the remaining 73.5% is accounted for by other factors not included in this study. In accordance with Table 11, the R-Square value for the Employee Commitment variable is 0.623, indicating that 62.3% of the variance in Employee Commitment can be attributed to the independent variable, while the remaining 37.7% is accounted for by other factors not considered in this study.

3.3.2.2 F-squared

The f-square value in PLS serves to analyze the effect size of any variable within the model. The f-square values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 signify that the model exhibits weak, moderate, and significant effects.

Table 12. F-Square Test Results

Variable	**CM**	**EC**	**OC**	**TL**
TL	0.360		0.231	
EC			0.157	
CM			0.052	
OC				

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

The f^2 (effect size) in PLS-SEM evaluates the influence of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable within the model. Established criteria imply that f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 correspond to modest, medium, and large effects, respectively. According to Table 12, transformational leadership exerts a substantial influence on conflict management ($f^2 = 0.360$) and a moderate influence on organizational culture ($f^2 = 0.231$). Employee commitment exhibits a moderate effect on organizational culture ($f^2 = 0.157$). Conversely, conflict management exerts a minimal influence on organizational culture ($f^2 = 0.052$). These results indicate that transformational leadership is the most significant variable in the model, especially in influencing conflict management.

3.3.2.3 Predictive Relevance (Q Square)

Predictive relevance is assessed through a test that evaluates the extent to which the observed value is generated using the blindfolding procedure, specifically by examining the Q-squared value. If the value of Q-squared is greater than 0, it indicates a good observation value; in contrast, if the value is less than 0, it suggests a poor observation value. The Q-Square predictive relevance for structural models analyzes the effectiveness of the model in generating conservation value and the accuracy of its parameter estimations.

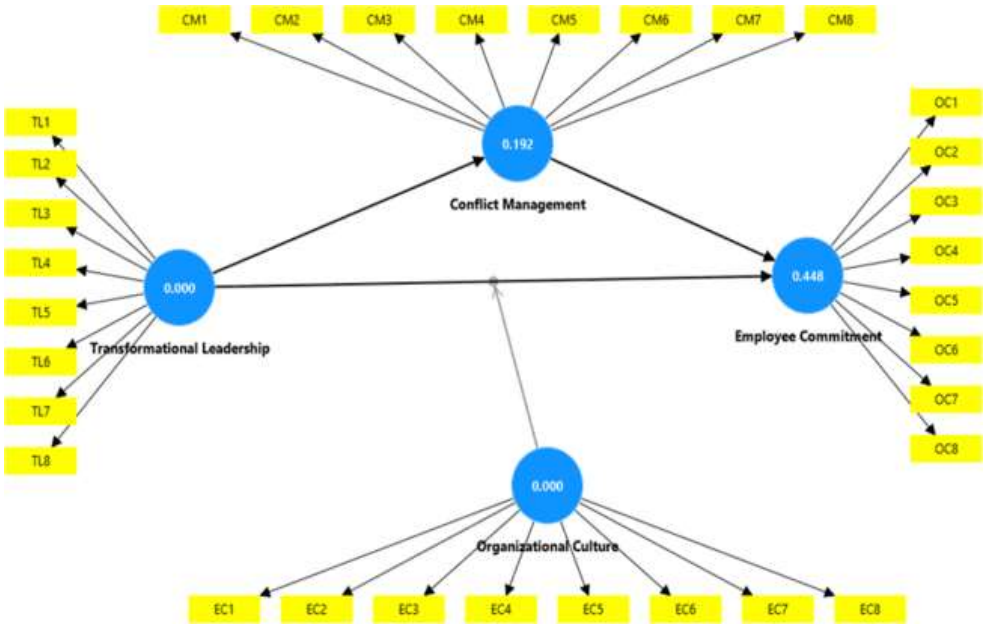

Figure 4. Predictive Relevance
Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

Based on the image above, it can be concluded in the table below:

Table 13. Predictive Relevance

Variable	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)	Information
CM	0,192	Has a predictive relevance value
EC	0,448	Has a predictive relevance value

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

Based on the data provided in the table above, the value of Q-squared for the dependent variable is higher than zero. By examining these values,

it can be concluded that this study possesses a strong observational value, as the Q-square value is higher than zero.

3.3.2.4 Hypothesis testing results

The analysis of the structural relationship model aims to clarify the connections among the variables within the study. A structural model test is conducted using evaluations utilizing PLS software. The basis for analyzing the hypothesis directly is based on the image output and the values present in the output path coefficients. The criteria for clearly testing the hypothesis are that if the p-value is less than 0.05 (significance level of 5%) and the statistical T-value exceeds 1.960, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. Here is a detailed explanation of hypothesis testing:

Table 14. Hypothesis testing

Variable	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV |)	P Values	Conclusion
TL -> EC	0.379	5.217	0.000	Accepted
TL -> CM	0.515	8.075	0.000	Accepted
CM -> EC	0.186	2.993	0.003	Accepted
TL -> CM -> EC	0.096	2.672	0.008	Accepted
OC x TL -> EC	0.098	2.074	0.038	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS Output Results (v.4.1.9)

Bootstrapping was employed in PLS-SEM for hypothesis testing to evaluate the significance of the proposed correlations. The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership exerts a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.379$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 5.217$), hence corroborating H1. Transformational leadership substantially impacts conflict management ($\beta = 0.515$, $p < 0.001$, $t = 8.075$), accordingly validating H2. Furthermore, conflict management exerts a positive and significant influence on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.186$, $p = 0.003$, $t = 2.993$), which means corroborating H3. The mediation study indicates that conflict management strongly mediates the connection between transformational leadership and employee commitment ($\beta = 0.096$, $p = 0.008$, $t = 2.672$), which corroborates H4.

Organizational culture significantly moderates the connection between transformational leadership and employee commitment (β = 0.098, p = 0.038, t = 2.074), which leads to validating hypothesis H5. Nonetheless, the effect size of this interaction is very modest, suggesting that although organizational culture enhances this connection, its practical significance is constrained. This indicates that modifications in organizational culture marginally affect the intensity of the correlation between transformational leadership and employee commitment.

4. Discussions

This study examines the relationships between transformational leadership, conflict management, organizational culture, and employee commitment at SNEL, providing both theoretical and contextual insights. The findings reveal that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee commitment (β = 0.379; $p < 0.05$). This suggests that when leaders clearly communicate goals, inspire employees, provide individualized support, and encourage intellectual engagement, employees develop stronger affective, normative, and continuance commitment to the organization. This result supports Social Exchange Theory, which posits that employees reciprocate supportive and empowering leadership behaviors with loyalty and commitment (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). It is also consistent with prior empirical studies, such as Mahfouz et al. (2019), who found that transformational leadership enhances emotional attachment through shared vision and psychological safety, and Yuan et al., (2022), who demonstrated that trust in leadership strengthens employee commitment. In the context of SNEL, where employees often face operational constraints and limited resources, transformational leadership plays a critical role in sustaining motivation and reducing frustration.

Furthermore, the results indicate that transformational leadership significantly improves conflict management (β = 0.515; $p < 0.05$). Transformational leaders foster open communication, collaboration, trust, and fairness, which help reduce destructive conflict while promoting constructive interactions. This finding aligns with Mahfouz et al. (2019), who argue that transformational leaders create environments conducive to cooperation and problem-solving, and with Aula & Siira, (2010)who emphasize the role of effective communication in conflict resolution. Similarly, Hussein et al., (2022) found that leadership behaviors strongly influence how employees manage conflict, with transformational leadership encouraging more collaborative and equitable approaches. In SNEL, where organizational challenges such as outdated infrastructure

and heavy workloads often generate tensions, effective leadership is essential for managing conflict and improving teamwork.

In addition, conflict management itself has a positive and significant effect on employee commitment ($\beta = 0.186$; $p < 0.05$). When conflicts are handled fairly and transparently, employees feel respected and valued, which enhances their willingness to remain with the organization. This finding is consistent with Hussein et al., (2022), who showed that fair conflict resolution strengthens affective commitment, and Kassim & Ibrahim, (2014), who found that effective conflict management reduces turnover intentions and builds trust. From a theoretical standpoint, this supports Social Exchange Theory, as fair interpersonal treatment encourages reciprocal commitment from employees (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In SNEL's context, where organizational pressures may create frequent tensions, effective conflict management becomes a key mechanism for maintaining stability and engagement.

The study also finds that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment ($\beta = 0.098$; $p < 0.05$). Specifically, the positive effect of transformational leadership is stronger in a supportive organizational culture characterized by collaboration, shared values, transparency, and innovation. This result is in line with Mahfouz et al., (2019), who argue that transformational leadership is more effective in participative and trust-based cultures, and Yuan et al., (2022) who highlight the role of shared norms in reinforcing employee commitment. Jiatong et al., (2022) further emphasize that organizational culture enhances the credibility and relevance of leadership behaviors. In SNEL, where bureaucratic structures and high-power distance have historically influenced organizational practices, culture plays a crucial role in either enabling or constraining leadership effectiveness.

Finally, the mediation analysis shows that conflict management partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment ($\beta = 0.096$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that transformational leadership enhances employee commitment not only directly but also indirectly through improved conflict management. This finding is consistent with Hussein et al. (2022), who found that conflict management serves as an important mechanism linking leadership to employee outcomes. It also supports the argument by John-Eke & Akintokunbo (2020) that constructive conflict resolution reduces negative emotions and strengthens organizational relationships. From a theoretical perspective, this mediation effect further confirms Social Exchange Theory, as employees reciprocate fair and respectful conflict management

practices initiated by leaders with greater loyalty and commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the SNEL context, where unresolved conflicts can hinder collaboration and service delivery, transformational leadership plays a vital role in fostering constructive conflict management, thereby strengthening employee commitment to organizational goals.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how transformational leadership influences employee commitment within SNEL, with particular attention to the mediating role of conflict management and the moderating influence of organizational culture. Rather than operating as isolated factors, the findings demonstrate that these elements function as an interconnected system through which leadership exerts its influence. Transformational leadership enhances employee commitment not only directly, but more importantly, by shaping how conflicts are managed and how organizational culture reinforces or constrains these dynamics. This integrated perspective moves beyond simple linear relationships and highlights the importance of organizational context in translating leadership behaviors into meaningful employee outcomes.

This study contributes theoretically and practically by advancing a context-sensitive understanding of leadership dynamics in public-sector organizations. It empirically supports a moderated mediation framework that extends Social Exchange Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory beyond Western settings, demonstrating their relevance while highlighting the conditioning role of organizational culture. At the same time, the findings emphasize that statistical significance does not necessarily translate into strong practical impact, as reflected in the relatively modest moderating effect ($\beta = 0.098$). For SNEL and similar organizations, this implies that transformational leadership alone is insufficient; its effectiveness depends on aligned institutional conditions. Concretely, organizations should invest in leadership development focused on communication, ethical conduct, and individualized support, formalize conflict management systems that promote collaborative resolution, and actively cultivate transparent and participatory organizational cultures. These interventions must be implemented as mutually reinforcing components within a coherent human resource strategy to produce meaningful and sustainable improvements in employee commitment.

Despite these contributions, the study is subject to several limitations. The cross-sectional design may limit causal inference, the relatively small and single-organization sample may constrain generalizability, and the reliance on self-reported, single-source data introduces potential common

method bias and may reflect underlying model fit limitations. Future research should address these constraints by adopting longitudinal and multi-source designs, expanding samples across multiple public-sector organizations and national contexts, and integrating qualitative approaches to capture lived organizational experiences. Further model refinement could incorporate additional variables such as trust, psychological safety, or perceived organizational support to better explain employee commitment. Taken together, these directions will help build a more robust and contextually grounded understanding of how leadership systems function in public-sector environments, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

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