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## Determining Sustainable Performance of Punjab Healthcare Sector in Post-Covid Era: Organizational Commitment Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This research effort entails to assess the sustainable performance of healthcare sector of Punjab, Pakistan. This study contributes in the body of knowledge by assessing the role of transactional leadership, transformational leadership, career planning and job design in determining the sustainable performance with mediating role of organizational commitment. The study was conducted on the hospitals of Pakistan on the nurses that considered as important employees of healthcare sector and data was collected through questionnaires by applying simple random sampling technique. The collected data was assessed on Smart PLS3 for construct reliability, validity and hypotheses testing, the study revealed that transactional leadership and career planning are insignificant to predict the sustainable performance, transformational leadership, job design and organizational commitment significantly influence the sustainable performance. Furthermore, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and job design significantly influence the organizational commitment, but career planning has no effect on organizational planning. The mediating role of organizational commitment was reported between transactional leadership, transformational leadership, job design and sustainable performance, but no mediation was reported between career planning and sustainable performance. The thesis recommendations and limitations are given at the end.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of sustainability has gained the attention of research scholars as countries are facing several issues and challenges in economic and social crises recently due to the worldwide situation. It has become necessary to generate value with the integration of sustainability in the healthcare sector of developing countries. The sustainability of the healthcare system is necessary for the prime service of the sensitive sector, as healthcare service centers required to provide the higher quality care to improve the public health without wastage of natural resources and ecological damage (Karamat et al., 2018). The previous studies assessed the sustainable future of the healthcare sector that developed through the effective knowledge management practices, that effective knowledge management enable the firms to improve the performance that contribute in enhancing the competitive advantage (Karamat et al., 2019). So therefore, the economic development of countries must be considered, the national economy may not be related to the tourism such as western Europe. The other studies have been considered and highlighted the factors that influence the sustainable performance of small and medium enterprises (Asad et al., 2018).

The literature argued that performance of the organization is measured by various variables such as the market share, the productivity of the firm, competitive position of the firm, growth of the firm, the assessment of satisfaction and profitability made by the firms. The concept of corporate sustainability performance has widened to manage economical-financial plan to enhance the social, ecological and environmental responsibilities (Schaltegger, 2011; Zharfpeykan & Akroyd, 2022). Pakistan was susceptible to various health issues because it is a middle-income nation with a deficient healthcare system and a population of about 220 million (Butterick & Charlwood, 2021). Hospitals in Pakistan suffering under the weight of patients as COVID-19 cases soar because of the public's lack of interest, government programs have failed. The administration lifted the lockdown and ignored public health experts' recommendations, and this decision paid a painful consequence (Atif & Malik, 2020). Emergency departments were overflowing with sick patients, placing strain on caregivers, laboratories, and other institutions. Like this, the employees or workforce levels dropped along with their performance, ICUs ran out of space, and healthcare costs increased (Hashim 2020). There was a shortage of physicians and paramedical personnel, and even the most basic medical equipment was broken. Health workers were not given any special training about the epidemic (Saqlain et al., 2020). For years, expensive medical equipment was inaccessible. The wealthy people received better treatment, leaving the poor behind (Hadid and Sattar 2020).

The companies need to be sensitive and flexible when organizing and managing their employees. But with the recent situations including Covid19 outbreak, health organizations are facing a huge challenge of never-before-seen proportions (Ferdous & Rana, 2022). Some countries have been hit hard by this pandemic, and their health care systems were at a breaking point. In many severely affected countries, healthcare services were being decentralized and broken up because of the chaos and the rising number of deaths (Villani et al., 2020). In developing countries where public health has been neglected and underfunded for a long time, the pandemic was causing chaos (Gates 2020). The experts were worried about its after-effects on the economies, society and normal life of people, they focused on making consistent management decisions, which could lead to a human

disaster that has never happened before (Looi, 2020). Consequently, in year 2019 and 2020 the first case was registered in Pakistan that reported 5386 deaths according to (World Health Organization 2020).

This has undoubtedly diminished the separation between work and home life, making it more difficult to unplug from work obligations (Bartik et al., 2020; Butterick & Charlwood, 2021; Looi, 2020). Senior executives and HR managers have placed employee well-being and performance at the top of their priority lists during the past two decades because they appreciate the significance of human capital to any organization and its ability to assist in achieving its goals (Ferdous & Rana, 2022). Most HR managers and academics have focused on these obstacles. The phenomenon of the HRM has emerged from simple personnel management while fulfilling the manager's responsibilities that were limited to job opening, payroll management and tracking, promotional decisions, routine personnel issues and recruiting and selection (Dirani et al., 2020).

There is a growing consensus among business leaders that, in order for their companies to thrive in today's talent-driven global economy and compete with their counterparts there, they need to acquire, cultivate, and appropriately manage world-class human resource management competencies and practices (Alkhazali et al., 2019). In the health sector, the appropriate HRM policies and practices are required to develop a satisfied, productive, and efficient staff. Additionally, their success has a significant impact on the organization's growth, progress, and development. Moreover, employee performance is related to the right implementation of HRM practices (Goswami & Ranjan, 2015).

Pakistan is now facing the issue of extreme shortage of skilled employees in every field, and it has become difficult to compete in highly competitive business era. So therefore, organizations are concerned with employee performance, and it has become major challenge after Covid, now firms strive to prevent talent loss, financial loss, relationship, and reputational loss. It has been reported that Pakistani healthcare industry is facing issue of employee related challenges and performance of existing employees have reduced (Bibi, 2019). Moreover, the health sector failed to attract large number of potential workers and nurses, however vast scope of the sector. There are number of issues and challenges faced by health sector that caused poor performance of sector including lack of training, religious beliefs, lack of trust on job appraisals. The current study bridges the theoretical gap in assessing the sustainable performance influenced by human resource practices including leadership style, career planning, and job design with mediating role of organizational commitment.

Therefore, employee performance which can be increased via better HRM practices is the key to a successful organization. This study has taken the following combination of HRM practices such as leadership styles (transformational, transactional), career planning, and job design, with mediating role of organizational commitment. This study examines the post-COVID-19 impacts on sustainable performance in the public health sector of Pakistan.

Inefficiency, corruption, incapacity to deliver treatments to impoverished people, customer unhappiness, emigration, and transfer of qualified workers to the commercial health sector, and resource waste are all prominent grounds for regulatory reforms (El-Seoud, 2013). Modern health care is limited by a lack of workers, medical equipment, and facilities. Public health care in

Pakistan is hampered by a lack of administrative competence, accountability, resource allocation, untrained and underpaid health care providers, and inadequate infrastructure (Hassan et al., 2017). Per capita, 44 USD is needed to provide critical health care; in Pakistan, 37 USD is given (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2015-16). These issues, along with a lack of proper policies, have led to high newborn and maternal mortality, failure to deal with epidemics, and short life expectancy.

The World Health Organization says that Pakistan is ranked 122 out of 190 countries in terms of health care (WHO). With a population that is growing quickly and where most people still live below the poverty line, it is important to make sure that the public health care system works well so that it can reach more people. The Pakistani healthcare sector lost credibility due to ill-administration, poor governance, negligence, and poor allocation of resources (R. Hussain et al., 2022). In Punjab, healthcare spending increased from 73 billion rupees in 2011 to 168 billion rupees in 2016, or 14% of the overall budget. Provincial officials are working hard to improve healthcare. Most secondary institutions are not delivering adequate health care due to heavy patient loads, a lack of financial and human resources, and malfunctioning equipment (Rana et al., 2020). According to Pakistan Nursing Council Registrar Fauzia Mushta, 2022 said that there is an urgent need to meet the shortage of nurses in hospitals to overcome the deficiency in the medical sector (Zaigham Naqvi, July 19, 2022).

The previous studies did not lead to the growth of an integrated healthcare system as a result of a lack of planning, monitoring, and research; rather, these have resulted in haphazard structure, poor maintenance, and a lack of basic facilities (Ahmad Aburayya1, 2019). This is because of the lack of planning, monitoring, and exploration. Notably, the challenges facing Pakistan's health sector increased along with all of the other issues as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic (Saqlain et al., 2020). After the epidemic, there was a rise in employee absenteeism, poor performance, a lack of interest in the job, low training levels, a lack of benefits, high levels of stress, unjust compensation, poor monitoring, and untrustworthy performance appraisals. The performance of healthcare sector is crucially important due to its impact on patient's satisfaction and to maintain during tough time such as pandemic and HR managers has to reexamine the performance programs (Kumar, 2021). COVID-19 has negatively impacted work quantitatively and qualitatively. Global companies have spent heavily on people management strategies in recent months. These include remote employment, decreased working hours, reduced training, and development expenditures, and recruiting bans. These are operational and focus on company performance (Günther et al., 2022). As result of the epidemic highlighted that organizations are combining mission, values, and societal implications. This includes employees, stakeholders, and the community (Butterick & Charlwood, 2021).

This study argues that effective leadership style such as the transformational leadership style, and transactional leadership style has important role to play in organizational commitment that further influence the sustainable performance of the firms. The study also assumes that career planning and job design influence the level of organizational commitment that further play role in gaining the sustainable performance. For conducting this study, overall we have followed guidelines outlined in some good studies in social science research (e.g., Anser et al., 2020; Gulzar et al., 2022; Hameed et al., 2019; Iqbal et al., 2021; Masood, Feng, Rasheed, Ali, & Gong, 2021; Naeem, Weng, Hameed, & Rasheed, 2020; Pitafi, Rasheed, Kanwal, & Ren, 2020; Zhang, Wu, & Rasheed, 2020).

## Literature Review

This research effort looked at leadership styles including transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, career planning and job design. It also looked at sustainable performance and mediation variable organizational commitment with Human resource management practices. In this context, the COVID-19's novelty and complexity provide a substantial obstacle that may jeopardize corporate goals. Standard economic models in organizations, according to Baert et al., (2020) are primarily taught to utilize data from a 'normal times' viewpoint. Some experts foresee a COVID-19 endemic although several economists think the pandemic's effects will last until 2021. This might imply that generating forecasts about the company's business, such as the planning and allocation of resources, is a difficult task. COVID-19 has created ambiguity. Some experts foresee a COVID-19 endemic although several economists think the pandemic's effects will last until 2021 (Baum & Hai, 2020; Newman, 2020).

Currently, it's unclear about the spread of virus and potential threats may occur in future and various vaccines may be developed to deal with, and new variants may emerge that causes potential threats (Kumar, 2021). During pandemic HR department faced the number of challenges towards employees from their planning to implementation as majority of the firms failed to provide effective management for information sharing and also faced challenges in reducing the employee's stress, while tough task was to increase the motivation and confidence (Bartik et al., 2020; Günther et al., 2022). The study of Elsafty and Ragheb (2020) identified the challenge of employee's retention, as it was difficult for organizations to retain the human capital specifically the situation raised during lockdown, meanwhile employees were seeking survival, further the challenges were faced by organizations for enhancing the resilience for ensuring the organizational sustainability (Baert et al., 2020). The significantly important HR practices including recruitment, the selection process, the initiatives of training and development, the performance assessment procedure and compensation management must be consistent and integrated for long-commitment of workforce, contribute to the organization's bottom line (Alkhalizi et al., 2019).

### Transactional Leadership to Organizational Commitment and Sustainable Performance

The definition of leadership has been illustrated by number of research scholars that classified two specific notions including transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Feranita et al., 2020; Naqvi et al., 2017). The individuals that emerge with new ideas and minds that spark others to motivate them for achievement of objectives known as sparking leaders, the spark of enthusiasm, glimmer of potential, flash of determination, the first flame of raw talent or highlights the interest (Bilginoglu & Yozgat, 2018; Bilginoglu & Yozgat, 2021).

Another study has been conducted on employees of cement industry of Pakistan to assess the well-being influenced by trust in leaders, and transactional leadership with mediating role of organizational climate. The sample was drawn of 348 employees from cement industry and it was reported that organizational climate mediated the relationship between transactional leadership, trust in leaders and employee well-being (Khan et al., 2021).

The leadership traits has the tendency to scan and monitor the internal and external environments for the organizations to keep high-quality relationship between different stakeholders (Hallinger & Suriyankietkaew, 2018; Fischer et al., 2020). The leadership style has the influence on organizational performance due to its impact on reduction of operational cost and exploration of newly available opportunities. It has been occurred in the literature and empirically examined that transformational leadership has the tendency to influence the organizational learning, the knowledge sharing also impact the organizational learning (Park & Kim, 2018). The effective, suitable and attractive workplace environment based on the behavior of employees towards knowledge sharing, trust among the employees, communication among employees and most impactful variable the sustainable leadership style that promote the positive behavior of employees (Iqbal et al., 2020).

The empirical examination of the study conducted on the SME sector of Pakistan revealed that sustainable leadership influence the organizational learning significantly, the organizational learning also impact the sustainable performance significantly, further the study reported positively significant relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable performance, and organizational learning mediates the relationship between sustainable leadership and sustainable performance among SME sector of Pakistan (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2021).

The study conducted on SME sector of Pakistan found that transactional leadership influence the entrepreneurs' passion and impact the employee performance. The study also reported that entrepreneur's passion mediated the relationship between transactional leadership and employee performance, the study acme the significance of the leadership in determining the employee performance (Abdelwahed et al., 2022). The study reported interesting findings that transactional leadership style considered as weaker association with performance in the presence of organizational political perception, it has been verified that organizational politics intensify the negative emotions and behavior among employees (Javed & Ishak, 2019). On the other hand, it has been found that transactional leadership style has the higher dominance over transformational leadership style in explaining the phenomenon of performance (Pedraja-Rejas et al., 2006).

The study revealed that organizational commitment influences the employee job performance and job satisfaction, the findings of the study shows that transactional leadership influences the employee performance through job satisfaction, and the organizational commitment influences the employee performance through job satisfaction significantly (Nurlina, 2022), however the study was limited and overlooked the direct relationship between transactional leadership and organizational commitment, the current study addresses the gap by empirically examine the relationship. The study also reported significant mediated relationship and role of affective commitment between authentic leadership and innovative behavior, however the insignificant relationship has been reported that no mediation effect of effective commitment was reported between creative self-efficacy and innovative behavior (Javed et al., 2021). The study overlooked to assess the role of transformational and transactional leadership style to explain the phenomenon of the organizational commitment and performance related outcomes. The current study intends to address the research gap to investigate the role of transformational, transactional leadership to explain the organizational commitment, and sustainable performance. Based on above literature review the following hypotheses are derived:

Hypothesis1: The Transactional leadership influences the sustainable performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis2: The Transactional Leadership influences the Organizational Commitment in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

### **Transformational Leadership to Organizational Commitment and Sustainable Performance**

The researchers have emphasized on transformational leadership due to its higher impact as compared to other leadership approaches, the scholars have articulated that transformational leadership style is more effective regardless of organizational type. The type of the leadership largely depends upon the personal ability, their preferences, and experiences. The transformational leadership found to be effective and impactful for employees, that it also influences the job satisfaction and resulted in employer' loyalty and tenure at the workplace, while compensation, benefits and supervisor's approach (Moyes et al., 2007). Further, the other research study has reported higher correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction (Paracha et al., 2012).

The charismatic leaders much likely to be transformational leaders, however there is difference to produce the change, creativity, and business sense for both kind of traits. The prior studies have contributed to expansion of theory for the constructs of transformational and transactional leadership styles to explain the concepts. The study has been conducted to determine the employee well-being influenced by transactional leadership and trust in leader through mediating role of organizational climate. The study was conducted on the employees of cement sector of Pakistan, the results reported that transactional leadership and trust in leader influences the organizational climate and employee well-being, further the study revealed that organizational climate significantly mediated the relationship between transactional leadership and trust in leader to predict the employee well-being (Khan et al., 2021).

The transformational leadership encourage employee to communicate their innovative ideas to the superiors, the transformational leaders fulfill the need of organization, create the trust among employees and stakeholders by facilitating the creative thinking and motivation of employees (Olsen, 2011; Iqbal et al., 2019). The study revealed that relationship between transactional leadership and job satisfaction was positively significant, the relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction was also reported s positively significant, however the relationship between laissez-leadership and job satisfaction was insignificant (Z. Iqbal et al., 2021). The results of the study demonstrated the importance and relevance of the leadership style in determining the performance related, employee related and behavior related outcomes and consequences. So therefore, the current study incorporated the role of transformational leadership style in health sector of Pakistan to explain the phenomenon of the sustainable performance.

The research investigated the relationship and revealed that transformational leadership influence the organizational commitment and leader-member exchange (LMX) among employees of universities in France (Keskes et al., 2018). The transformational leadership model has been developed by MacGregor to assess the organizational perspective; the study argued that transformational leadership has the tendency to direct the superior performance for the organization. The study reported that committed workforce reduce the cost of recruitment and

selection and training, so the organizational commitment has central importance in determining the performance related outcomes, so therefore the current study incorporated the role organizational commitment to predict the sustainable performance (Mishra & Upadhyay, 2022). The current study argue that transformational leadership influence the organizational commitment. Based on the above literature the following hypotheses are derived:

Hypothesis3: The Transformational leadership influences the sustainable performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis4: The Transformational Leadership influences the Organizational Commitment in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

### **Career planning to Organizational Commitment and Sustainable Performance**

The career planning also relates to the social, economic, and environmental components that receives significant influence. The goals setting helps in determining the direction of individuals that what, where, and when to achieve, that is considered as a continuous exploratory process, that assists in determining the path that reflect the interest, talent, values, work, needs personalities (Zhang & Shao, 2012). The literature argued that career planning is an initiative of an employee that enable the organizations to identify the strengths and weakness and the desired goals for the career development. The literature has examined the impact of career planning on the customer satisfaction (Obeidat & Abdallah, 2014), however number of other variables have been overlooked and ignored, this study focused on assessing the role of career planning in health sector of Pakistan to determine the sustainable performance.

The career planning has been expressed under the HRM practices that influence the performance of the firm in the insurance sector (Loo & Beh, 2015), the customer satisfaction found to be very important for firm performance, also prior literature revealed positive relationship between career planning and performance of employees (G. Uysal, 2012; Kumari et al., 2013). The prior research has focused on the performance of lecturers in public sector universities of Indonesia and reported that hard skills, soft, skills, organizational learning and innovation capability of the teachers directly influence the performance. It has been proposed to ensure these influential variables in order to enhance the performance of lecturer, however the study has overlooked the importance of career planning to determine the performance (Purwanto et al., 2019). The researchers have explored the university leaders in educational perspective and reported the challenges, issues, and opportunities through qualitative approach. It has been suggested to educational sector to provide the training and support, transparency for policies related to promotion and selection, the support to existing factors rather than expansions, and to focus on reduction of brain drain to retain the quality faulty members (Khwaja et al., 2022).

The study however ignored the important aspect of HR that career planning has tendency to influence the behavior, workplace environment and behavioral outcomes where the performance related outcomes found to be affected as the most (Ahmed et al., 2022). Another study was conducted to determine the performance of academic staff that does work-family role conflict impact the performance related outcomes, the study showed that work-family conflict influence the performance related consequences but female workers received much higher impact than male members, the academic employees of higher education sector of Multan was targeted population of study and reported that work-family conflict has the negative impact on behavior and



performance of employees (G. Hussain, 2022). The study determined the career success, however it was limited in assessing the phenomenon, as it has ignored the important other factors such as appropriate leadership style.

Previously, the study was conducted on university teachers and found that these six factors causes, the excessive workload and role conflict found to be higher stressors, however the career progression reduce the stress level and increase the performance of employees (Faisal et al., 2019). The study was limited in determining the performance of employees or universities as it focused on the stressors and its consequences of work performance, the study overlooked the important factor of career related factors to determine the sustainable performance. The study reported that work engagement has the significant relationship with organizational commitment, the organizational commitment significantly mediated the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study (Cao et al., 2019). The career development has been considered as an important factor of HR that facilitate the continuous learning that help the employees to face the challenges and issues of workplace (Watkins & Marsick, 2016).

The research efforts have determined the relationship between career training and development to the job satisfaction and impact of organizational commitment. The career development found to be positively related to the job satisfaction as study was conducted on the public sector employees. The study also revealed that training positively related to the job satisfaction, the career development and training together positively influence the job satisfaction (Rahayu et al., 2019). The previous studies have overlooked the empirical examination of career planning and organizational commitment that further influences the sustainable performance. The current study bridges the research gap by investigating the relationship between career planning and organizational commitment that further influences the sustainable performance. The above literature review helps to drive the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis5: The Career Planning influences the sustainable performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis6: The Career Planning influences the Organizational Commitment in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

### **Job Design to Organizational Commitment and Sustainable Performance**

This study focused on the importance of job related tasks, the process to combine the tasks performed during the job known as complete job, it can also be summarized as characteristics of job of an employee (Dessler, 2000). The prior literature has established the relationship between job design and employee's behavior and attitude. The concept of job design also includes the job enlargement, engagement, and job motivation that plays fundamental role in empowerment and strengthening of employees for accomplishment of the strategic goals and objectives (AlKerdawy, 2014;Schaufeli, 2013).

It has been reported that job characterized by different tasks that particularly affect the completion of job that has been performed by counterparts. The research scholars have supported the suggestions to expand the task-focused and related to the theory of work-design proposed by (Parker, 2014). The study also reported mediating effect of motivation between organizational

culture, job design and HR performance. However, no influence was reported by organizational culture on HR performance (Al-Musadieq et al., 2018). The study overlooked to assess the impact of job design on performance of the organization along with leadership skills, the current study intends to determine the influence of job design on sustainable performance in health sector of Pakistan.

The limited research has been published on assessing the role of job crafting and design that influence the job satisfaction. The study revealed that university teachers have taken initiatives during covid lockdown to attain the job satisfaction. The positive behavior of university teachers have been shown for job design and crafting during covid 19 lockdown for attaining the job satisfaction (Irshad & Raja, 2021). However, the study has overlooked and ignored the role of job design in assessing the sustainable performance of health sector along with leadership style. The organizational commitment of employees linked to the psychological rewards that received, the recognition of employees, the support they receive from the organization and support given by the colleagues, the employees develop the sense of care from the organization, and in return accept the values, and objectives of the organization that shows the normative commitment (Rodríguez-Fernández et al., 2021). On the base of literature review the following hypotheses are derived:

Hypothesis7: The Job Design influences the sustainable performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis8: The Job Design influences the Organizational Commitment in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

### **Organizational Commitment and Sustainable Performance**

The research study has been conducted to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, the influence of transformational leadership to the organizational commitment in the banking sector of Pakistan. The findings of the study revealed that transformational leadership positively influence the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of workforce (Bushra et al., 2011).The strengthened organizational commitment found to be critical to the success for achievement of higher performance standards, the organizational commitment is an important aspect to perform better that required for organizational success. The prior literature has empirically proved that organizational commitment has the tendency to influence the employee performance (Syauta et al., 2012). The study conducted on Indonesian hospitals and reported significant positive results between organizational commitment and employee performance (Hakim, 2015). Contrary, the organizational commitment found to be insignificant towards performance related outcomes (Cesário & Chambel, 2017). The current study argues that organizational commitment has the tendency to influence the sustainable performance among the employees of health sector of Pakistan. Based on the above literature the following hypothesis is derived:

Hypothesis9: The Organizational Commitment influences the sustainable performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

## **Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment**

The mediating construct can be incorporated in the framework between exogenous and endogenous constructs when independent variable found to have a significant influence on both dependent and mediating variable, meanwhile the mediating variable must have a significant influence on dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The leadership style is considered as one of the curial factors that contribute to organizational success and performance, the considerable efforts have been published to establish the relationship. The role of leadership style has also been assessed in establishing the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational performance (Choi et al., 2019; Islam et al., 2020). The failure in execution of effective and supportive leadership may lead to negative outcomes by influencing colleagues, firms and working environment (Yadav et al., 2019). The transactional leadership influences the well-being as trust in leaders and transformational leadership influences the performance (Meisam et al., 2013; R. N. A. Khan et al., 2021). The research investigated the relationship and revealed that transformational leadership influence the organizational commitment and leader-member exchange (LMX) among employees of universities in France (Keskes et al., 2018).

The study reported that work engagement has the significant relationship with organizational commitment, the organizational commitment significantly mediated the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study (Cao et al., 2019). The organizational commitment has the positive significant relationship with performance, so it is assumed by the researcher that organizational commitment expected to mediate the relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs of the study. Therefore, this research effort incorporated the organizational commitment as a mediator between transformational, transactional leadership styles, career planning, job design and sustainable performance. Following guidelines of previous social sciences research studies (Kanwal, Pitafi, Rasheed, Pitafi, & Iqbal, 2022; Khan, Liu, Khan, Liu, & Rasheed, 2020; Luqman, Masood, Shahzad, Imran Rasheed, & Weng, 2020; Rasheed, Malik, et al., 2020; Rasheed, Weng, Umrani, & Moin, 2021) and the discussion above, the following mediating hypotheses are devised:

Hypothesis10: The Organizational Commitment Mediates the relationship between Transactional Leadership and Sustainable Performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis11: The Organizational Commitment Mediates the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Sustainable Performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis12: The Organizational Commitment Mediates the relationship between Career Planning and Sustainable Performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

Hypothesis13: The Organizational Commitment Mediates the relationship between Job Design and Sustainable Performance in health sector of Pakistan in post-covid19 era.

## **Data, Variables and Methodology**

Research designs are strategies and the techniques for research that span the decisions from comprehensive assumptions to thorough methods of data collection and analysis (Zikmund et al., 2010). Since the current research study is quantitative in nature, the respondents, who are the

permanent staff (nurses) of public hospitals in the Punjab province of Pakistan, filled out questionnaires to provide the data.

### **Population and Sample**

According to Sekaran and Bougie, (2010) population refers to the interest of the researcher in a topic or group of individuals. The whole collection of certain demographic components relevant to the study topic is referred to as the target population (Zikmund et al., 2013). As it is shown in table 1, the employees (nurses) of all public hospitals are considered as population of the study, as unit of analysis is an individual employee. The permanent employees (Registered Nurses) of government hospitals were considered as population from one largest Punjab province out of four provinces of Pakistan. Punjab province has major number of government hospitals with 62 basic health units (BHUs). Table 2 shows the registered number of all the doctors, nurses and other staff in all four provinces. The targeted population for this study is nurses in BHUs of public hospitals in Punjab Province because it is with highest number of registered nurses and the population of this study 17,773. Table 3 below contains the names of the public hospitals which providing basic services during COVID-19 in Punjab.

### **Sample size**

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a suitable proportion of a population's members as responders for the purposes of data collecting. In the present study, the table developed by Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) served as the basis for establishing the appropriate size of the representative sample to be drawn from the total population of 17,773, as shown in table 2. And the sample size of 377 was regarded to be an adequate sample size for the population that was being studied, which meant that it was sufficient to generalize the results. The use of a simple random sampling technique was adapted for the purpose of data collection from the information provided in table 3. To ensure an adequate response rate collecting researcher distributed 20% more questionnaires in accordance with the advice made by Salkind (1997). Therefore, the researcher distributed a total of 548 questionnaires to obtain relevant responses. The sampling strategy we adopted in this study has been adopted from previous research in same area (e.g., Moin, Omar, Wei, Rasheed, & Hameed, 2021; Nisar, Rasheed, & Qiang, 2018; Sattar, Rasheed, Khan, Tariq, & Iqbal, 2017; Yousaf, Rasheed, Hameed, & Luqman, 2019).

### **Measurement scales**

The 4 items for transactional leadership, the scale was adopted from the study of (Khan et al., 2021). The 4 items for transformational leadership, the scale was adopted from the study (Nasir et al., 2022). The five-items measurement scale of career planning was adopted from previous study, It determines the career goal setting, assess the self-abilities, interest, strengths and weakness (Joarder, 2012). The four-items scale of job design was also adopted from previous research as it is referred as job description, learning perspective of an organization, culture of job design and team work (Chand, 2010). The 17 items to measure the sustainable performance, the measurement scale was adopted from the study of (Mousa & Othman, 2020). The 3 items to measure the organizational commitment, the measurement scale was adopted from the study of (Chaudhary et al., 2021).

## Data analysis

The permanent employees of public hospitals responded to the questionnaires as 600 total questionnaires were distributed and 308 usable responses were received, which denotes that a 51% and this response rate is acceptable by the American Association for Opinion Research (AAPOR) in social sciences. Particularly, the nurses were quite occupied and got less time for such research questionnaires to be filling them. The Smart-PLS is one of the most powerful statistical data analysis tools utilized in social sciences that helps in testing the relationship between the constructs of the framework (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

## Measurement Model Assessment

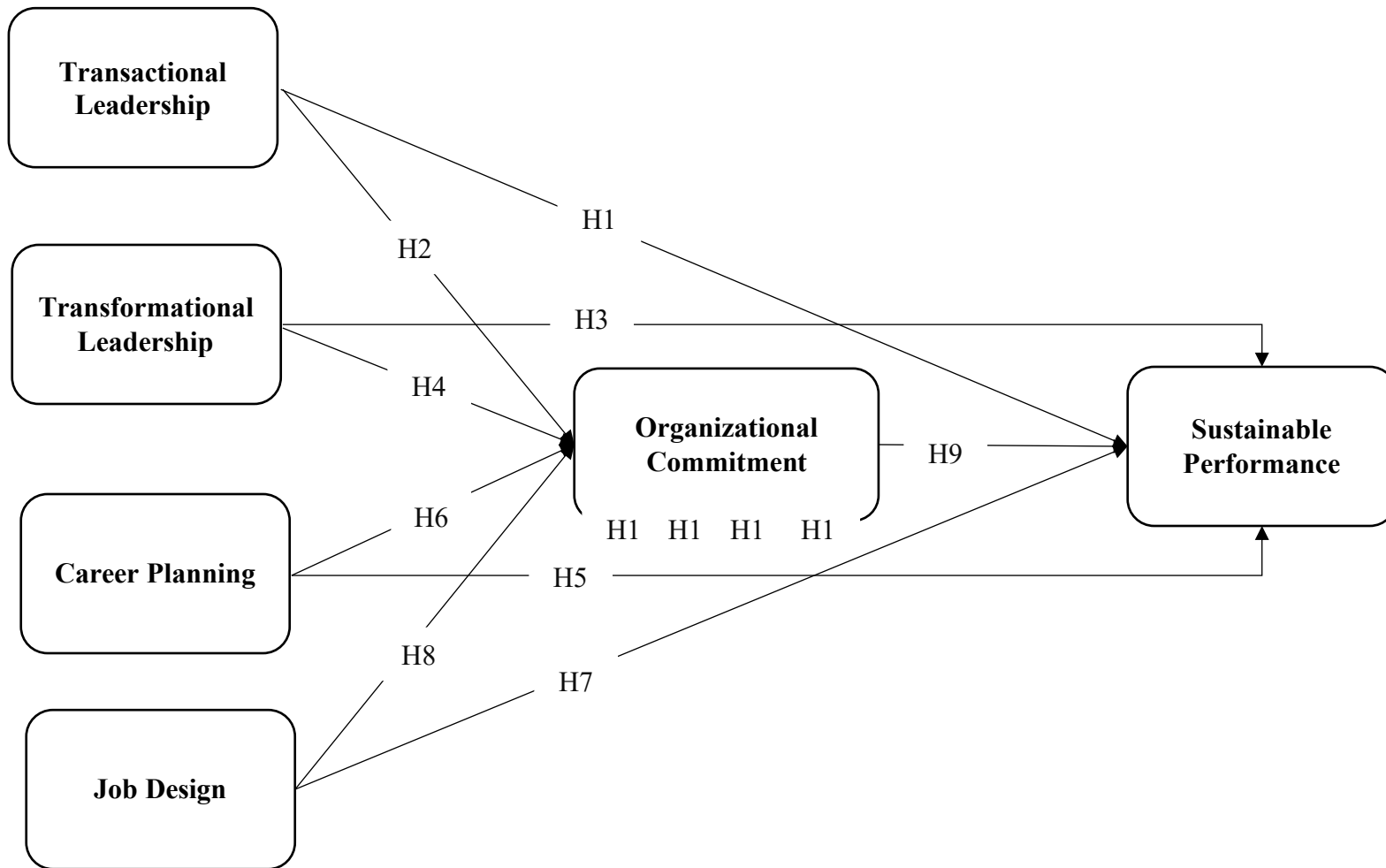
The assessment results for the measurement model are given in Table 4 below. Figure 2 demonstrates the measurement model drawn in Smart-PLs for construct validity and reliability.

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Table 3. List of Public Hospitals in Punjab

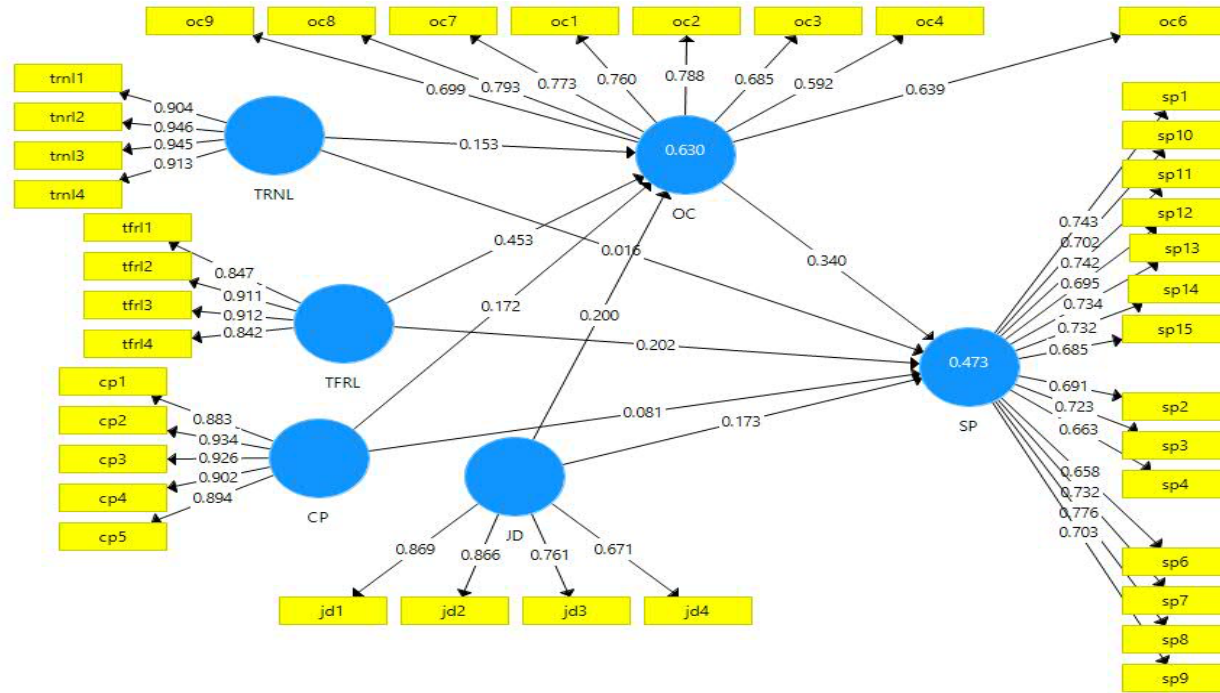
1. Bakhtawar Amin Memorial Hospital, Multan
  2. City Hospital (Multan)
  3. Victoria Hospital, Bahawalpur
  4. Civil Hospital, Bahawalpur
  5. Sheikh Zayed Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan
  6. Allied Hospital / DHQ Hospital, Faisalabad
  7. Nishtar Hospital, Multan
  8. Fatima Memorial Hospital, Lahore
  9. Jinnah Hospital, Lahore
  10. Lahore General Hospital, Lahore
  11. Services Hospital, Lahore
  12. Doctor Hospital, Lahore
- 

**Table 1.**



**Figure 1: Research Framework** Note: Independent Variables (Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Career Planning, Job Design. Dependent Variable (Sustainable Performance), Mediator (Organizational Commitment).

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework developed by the researcher linking healthcare’ practices related to HRM including transformational leadership, transactional leadership, career planning, and job design with organizational commitment and sustainable performance. The following research framework signifies the thirteen hypotheses.



**Figure 2. Measurement Model (PLS3)**

Note: Transactional Leadership (TNSL), Transformational Leadership (TFRL), Career Planning (CP), Job Design (JD), Organizational Commitment (OC), Sustainable Performance (SP)

The MM was assessed using several parameters. Internal consistency reliability was inspected using CA, rho\_A and composite reliability (CR). As shown in Table 4, they all exceeded the benchmark of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017), strongly suggesting acceptable reliability amongst the indicators. It is important to note here that in reflective MM, indicators must be interrelated, to portray substantial values of outer loading values (Hair et al., 2017).

### Convergent Validity

The research guru Hair Jr (2006) described convergent validity as the extent to which the items of the constructs not only present the true proposed latent variable but also correlate with measures of the same latent variable. The average variance extracted was determined for the assessment of the convergent validity, as the acceptable threshold value for AVE must be 0.50 or higher according to (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as shown in table 4 below. Convergent validity was evaluated by average variance extracted (AVE), which should be above 0.5; indicator loadings, which should be greater than 0.6; and CR, which should be above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017).

In this study, as shown in Table 4, convergent validity was achieved as all these thresholds were achieved. However, in achieving these values, some item loadings that fall below the threshold were deleted and reported in table 4. The variables of the current study including transformational leadership, transactional leadership, career planning, job-design and dependent variable sustainable performance with mediating variable of organizational commitment that have been observed with acceptable composite reliability as shown in table 4 below.

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Transactional Leadership (TRNL)</b>	0.868	0.522
<b>Transformational Leadership (TFRL)</b>	0.867	0.567
<b>Career Planning (CP)</b>	0.794	0.565
<b>Job Design (JD)</b>	0.862	0.560
<b>Sustainable Performance (SP)</b>	0.866	0.521
<b>Organizational Commitment (OC)</b>	0.827	0.545

**Table 3. Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

*Note: Transactional Leadership (TNSL), Transformational Leadership (TFRL), Career Planning (CP), Job Design (JD), Organizational Commitment (OC), Sustainable Performance (SP)*



The table 3 shows Composite reliability and Average variance extracted (AVE), the three items from sustainable performance SP5, SP16 and SP17, and one item from organizational commitment OC5 is deleted, due to lower factor loading that affect the AVE, so for achievement of reliability and validity of the constructs three items were deleted.

### Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated by the Fornell & Larcker (1981), that says square root of AVE must remain higher than the correlational values, the intersectional value must be higher than the remaining values of the same column. Table 5 reveals that the total correlations amongst all the variables were lower than the threshold. This confirmed there was adequate discriminant validity. Further, so there was no multicollinearity to worry about as far as the predictors were concerned.

Constructs	SP	OC	TRNL	TRFL	CP	JD
<b>SP</b>	<b>0.908</b>					
<b>OC</b>	0.431	<b>0.719</b>				
<b>TRNL</b>	0.514	0.547	<b>0.927</b>			
<b>TRFL</b>	0.198	0.200	0.284	<b>0.879</b>		
<b>CP</b>	0.554	0.452	0.622	0.162	<b>0.796</b>	
<b>JD</b>	0.633	0.551	0.461	0.182	0.661	<b>0.667</b>

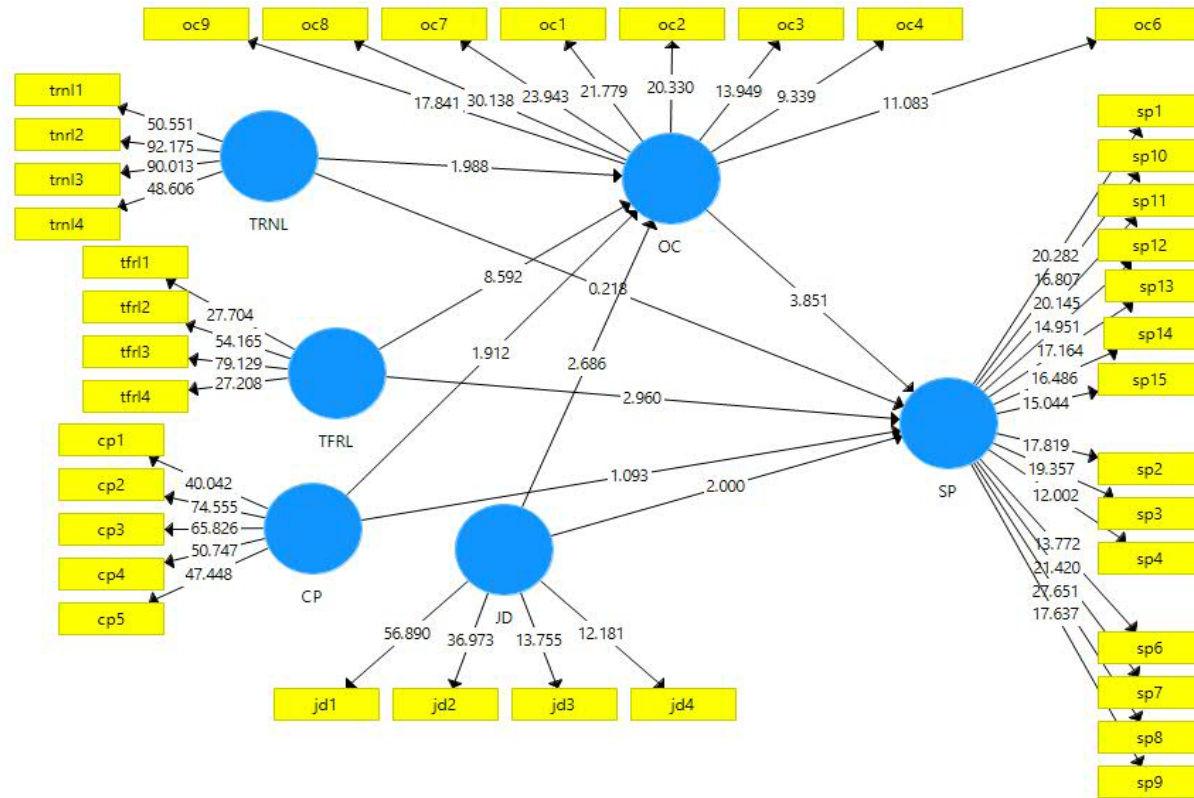
**Table 5.**

Note: Transactional Leadership (TNSL), Transformational Leadership (TFRL), Career Planning (CP), Job Design (JD), Organizational Commitment (OC), Sustainable Performance (SP)

### Structural Model Assessment (Direct Relationships Testing)

The procedure of SEM was adopted according to the suggestions and instructions of various previous studies (Hair Jr et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2009). In the structural model, all direct hypotheses were tested as shown in Figure 3 below. The significant value is based on the t statistics that must remain higher than 1.96 as the threshold for acceptance and rejection of relationship between the constructs. Moreover, the  $\beta$ -value was considered for examining the direction of the relationship. Overall, we have followed previous god studied to analyses our data (Rasheed, Jamad, et al., 2020; Rasheed, Okumus, Weng, Hameed, & Nawaz, 2020; Saleem, Rasheed,

Malik, & Okumus, 2021; Yousaf et al., 2014; Zhang, Rasheed, & Luqman, 2019). The figure 3 demonstrates the structural equation model drawn in Smart-PLS 4 version in bootstrapping method.



**Figure 3. Structural Equation Model (SEM-PLS3)**

*Note: Transactional Leadership (TNSL), Transformational Leadership (TFRL), Career Planning (CP), Job Design (JD), Organizational Commitment (OC), Sustainable Performance (SP).*

## Direct Relationships Explanation

**Hypothesis 1:** Transactional Leadership expected to be influential in explaining the phenomenon of the sustainable performance among public sector hospitals of Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between transactional leadership and sustainable performance, which shows that transactional leadership is in-significant related to SP based on ( $\beta = 0.016$ ; t-value 0.218;  $p=0.827$ ). The result shows that the independent variable transactional leadership has in-significant direct effect on SP.

**Hypothesis 2:** Transactional Leadership expected to be influential in explaining the phenomenon of the organizational Commitment among public sector hospitals of Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between transactional leadership and organizational Commitment, which shows that transactional leadership is significantly related to OC based on ( $\beta = 0.153$ ; t-value 1.988;  $p=0.047$ ). The result shows that the independent variable transactional leadership has a significant direct effect on OC

**Hypothesis 3:** Transformational leadership are significantly influential towards sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between transformational leadership and sustainable performance, which shows that TFRL is significantly related to SP based on ( $\beta = 0.202$ ; t-value 2.960;  $p=0.003$ ). The result shows that the independent variable TRFL has no direct effect on SP and the hypothesis is accepted on statistical grounds.

**Hypothesis 4:** Transformational leadership are significantly influential towards organizational Commitment among public hospitals in Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational Commitment, which shows that TFRL is significantly related to OC based on ( $\beta = 0.453$ ; t-value 8.592;  $p=0.000$ ). The result shows that the independent variable TRFL has no direct effect on OC and the hypothesis is accepted on statistical grounds.

**Hypothesis 5:** Career planning significantly influences sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between career planning and sustainable performance, which shows that CP is in-significantly related to SP based on ( $\beta = 0.081$ ; t-value 1.093;  $p=0.275$ ). The result shows that the independent variable SP has in-significant effect on SP.

**Hypothesis 6:** Career planning in-significantly influences organizational Commitment among public hospitals in Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between career planning and organizational Commitment, which shows that CP is insignificantly related to OC based on ( $\beta = 0.172$ ; t-value 1.912;  $p=0.056$ ). The result shows that the independent variable CP has in-significant effect on OC.

**Hypothesis 7:** Job-Design significantly influences sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between JD and sustainable performance, which shows that JD is significantly related to SP based on ( $\beta = 0.173$ ; t-value 2.000;  $p=0.004$ ). The result shows that the independent variable JD has a direct effect on SP.

**Hypothesis 8:** Job-Design significantly influences organizational Commitment among public hospitals in Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between JD and organizational Commitment, which shows that JD is significantly related to OC based on ( $\beta = 0.200$ ; t-value 2.686;  $p=0.007$ ). The result shows that the independent variable JD has a direct effect on OC.

**Hypothesis 9:** Organizational Commitment expected to be influential in explaining the phenomenon of the sustainable performance among public sector hospitals of Pakistan. Table 6 demonstrates the relationship between transactional leadership and sustainable performance, which shows that organizational Commitment is significantly related to SP based on ( $\beta = 0.340$ ; t-

value 3.851;  $p=0.000$ ). The result shows that the independent variable organizational Commitment has a significant direct effect on SP.

Sr. No	Direct Relationship	$\beta$	T Value	P Values	Decision
H1	TRNL $\rightarrow$ SP	0.016	0.218	0.827	In-Significant
H2	TRNL $\rightarrow$ OC	0.153	1.988	0.047	Significant
H3	TFRL $\rightarrow$ SP	0.202	2.960	0.003	Significant
H4	TFRL $\rightarrow$ OC	0.453	8.592	0.000	Significant
H5	CP $\rightarrow$ SP	0.081	1.093	0.275	In-Significant
H6	CP $\rightarrow$ OC	0.172	1.912	0.056	Insignificant
H7	JD $\rightarrow$ SP	0.173	2.000	0.046	Significant
H8	JD $\rightarrow$ OC	0.200	2.686	0.007	Significant
H9	OC $\rightarrow$ SP	0.340	3.851	0.000	Significant

**Table 6. Structural equation model (Direct Relationships testing)**

Note: Transactional Leadership (TNSL), Transformational Leadership (TFRL), Career Planning (CP), Job Design (JD), Organizational Commitment (OC), Sustainable Performance (SP)

### Assessment of Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment

After assessing the direct effect between exogenous and endogenous variables, the study went further to test the relationships through the role of mediator (indirect effect). The mediation role was assessed through the bootstrapping method of PLS and examined on t-value as 1.96 as threshold for acceptance or rejection of mediation hypotheses. The table 7 presents the results of the mediation effect. The figure 3 demonstrated the mediation effect in graphical representation drawn from bootstrapping method of Smart-PLS.

Sr#	Indirect Hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Values	P values	Decision
H10	TRNL $\rightarrow$ OC $\rightarrow$ SP	0.152	2.714	0.001	Significant
H11	TFRL $\rightarrow$ OC $\rightarrow$ SP	0.154	3.594	0.000	Significant
H12	CP $\rightarrow$ OC $\rightarrow$ SP	0.058	1.704	0.089	Insignificant
H13	JD $\rightarrow$ OC $\rightarrow$ SP	0.068	2.035	0.042	Significant

**Table 7 Structural Model Assessment (Mediation results)**

*Note: Transactional Leadership (TNSL), Transformational Leadership (TFRL), Career Planning (CP), Job Design (JD), Organizational Commitment (OC), Sustainable Performance (SP)*

**Hypothesis 10:** Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan as argued in the study. The H10 examines the mediation role of organizational commitment between transactional leadership and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan, the results of the hypothesis are assessed as based on statistical values ( $\beta = 0.152$ ;  $t\text{-value} = 2.714$ ;  $p=0.001$ ), that shows statistically significant relationship and mediation role is evident between the relationship of transactional leadership and sustainable performance.

**Hypothesis 11:** Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan as the study argues. The H11 examines the moderation role of organizational commitment between transformational leadership and sustainable performance of public hospitals in Pakistan, the results of the hypothesis are assessed based on statistical values ( $\beta = 0.154$ ;  $t\text{-value} = 3.594$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), this result depicts statistically significant result that there is significant mediation between transformational leadership and sustainable performance.

**Hypothesis 12:** Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between career planning and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan. The H12 examines the mediation role of organizational commitment between career planning and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan, the results of the hypothesis are assessed as rejected on the basis of statistical values ( $\beta = 0.058$ ;  $t\text{-value} = 1.704$ ;  $p=0.089$ ). The results depicted insignificance mediation between the career planning and sustainable performance.

**Hypothesis 13:** Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between job design and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan. The H13 examines the mediation role organizational commitment of between job design and sustainable performance among public hospitals in Pakistan, the results of the hypothesis are assessed on the basis of statistical values ( $\beta = 0.068$ ;  $t\text{-value} = 2.035$ ;  $p=0.042$ ). The results show statistically significant mediation between job design and sustainable performance.

## Conclusion & Recommendations

The study aimed to investigate the impact of different practices including transactional leadership style, transformational leadership style, career planning and job design to determine the sustainable performance, with mediating role of organizational commitment. The study revealed there is an impact of human resource management practices on performance in public hospitals of Pakistan either collectively or separately. This indicates that human resource management practices play a major role in employees' performance in organization regardless of their activities. And finally, these factors can lead to increasing employee performance in public hospitals of Pakistan by:

1. Adopting the appropriate leadership approach, as this study depicts that transformational leadership has higher and significant impact on sustainable performance and increase the organizational commitment. The transactional leadership style found to be insignificant in determining the sustainable performance, the study revealed that transformational leadership is much appropriate in rapidly changing environment. So therefore, it is suggested that health sector should incorporate the transformational leadership approach in order to gain the sustainable performance.

2. The study encourages to establish the career planning for employees, as the lack of career planning leads towards the higher turnover and negative emotions, so therefore it is suggested to devise the appropriate strategies to sustain the performance and to gain the organizational commitment. The career planning has the tendency to influence the organizational commitment and sustainable performance, however the findings of this study depicted that career planning is insignificant in sustainable performance and to achieve the organizational commitment.
3. The job design is an important factor that is expected to influence the performance related outcomes as well as assist in achieving the commitment of employees. This study also concluded that appropriate job design and the duties performed by the employees has the influence on performance, this study suggests developing the effective job design and job description for gaining the higher commitment and sustainable performance.
4. Increasing the commitment of employees to their jobs to achieve the sustainable performance, the result of the current study depicted that organizational commitment has the tendency to establish the relationship between transactional leadership and sustainable performance, that means in the presence of higher organizational commitment the sustainable performance can be achieved.
5. The healthcare sector must be adoptive in effective leadership style, in devising the strategies for career planning and job design to achieve the organizational commitment that further influence the sustainable performance.

In nutshell, the organizations should give prime importance to the sustainable performance to gain the competitive advantage in highly competitive and turbulent environment as Covid19 situation occurred or similar stressful situation arises again in future. The study concluded that public health of Pakistan is facing the issue of performance, the challenge of effective leadership approaches, the lack of career planning programs, the ineffectiveness of job design and inappropriate commitment level of employees towards the healthcare sector. So therefore, the results of the current study suggested that public health of Pakistan must incorporate the ensure the effective leadership style that is considered as transformational leadership, initiate the useful career planning programs to increase the job security of employees that plays important role in achieving organizational commitment and performance.

## **Recommendations**

Based on previous results and conclusions, the following recommendations might help to enhance sustainable performance in healthcare sector of Punjab, Pakistan:

- 1- The current study recommends that top management in public health sector need to improve the human resource perspective, leadership style, career planning and job design of the sustainable performance of hospitals. The study showed that public health needs to be more transparent with their managerial style towards employees, the transactional leadership style is believed to be more traditional as compare to transformational leadership style, the results show and recommends to adopt the transformational leadership style in order to achieve the organizational commitment and finally for sustainability of performance in pandemic like situation.
- 2- The current study recommends top management in public health to implement a fairer career planning program that provides the employees with the benefits they need, the job security

and satisfaction that influence the commitment and finally contribute in sustainability of performance.

3- The study recommends the public health should be focusing on the job design of nurses in hospitals, the working hours, the working environment and working conditions that influence the performance and impact the behavior of employees towards the commitment level that further play role in sustainability of performance.

4- The study showed that management at public health must incorporate the effective strategies in order to increase the commitment level that is influenced by the leadership styles, that study suggested to transform the traditional leadership style to the transformational leadership approach that harvest the maximum benefits at the strategic as well as on operational level due to direction management and decisional approach towards the employees.

5- The conclusions from this study are limited as there may be questions regarding the factors of human resource practices to the employees including the leadership perspective, the effective career related decisions, and appropriate job design. This study was focused on the operational level, the higher management point of view is recommended to be considered in future studies which would benefit from the use of a larger sample. Also, an important factor like performance has the most impact on motivation and it is recommended to be tested separately.

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