

# Leadership Support and Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Satisfaction

**Dilli Ram Bhandari, PhD**

Lecturer, Shankerdev Campus, Kathmandu,

Email: drvandari@gmail.com

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## Abstract

*This study has been carried out to explore the effect of Leadership Support on Organizational Performance with the mediating effect of Employee Satisfaction in Nepalese Commercial Banks. A survey has been undertaken to gather the data by use of a structured questionnaire from 6 banks. Altogether, 224 questionnaires were used for final analysis. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were taken for data analysis. The collected data were analyzed on two steps. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.*

*The result of the data analysis revealed that Leadership Support significantly affects Organizational Performance and Employee Satisfaction. Further, Employee Satisfaction showed the direct positive impact on Organizational Performance and it also showed a mediating effect between Leadership Support and Organizational Performance.*

*The findings of this study imply that human factor should be emphasized for a better Organizational Performance and Leadership Support plays a vital role in satisfying and motivating the employees.*

**Keywords:** Leadership Support, Employee Satisfaction, Organizational Performance

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## Introduction

An organization's performance is nurtured when the employees are productive. When the employees are satisfied, they put their utmost efforts for both operational efficiency and effectiveness. There are multiple components of employee satisfaction (ES). Leadership support (LS) is one of the prominent ones.

LS is likely to affect the attitude of employees towards their jobs and thus their satisfaction. The role of leaders in today's organizations has changed over the years and their success largely relies on how they support their followers.

Studies show that the role of leadership is critical for the growth and sustainability of an organization. Leadership plays an important role for any organization to be successful (Ramos, 2014). So, organizations require the right type of leaders in order to promote their efficiency and the productivity (Mussolino & Calabro, 2014). A capable leader provides direction to the organization and guides his/her followers towards achieving desired goals (Voon et al., 2011).

ES plays a primary role in achieving both efficiency and effectiveness and to achieve organizational goals. The common idea is if leaders take care of their employees, in turn, they will also be customer oriented. According to Javed, Rahim and Jaffari (2014), when the employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are likely to put more efforts to achieve organizational objectives. ES has a significant direct effect on organizational success (Javed et al., 2014). Leadership is a significant factor in every human action in

pursuit of the aims and objectives (Adekunle, 2020).

A supportive leadership and satisfied employees can improve performance of the organization. Studies suggest that effective leadership can facilitate the improvement of performance when organizations face new challenges (Obiwuru et al., 2011). Ogochukwu & Ikon (2019) argued perceived LS has a significant positive relationship with employee performance. Kumar & Ansari (2020) clearly show a positive and highly significant correlation between perceived organizational support and performance outcomes.

In relation to the above issues, this study attempts to show the relationship between LS and OP in Nepalese commercial banks with the mediating effect of ES.

## **Problem Statement**

Even with the advancement of modern workplace technologies, leadership problems are common in recent times. The banking industry is not an exception to this. Enhancing job satisfaction of employees in pursuit of the organizational goals has always been a major challenge for the industry. Companies are shifting their focus on the role of leadership to enrich ES. Thus, an organization should have effective leadership to promote ES at both individual and group level and achieve the organizational goals.

Nowadays, employees are not satisfied with only financial benefits. According to Hanif and Kamal (2009), happy employees are more likely to be attentive to attract customers. Employee job satisfaction is an important element in a work situation and has been associated with improved organizational performance as well as increased commitment to the organization (Orute et al., 2015).

Furthermore, performance is a vital factor for financial institutions wishing to carry out their business successfully and smoothly facing the competition in financial markets (Ntuite, 2015). The goal of the organization is not only to survive, but also to sustain its existence by improving its performance. In order to meet the highly competitive markets, organizations must continuously increase their performance (Capella, 2016). Good organizational performance comes as a result of employee job satisfaction that largely depends on LS.

A failure in strategic leadership often causes business losses and lowers employees' morale (Hino & Aoki, 2012). Leadership styles and strategic leadership practices by top management teams have a significant influence on the organizations' competitiveness and financial performance (Carter & Greer, 2013).

Leadership has been a major issue in Nepalese financial sector, mainly from governance issues: transparency, accountability and discipline. Furthermore; the role, competency, development, integrity and benefits of the leaders are much debated topics in Nepalese financial sectors. On the other side, a comparatively high employee turnover is another important matter of the banks.

To address the above issues, this study attempts to address the given issues;

1. What is the effect of LS on ES?
2. What is the impact of LS on OP?
3. How ES affect OP?
4. Does ES mediate LS and OP relationship?

## **Objectives of the Study**

This study is primarily centered on assessing the relationship between LS, ES and OP on selected private commercial banks in Nepal. Other subsidiary objectives are;

1. To assess the influence of LS on ES
2. To examine the effect of ES on OP
3. To examine the effect of LS on OP
4. To test the mediation by ES between LS and OP

## **Rationale of the Study**

Leadership is the life blood of any organization and its importance cannot be underestimated (Abdilahi, 2016). According to Saleem, (2015), the role of leadership in modern organizations is changing. A manager

has to understand his/ her employees' requirements, needs, or expectations and generate a suitable work environment to motivate employees. In today's competitive workplace, managers should equip themselves with leadership orientation and employee behaviors knowledge (Khuong & Hoang, 2015).

Although the effects of leadership on performance have been recognized in academia and practice (Tran & Philipp, 2010), little research has specifically examined which leadership style affects certain key financial performance. Dalluay & Jalagat (2016) pointed out that leadership can only be measured on how the employees perform and how efficient and productive they are in performing their responsibilities. A leader's enthusiasm, willingness, commitment and selfless should be shown in a unique to increase profitability, productivity, performance and effectiveness (Aghahowa, 2021).

In Nepalese context, leadership has not received much attention yet (Upreti, 2016). LS, ES and OP are crucial factors for the growth and sustainability of financial organizations in Nepal which this study has attempted to explore.

### **Definition of Variables**

The study attempts to examine the association between the LS, ES and OP. A brief description of the study variables is presented in the following section.

#### **Leadership support**

Leadership is an art of influencing the employees toward organizational goals. Effective leadership implies that the leader is being able to provide the vision and the necessary motivation to a group of people or a team in order to ensure that they work together toward the same goal (Jerome, 2018). With an effective leadership, employees are ready to go the extra mile for the growth and sustainability of the organization (Aghahowa, 2021). Good leadership is able to influence a person to feel satisfaction in work. Leadership has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction and performance (Ratnasari et al., 2020). Leadership has a significant relationship with the job satisfaction of employees (Skansi, 2000) which finally leads to enhanced organizational performance.

#### **Employee satisfaction**

According to Somvir (2013), ES can be taken as an emotional response to a job circumstance that may not be seen. Job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct; it includes both intrinsic and extrinsic indicators (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2019). ES is one of the key factors that motivate employees, which ultimately enhances employees' productivity (Basnet, 2017). It plays a significant role in achieving financial objectives. If employees are satisfied, they provide the more efficient services for customer satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied are hard workers and dedicated more to their work. There is an indirect relationship between ES and financial performance (Hassan et al., 2017).

#### **Organizational Performance**

Ling and Hung (2010) suggested that OP is the results accomplished by relevant divisions and departments before deadlines to achieve stage or overall goals of an organization. Huang (2008) used financial growth and profitability metrics for the evaluation of organizational performances.

The extant literature shows the application of different ways to measure OP (Prajogo et al., 2007; Wong and Wong, 2007). OP is an indicator showing how well an enterprise achieves its own goals (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986). Steer (1975) reviewed 17 models of organizational effectiveness and generalized the results into financial, performance and effectiveness.

### **Literature Review**

Businesses now demand more efficiency to remain ahead of competitors (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010; Ndethiu, 2014). An organization's competitive advantage, success, and sustainability are largely predicated

through employee job satisfaction and turnover intention (Jerome, 2018).

According to Belias & Koustelios (2014), *leadership and employee job satisfaction* have an interactive relationship. A positive relationship exists between the dimensions of transformational leadership and job satisfaction augmented by contingent reward (Puni, Mohammed and Asamoah, 2018).

Effective leadership and employee job satisfaction are two factors that have been regarded as fundamental for organizational success (Voon et al., 2011). Leaders motivate employees to perform more than expected by their job requirements (Nawoselng'ollan & Roussel, 2017). Only satisfied employees influence the productivity towards the organization's vision and goals (Hussin, 2011) which are achieved through ES. ES is best achieved through maintaining a positive LS (Likert, 1961).

Sharma and Biswakarma (2016) demonstrate that the significant relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance with the mediating effect of employee job satisfaction. The finding showed that organizational support to the employees can strongly relate to achieving higher levels of customer satisfaction in Nepalese hospitality sector. Basnet (2017) states that there is significant predictive relation of instrumental and towards leadership behaviour that they associate with their job satisfaction is more inclined towards instrumental leadership.

According to Hassan et al (2017) the democratic leadership style has a significant positive impact on employee performance. This indicates that when democratic approach is applied, employees are likely to be more satisfied resulting in performance enhancement. Asghar & Oino (2018) states that transformational leadership positively affects employees job satisfaction.

Gautam (2018) found that all the six dimensions of team effectiveness, such as supportive environment, team reward, team skill, role clarity, leadership and team cohesiveness have a positive relationship with employee performance in Nepalese Service Sector organizations. According to Mishra & Shrestha (2019), the majority of employees reported their job as a great job in the organization that has better management of human resource mobilization, working environment and organizational performance.

Pokhrel (2019) states that the researcher has found that LS has a significant impact on employee engagement in Nepali commercial banks. Thus, it is imperative to state that leadership styles can influence the employees of commercial banks to be more engaged in their workplace. The perceived organizational support has a significant positive relationship with employee performance (Ogochukwu & Ikon, 2019). This is contingent on the fact that management support has a statistically significant relationship with felt obligation as made evident from the analysis carried out. Kumar & Ansari (2020) states that there is positive and highly significant correlation between perceived organizational support and performance outcomes. Maan, Abid, Butt, et. al. (2020) highlighted the importance of the fact that the organizations are not compelled to just focus on the empowerment of the employees but should also care for their well-being. The more they channelize the energies of their employees, the more they are satisfied with their job.

Ratnasari, Sutjahjo & Adam (2020) state that several conclusions, namely: leadership style significant influence on ES, and ES significant influence on employee performance.

To attain the organizational goal, the commitment of employees towards the organization is a crucial factor (Obedgiu et al., 2017). Leadership styles significantly impact employee performance (Nasaband Afshari, 2019). Empowerment leadership styles significantly influence the learning behavior of the employees (Wibowoand Hayati, 2019)

The leadership styles of the superior directly impact the performance of the employees (Kim and Beehr, 2019) as its affects the job satisfaction of employees (Suryawan et al., 2021).

According to Nanjundeswaraswamy (2021), job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between LS and EC. Contingent reward moderates the relationship between democratic leadership and organizational performance (Hilton, Arkorful, and Martins, 2021).

## **Conceptual Framework**

Based on the theoretical framework and literature, the following study framework is developed.

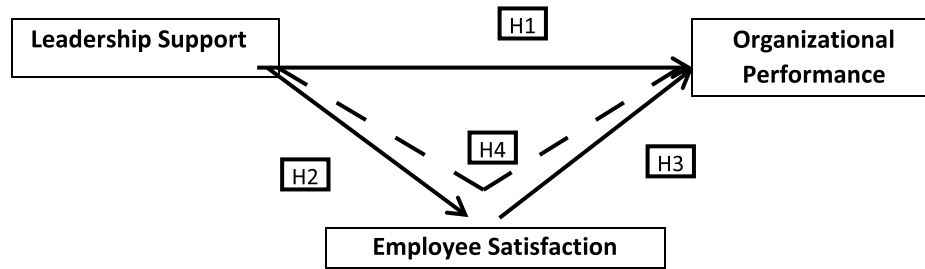


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and subsequent conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed.

- H1: A significant relationship does not exist between LS and ES.
- H2: A significant relationship does not exist between ES and financial performance.
- H3: A significant relationship between LS and financial performance does not exist.

**Methodology**

This study is designed to determine the impact of LS on employees’ job satisfaction and financial performance in the private commercial bank of Nepal. To achieve this, descriptive as well as casual research designs were used.

The 27 commercial banks of Nepal are the population of this study. A survey has been undertaken to gather the data by use of a structured questionnaire. The sample frame for this study includes 6 banks. The banking industry is selected for this study, assuming the more critical roles of leadership in the performance of the organization.

All the items of the questionnaire were in Likert scale ranging 1 strongly dissatisfactory to 5 strongly satisfactory. The questionnaire was pretested with 10 randomly selected employees from the sample banks. The informants of this study are employees of all levels. Altogether 300 questionnaires were distributed among 140 females and 160 males, 246 were returned or collected and 22 were removed for multiple non-response. Finally, 224 questionnaires were used. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was used for final analysis. Table 1 presents the variables used in this study with their respective items.

Table 1

Measurement of variables

Leadership Support	Employee Satisfaction	Organizational Performance
▪ Promotion of teamwork	▪ Pay and benefits	▪ Operating income
▪ Guidance and feedback	▪ Training and development	▪ Market share
▪ Appreciation of efforts	▪ Promotion and growth	▪ Shareholders’ value
▪ Welcome of suggestions from employees	▪ Workplace environment	▪ Employee commitment
▪ Provide necessary resources	▪ Enriched job	▪ Customer satisfaction
▪ Collaboration	▪ Participation	▪ Innovation
▪ Motivation		

**Result and Discussion**

This study basically attempts to test the relationship among LS, ES and OP. The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical packages for social science) and the AMOS (Analysis of moment structure) in two steps: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFA was used to identify the underlying dimensions. The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was used to analyze the 19 items in the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the result of EFA analysis.

Table 2  
Output of EFA

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.868		
	Approx. Chi-Square	2073.304		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Df	136	
	Sig.	.000		
		Employee Satisfaction	Organizational Performance	Leadership Support
	Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.93	0.90	0.92
	Eigen value	7.49	3.1	1.77
	% of variance explained (Total 73%)	44.06	23.34	22.77
a. Promotion of teamwork	LS1			.867
b. Guidance and feedback	LS2			.869
c. Appreciation of efforts	LS3			.887
d. Welcome of suggestions from employees	LS4			.900
e. Provide necessary resources	LS5			.768
f. Collaboration	LS6			0.36
g. Motivation	LS7	0.48		
a. Operating income	OP1		.533	
b. Market share	OP2		.813	
c. Shareholders' value	OP3		.770	
d. Employee commitment	OP4		.804	
e. Customer satisfaction	OP5		.844	
f. Innovation	OP6		.768	
a. Pay and benefits	ES1	.792		
b. Training and development	ES2	.756		
c. Promotion and growth	ES3	.813		
d. Workplace environment	ES4	.811		
e. Enriched job	ES5	.873		
f. Participation	ES6	.878		

EFA with Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was done to confirm the loading of latent variables. The table 1 shows that three factors were extracted, that explained 73% of total variance. The factor model is highly appropriate (Bartlett's Test of Sphericity,  $p < 0.001$ ) (Norusis, 1994). The KMO (0.868) is above the threshold of 0.6 (Norusis, 1994) showing the adequate samples. Eigenvalues range from 1.774 to 7.49. The Cronbach alpha higher than 0.6 shows the factors are highly reliable. Two items of LS namely LS6 and LS7 were removed because of low or cross loadings.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA was used as a second step next to EFA to examine whether the structure identified in the EFA works on a new sample. Its main objective is to test whether the data fits a hypothesized measurement model. The structural model was assessed based on CFA with the assumptions that there should be at least three items with loading  $< 0.3$ , CMIN/DF between 1 and 3, CFI  $> 0.95$ , and SRMR  $< 0.08$ .

Since the primary model had a poor fit, it demanded modification. For this, the model was restructured using the modification indices (MI) on the basis of which the items ES5 and ES6 were covaried and an item was removed (ES2). Finally, the model with 16 items is tested for model fit.

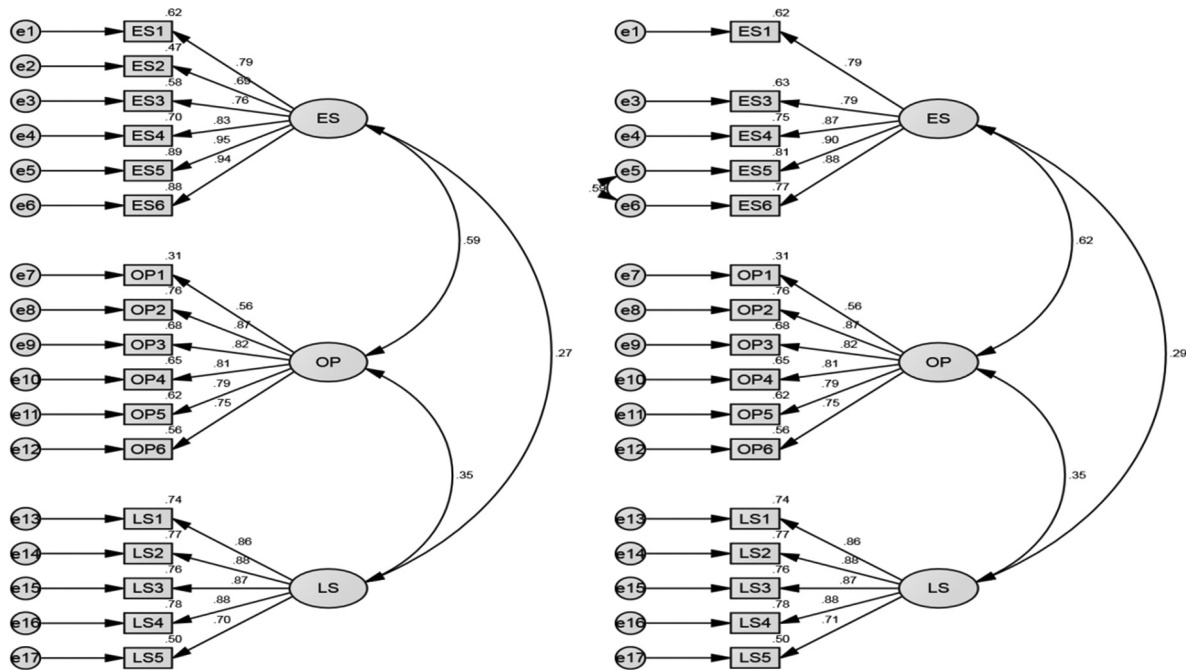


Figure 2. Proposed and Final Model

The table 3 provides the model fit indices.

Table 3  
Model Fit Measures

Measure	Estimate Primary	Estimate Final	Recommended threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	359.882	266.200	--	--
DF	116	100	--	--
CMIN/DF	3.102	2.662	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	.880	.912	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	.120	.071	<0.08	Excellent

Interpretation: Gaskin & Lim (2016)

**Reliability and Validity Measures**

The acceptable limit of CR is 0.70 which all the dimensions exceed (Carmines and Zeller, 1988). It proves that the model is reliable. The average-variance extracted for all the dimensions are well above the acceptable level of 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). There are significant loadings onto the respective latent constructs ( $p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore, the AVE for each construct is  $> 0.50$  supporting the convergent validity. The square root of the AVE values is greater than the inter-construct correlations (loadings) supporting the discriminant validity.

Table 4  
Validity Analysis

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3
ES	0.938	0.751	0.416	0.943	0.866		
OP	0.934	0.707	0.416	0.957	0.645***	0.841	
LS	0.940	0.759	0.138	0.951	0.279**	0.372**	0.871

**Path Analysis and Test of Hypotheses**

The path analysis was done based on SEM showing the LS-OP relationship model with the mediation of ES. The final measurement based on the structural model of this study is presented in figure 3.

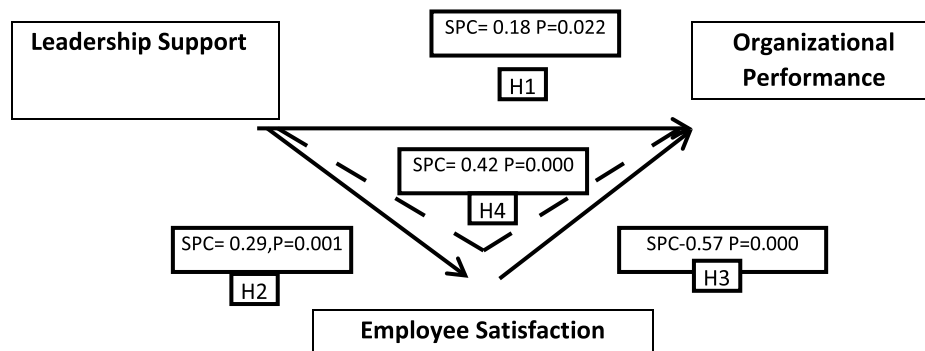


Figure 3. Direct and Indirect Effect of Leadership Support on Organizational Performance

A significant relationship between LS and OP is seen (SPC - 0.18, P - 0.022). Hence, H<sub>1</sub> (LS significantly influences OP) is accepted. This is in line with the findings by Kumar & Ansari (2020) who found that there is positive and highly significant correlation between perceived organizational support and performance outcomes. It is also consistent with Orute, Mutua, Musiega & Masinde (2015) and Ogochukwu & Ikon (2019) who concluded that LS significantly affects employee job satisfaction.

It is also seen that LS and ES are significantly related to each other (SPC= 0.29, P=0.001). Hence, H<sub>2</sub> (LS has a positive influence on ES) is accepted. This finding is consistent with Orute, Mutua, Musiega & Masinde (2015) who argued that LS had a statistically significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

The relationship between ES and OP is also found significant (SPC-0.57, P- 0.000). Hence, H<sub>3</sub> (ES significantly affects OP) is accepted. This finding is similar to Miah’s (2018) study.

Table 5  
Hypothesis Testing

Regression weight	Estimate	S.E.	C.R. (t)	P	Result
Op ← LS	0.175	0.054	3.232	0.001	Accepted
EC ← LS	0.472	0.092	5.130	0.000	Accepted
OP ← EC	0.092	0.040	2.297	0.022	Accepted

Some statistical steps and assumptions were considered to examine the mediation by ES ES in LS-OP relationship (Bae, 2006; Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2005) that states if the exogenous variable has a statistically significant impact on the proposed mediating variable, the mediating variable significantly affects the endogenous variable; and the direct path between the exogenous variable and endogenous variable is statistically non-significant (Full mediation)/significant (Partial mediation) with the appearance of mediating construct.

The analysis shows that LS has a statistically significant impact on ES (SPC= 0.29, P=0.001). Similarly, ES significantly affects OP (SPC= 0.29, P=0.001). Finally, the direct path between LS and OP is statistically



significant while adding ES (SPC - 0.18, P - 0.022). Hence, the result shows the partial mediation by ES in LS-OP relationship.

Table 6  
Direct and Indirect Effects of Leadership Support

Constructs	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
OP ← ES ← LS	0.301	0.26	0.041

Table 7 presents the summary of hypotheses testing results.

Table 7  
Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
1	LS-OP	Accepted
2	LS-ES	Accepted
3	ES-OP	Accepted
4	LS-ES-OP	Accepted

### Conclusion

This study proposed and tested the theoretical model of LS and OP using structural equation modeling (SEM) which is a new concept in Nepalese context. The data were collected from 224 employees through a structured questionnaire with a five points scale ranging one as strongly unsatisfactory to five strongly satisfactory. Out of 27 commercial banks, 6 were selected for this study on a random basis.

The collected data were analyzed on two steps. First, EFA was done to explore the underlying factors of LS, ES and OP. Second, CFA of the above factors was done to test the validity and reliability of the model. Finally, SEM was done to test the hypotheses based on the relationship between the variables.

The result of the analysis showed that there is significant impact of LS on both ES and OP. Likewise, ES is found to affect OP significantly. It was also found that ES mediated the relationship between LS and OP partially.

Overall, the study concludes that LS has a significant effect with ES and OP and ES mediated the relationship between LS and OP significantly.

This paper’s findings imply that LS can foster an environment and system to satisfy employees, which increases their work engagement for better organizational performance which help to explain the association between leadership capabilities and ES, provide a better understanding of the mechanism through which leadership can contribute toward enhanced organizational performance.

Job satisfaction is one of the keys of successful performance and in line with the organization’s priorities (Kaikatuy, Pasinringi, and Jafar 2018). Effective leadership creates a conducive and competitive working environment to achieve goals by providing rewards and recognitions for the performance achievements of the employees. It motivates the employees to achieve more of their work performance (Pravamayee, 2014).

The findings of this paper imply that human factor should be emphasized for a better organizational performance and LS plays a vital role in nurturing and satisfying the employees. ES depends on how a leader is treating and supporting them so that they are bound to the organization. This result is in line with the research outcome of Mwesigwa et. al.,2020)

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