Pak J Commer Soc Sci
Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences
2015, Vol. 9 (2), 540-567

Moderating Effect of Top Management Support on Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Project Success

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Abstract

Project success has remained the center of project management since long time. Continuous efforts are being indulged by various academicians and practitioners to find out the factors that contribute significantly toward project success. The authors edify the importance of project managers as transformational leaders in presence of top management support. This document investigates the interacting effect of top management support on relationship between project managers' transformational leadership and project success. The study covers a total of 125 project managers selected through systematic sampling technique by using mail survey method. PLS-SEM has been utilized to analyze the study data. The study concludes that project success can be enhanced through unfolding the relationships between project managers' transformational leadership and top management support. The study is pioneer to discuss these relationships particularly in a developing country. However, the study findings only rely on the higher education sector of Pakistan.

Keywords: project success, project leadership, transformational leadership, top management support.

1. Introduction

Top management support is one of the prime factors for achieving the project success. In absence of top management support, the project managers despite having excellent skills may fail at any stage of the project (Meredith and Mantel, 2010). Regardless of strong influence on project activities, the role of top management support could not find a proper

platform in project management. Kandelousi, Ooi and Abdollahi (2011) mentioned that top management support can be viewed in several forms, for instance, helping teams in dealing with hurdles, exhibiting commitment to the work and encouraging the subordinates. Moreover, top management support results in availability of in time financial, human and other physical resources required for the successful execution of projects and more importantly, it also refers to the delegation of necessary power to project leaders and project teams. Therefore, top management support is important recommendation for achieving the project success (Belassi & Tukel, 1996; Chae & Poole, 2005; Lin, 2010). For the reasons, the projects without support of top management rarely survive (Meredith and Mantel, 2010).

In contrast, it is also a fact that due to some reasons, top management cannot provide even the due support to every individual project in the organization (Young & Jordan, 2008). For instance, if the organization is having limited physical resources, then it cannot provide the same resources to each and every project at a time (Meredith and Mantel, 2010). Therefore, they must realize the existence of project leaders who are directly and continuously involved in day-to-day project activities. The project leader is a person who can intimate and coordinate with top management for getting the required resources for a project through strategic planning (Murugesan, 2014). However, limited research has been conducted on the spirit of the top management support with combination of project leadership. Though the concept of top management support is not new in project success factors, despite the confined literature is available to answer the question that why certain projects get the top management support and why the other projects fail?

In addition, Young and Jordan (2008) discussed that top management support is often discussed as a single paradigm, which is required for the project success. Prior literature has acknowledged the existence of top management support as a valuable template for project success (McComb et al., 2008; Naranjo-Gil, 2009), but no one has discussed the top management as a supporting variable to project managers' transformational leadership for achieving the project success, particularly in higher education projects of a developing country. The authors chosen to underline the importance of higher education system and their projects in Pakistan. The educational system of a country can ultimately lead the nations toward prosperity (Hoodbhoy, 2009). Furthermore, the failure of six continuous decades in creating a viable higher education system in Pakistan, forces to find out the reasons that go beyond administrative and fiscal issues. Similarly, the challenge for every Pakistani government is to search for new opportunities in different public and private sectors of the country and to rise above the blame game (Hoodbhoy, 2009).

In contrast, the Higher Education System (HES) of Pakistan has expanded gradually with the passage of time (Parveen et al., 2012). However, the achievements made by HEC during the past decade were more than the achievements made in last 55 years of history (HEC, 2011). The public expenditure on the higher education sector increased four times since 2002. Several projects were started under HEC in entire country with the investment of Rs. 7.72 billion during the year 2002-03. During the fiscal year 2013-2014, the HEC reached to funds Rs. 59.28 billion. These funds were allocated to different ongoing projects to meet the requirements of higher education system of Pakistan (PES, 2014). The increase in the higher education budget also led to the establishment of new public and private sector universities in the country. Despite the growing number of universities, there are no impacts of these developments on the national economy of Pakistan. The economic

development in Pakistan is also keeping a declining trend that could have adverse effects on financial resources of higher education system (PES, 2014).

Moreover, there are different factors that may definitely affect the project success or failure and may relate to the internal and external environments. According to Pinto (1996), the factors related to the internal environment are: role of top management, accountant, functional managers and project team members. While, he specified the clients, competitors, suppliers, environmental, political, consumer and other intervenor groups as external factors. However, it is beyond the scope of the current study to include all of the internal and external factors in theoretical framework of the study due to cost and time constraints. Hence, it is important to mention that these factors may create impediments to meet the challenges of twenty first century for a country. Therefore, future studies may consider different internal and external factors in diverse organizations to improve the efficacy of project success in Pakistan.

Moreover, project managers' transformational leadership is considered to be an important element in project success factors (Yang et al., 2013). Interestingly, scope of project leadership is wide as compared to traditional project management (Sumner, Bock, & Giamartino, 2006). Despite the significance of project managers' leadership on project success (Geoghegan & Dulewicz, 2008) still in project management role of project managers as leaders is needed to be discussed in more detail (Turner, Müller, & Dulewicz, 2009). Leadership has been discussed with different theories in the literature; transformational leadership is found contemporary amongst them (Keegan & Den Hartog, 2004; Robbins & Coulter, 2007; Turner & Muller, 2005; Nixon et al., 2012). Transformational leadership has been discussed as the ability of a leader to inspire a shared vision and providing strong identification with team members, which goes beyond by just rewarding the project activities on completion (Bass, 1985; Keegan & Den Hartog, 2004: Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The current study tends to investigate transformational leadership behaviors of project managers with respect to top management support and their relationship with project success factors in projects of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, because no one has discussed these specified relationships in a developing country. The study firmly believes that top management can add a synergic effect with transformational leadership to enhance the project success effectively in Pakistan.

Likewise, project success does not fit into any predefined criteria and it changes from person to person and from perspective to perspective. Therefore, measurement of project success is more ambiguous and complex in nature (Baccarini, 1999; Hyväri, 2006; Ika, 2009; Jugdev & Müller, 2005; Thomas & Fernandez, 2008). The study contributes in the existing literature of project success in two ways. First, offering a combination of traditional measures, i.e. time, cost and quality (Atkinson, 1999; Korrapati & Eedara, 2010) and emerging project success factors such as, client satisfaction (Papadopoulos et al., 2012) and impact of project success on organizational success (Müller, Geraldi, & Turner, 2012; Shenhar, Dvir, & Maltz, 2001). However, the research considered these all factors as a single construct (Atkinson, 1999; Pinto & Slevin, 1988; Pinto, 1986).

At the same time, the study conceptualization puts light on the potential reasons that why project managers remain unsuccessful in getting support from top management? Basically, the priorities are the main reasons. When priorities such as, provision of in time financial and human resources are different for project leaders and top management, ultimately

mostly projects suffer from failure (Dolfi & Andrews, 2007; Kerzner, 2006; Meredith & Mantel, 2010).

However, Mantel and Meredith (2010) argued that if external environment remains the same, the top management support enables the project leader to transform even the weaker projects into the successful ones. On contrary, in absence of top management support, the project(s) may fail at any stage of project, and usually it results in non-availability of in time resources. Therefore, a project leaders should also possess good relationship with top management as well as having the required technical and administrative skills to lead a project toward success (Morgan, 2012).

Therefore, the study takes the initiative to empirically investigate the role of top management support as a moderator between project managers' transformational leadership and project success, for the first time in higher education projects of Pakistan. The study offers a unique conceptual framework in such a way to analyze the prior theoretical conceptions regarding the top management support, project managers' transformational leadership and project success by applying a positivist paradigm in particular settings of Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

Despite the many advances in the field of project management, the majority of projects still fail due to some reasons. In extent literature, project failures are reported more than project success around the world (Schmidt, Sarangee & Montoya, 2009; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2012). For instance, The Standish Group (2001) conducted a survey on small, medium and large organizations in the USA, especially in IT sector, with reference to the role of project managers. Their survey showed that less than 25% of projects succeeded and almost 76% were challenged or failed. The Standish Group use to repeat their survey after every two years and recently in 2009 they published that only 32% projects succeeded, 44% were challenged and 24% of projects failed. In addition, a study was conducted by Gartner Group from 1999 to 2002 in USA to determine the success and failure of the projects. They claimed that only 25% of projects remained successful (Stewart, 2003).

Moreover, Haughey (2010) argued that there is need of gradual and continuous rise in project success rates especially in developing countries where situation is more alarming. According to Korrapati and Rapaka (2009), most of the projects succeed due to managerial skills and leadership styles of project managers. In addition, transformational leadership behaviors has long been considered as an important factor for better performance in various general organizations (Keegan & Den Hartog, 2004; Yang *et al.,* 2011), rarely reported in project management (Kissi *et al.,* 2013).

Robbins and Coulter (2007) discussed that transformational leaders have the ability to arise the interest of the followers by clearly defining the goals, and task requirements. In addition, these leaders possess a charisma and can get extra ordinary results with and through their followers. Furthermore, Ergeneli, Gohar and Temirbekova (2007) emphasized that comparatively, transformational leadership theories are considered most effective because they have widened the scope of leadership theories by recognizing the importance of emotional, symbolic and highly motivating behaviors. Moreover, they have ability to appeal to the followers' minds and hearts directly and is accounted for the results over and above ordinary leadership.

Similarly, Morgan (2012) argued that several studies in project management have ignored the importance of project managers' leadership as a key factor for the project success. Likewise, the term of project success has been found in literature as an aggregate measure of project performance (Muller, Geraldi, and Turner, 2012; Scott-Young and Samson, 2008). In addition, to quantify the performance of leadership various attempts have been made by different researchers but Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) developed by Posner and Kouzes (1988) is most comprehensive and detailed tool for catering the transformational leadership behaviors in different organizations across the borders.

For instance, Sumner, Bock and Giamartino (2006) conducted a research in IT projects by using transformational leadership dimensions specified by Posner and Kouzes (1988). They concluded that all of the five leadership practices measured through LPI were found statistically significant with project success. Furthermore, prior studies have reported positive and significant relationships between transformational leadership style and different criteria of project success, such as, R & D projects (Keller, 2006), constructions projects (Yang *et al.*, 2011, 2013), perceived project success (Prabhakar, 2005; Thite, 2000), and enhancing the schedule and cost performance of the projects (Strang, 2007). Moreover, Bass and Riggio (2006) confirmed that transformational leadership behaviors may be ideal for project success in any culture, industry or settings.

Similarly, O'Donnell (2010) conducted a research to investigate transformational project leadership behaviors in six different large organizations of USA, using LPI. According to the study, transformational leadership behaviors measured through LPI were positively associated with internal and external project success factors. Moreover, project managers' transformational leadership has been a proven tool for enhancing the project success in western countries (Geoghegan & Dulewicz, 2008; Kissi *et al.*, 2013; Müller & Jugdev, 2012; Müller & Turner, 2010; Turner *et al*., 2009) yet the studies related to developing countries, especially Asian countries are rarely found in comparison with advanced countries (Takahashi et al., 2012; Lo, 2011). Therefore, the study is an endeavor to investigate the direct and indirect effect of transformational leadership with top management support on project success factors in Pakistan and to know whether transformational leadership exists in the same direction in Pakistan as had been discussed in advanced countries. On the basis of the extant literature, the study hypothesized that:

- **H_1:** There is positive and significant relationship between project managers' transformational leadership behaviors (individually and collectively) and project success in Pakistan.

On the other hand, top management also plays a crucial role in providing and facilitating the required resources for project success (Staehr, 2010). Moreover, top management generally, play an important role in defining the scope of a project (Boonstra, 2013). In addition, they remain in a position to structure the context of the organizations and they also facilitate the provision of resources. Therefore, the literature of project management makes a strong sense for realizing and recognizing the importance of top management support (McComb *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, Green (1995) concluded after investigating the 213 R & D projects that the projects with top management support were less likely to be unsuccessful. In addition, Meredith and Mantel (2010) termed the project with top management support as "*sacred cows*", which means that these types of projects seldom fail.

Moreover, Boonstra (2013) attested that several researchers have reported various aspects of top management support. For example, Guimareas and Igbaria (1995) argued that top management interests, understandings and encouragements are much important elements for project success. Similarly, quite a few researchers also suggested that for successful implementation of projects, top management should represent themselves as project champions (McComb *et al.*, 2008; Naranjo-Gil, 2009). Project championing is referred to communicating the importance of the project clearly as well as resolving the arising conflicts and supporting the project team (Morton, 1983). Similarly, other vital aspect of top management support is provision of in time resources (Bruqué-Cámara *et al.*, 2004) Moreover, Kazanchi and Reigh (2008) emphasized the importance of control and measurement activities in several projects by top managers. Likewise, others referred the change management, provision of resources and sharing the vision of projects with project team as factors of top management support (Dong *et al.*, 2004).

Additionally, top management support has been examined in various studies as one of the critical success factors. Belassi and Tukel (1996) and Young and Jordan (2008) argued that top management support is the most critical success factor in project success. While various authors have agreed upon the necessity of top management support as an independent variable for accomplishing the project successfully (Dong *et al.*, 2004; Jugdev, 2004; Jugdev & Müller, 2005; Murray, 2001; O'Brochta, 2002, 2008; Shenhar *et al.*, 1997; Thamhain, 2004) while, infrequent studies have investigated the interacting effect of top management support, especially in higher education projects of a developing country. Moreover, Ofer (2007) argued top management support is the main ingredient in 'project success recipe'. In addition, top management must avoid biasness and should realize the importance of project success, because it ultimately contributes to organizational success (Swink, 2000). On the basis of literature discussed above, the researchers postulated the following directional hypothesis to be tested.

- **H_2:** Top management support is positively and significantly related with project success.

Effective top management support gives confidence to the project managers to execute their projects toward success through effective leadership skills (Morgan, 2012). In constrast, Cowan-Sahadath (2010) argued that it is also the responsibility of project managers to enhance their performance and meet the expectations of top management. Furthermore, Zwikael (2008) argued that top management support and involvement significantly encourage the project leaders to accomplish the projects successfully. On the other side, Smith (1999) argued that despite importance of top management support in project success, it should not be considered as solely responsible factor for project success or failure. He further added that for achieving the milestone of project success, effective leadership skills are also important.

The theoretical model of the study, also represents the blend of top management support and project managers' transformational leadership. As discussed earlier, top management support can help the project managers to harbor a project from failure (Meredith and Mantel, 2010). Therefore, the project managers should focus on win-win situation for project success. The extant literature has given confidence the researchers to consider top management support as a moderator between project managers' transformational leadership and project success for the first time in HEC projects in Pakistan, hence hypothesized.

- **H_3:** Top management support strengthens the positive relationship between project managers' transformational leadership and project success in Pakistan.

3. Methodology

The current study is framed by observations found in the literature about effectiveness of project managers' transformational leadership and top management support for getting the desired project success. Project managers' transformational leadership behaviors were investigated through LPI of Posner and Kouzes (1988). While, to cater the dependent and moderating variables of the study, Pinto's (1986) inventory was utilized.

The survey instrument consisted on three parts, measuring theses primary project variables, i.e. (project managers' transformational leadership, top management support and project success factors, respectively). The total 198 questionnaires were issued project wise to project managers through one of the best courier service of Pakistan named (TCS Express & Logistics). This sample size was selected following the guidelines of (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) by applying systematic random technique, as overall population list was available, i.e. 788 projects disbursed province/territory wise in Pakistan (see Table 1). Of 198 issued questionnaires, 129 were returned out of them 125 responses were considered appropriate for data analyses, yielding a response rate of 63%.

Table 1: Total Segregation of HEC Projects

Sr #	Provinces/ States	Total projects (A)	Total sample of project managers (A/4), k=4	Total %age of selected projects
1	Federal	122	31	16%
2	HEC	115	29	15%
3	Punjab	227	57	29%
4	Sindh	151	38	19%
5	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	101	25	13%
6	Baluchistan	44	11	5%
7	Gilgit Baltistan	7	2	1%
8	Azad Jammu & Kashmir	21	5	2%
Total		**788**	**198**	**100%**

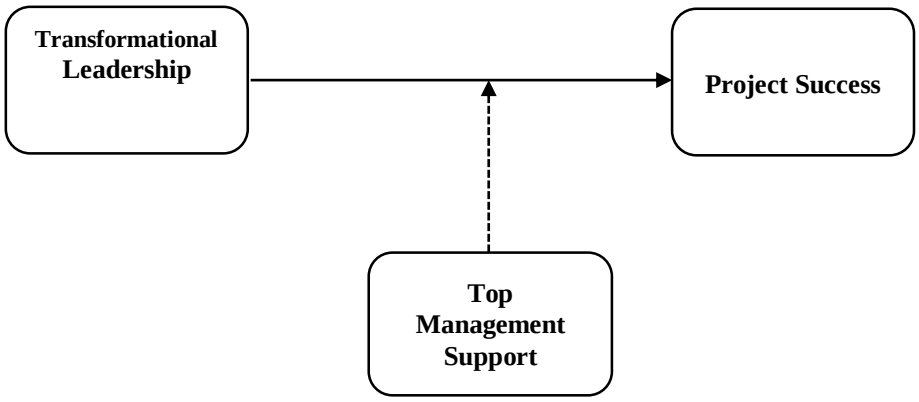

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

Moreover, Hair *et al*. (2014) argued that for co-variance based method the data must be equal to or above 200 observations, otherwise the study may lack authentic findings. The researchers, for the reason, found the PLS-SEM technique appropriate for study data analyses (Ringle *et al*., 2012). PLS-SEM is also one of the increasingly applied multivariate technique among various disciplines including management sciences (Hair *et al.*, 2012a; Hair *et al.*, 2013b; Hair *et al.*, 2012c). PLS-SEM is based on a series of ordinary least squares regressions and is not sensitive to small sample sizes, which is particularly beneficial in a medium and complex model set-ups (Chin, 2010; Lu *et al.*, 2011). Reinartz *et al*. (2009) substantiate this argument that PLS-SEM has higher levels of statistical power than covariance-based methods. Thus, PLS-SEM seems warranted for the current study data analyses.

4. Discussions on Findings

Sample for current study was taken from higher education sector of Pakistan. The employees working as project managers in public and private higher education degree awarding institutions as well as project managers of HEC were the target population of the study. Moreover, Table 2 represents the results of sample description. However, during initial analyses it was found that none of the demographic variables were found significantly correlated with project success factors, otherwise, could be discussed as controlled variables. Using PLS-SEM, the study models are required to be tested on two main stages, i.e. measurement models and structural models (Chin, 2010). Following sub-sections elaborate these requirements in detail.

Table 2: Sample Description

Sr #	Demographics		Frequencies	Percentage
Q1: Gender				
			Frequency	Percent
Valid		Male	83	66.4
		Female	42	33.6
		Total	125	100.0
Q2: Total Job Experience				
			Frequency	Percent
Valid	< 5 years		20	16.0
	< 10 years		51	40.8
	< 15 years		33	26.4
	< 20 years		8	6.4
	> 20 years		13	10.4
	Total		125	100.0
Q3: Total Experience as Project Manager				
			Frequency	Percent
Valid	< 5 years		53	42.4
	< 10 years		52	41.6
	< 15 years		17	13.6
	< 20 years		2	1.6
	> 20 years		1	.80
	Total		125	100.0
Q4: Qualification				
			Frequency	Percent
Valid	Bachelor Degree 2 years		2	1.6
	Bachelor Degree 4 years		27	21.6
	Master Degree without project specialization		42	33.6
	Master degree with project specialization		41	32.8
	Others		13	10.4
	Total		125	100.0
Q5: Position in the Organization				
			Frequency	Percent
Valid	Top/Executive Management		28	22.4
	Middle Management		67	53.6
	Functional Management		30	24.0
	Total		125	100.0
Q6: Professional Training provided by Organization				
			Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes		46	36.8
	No		79	63.2
	Total		125	100.0
Q7: Have any Professional Certification				
			Frequency	Percent

Valid	Yes	75	60.0
	No	50	40.0
	Total	125	100.0
Q8: Nature of Project			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Information Technology	35	28.0
	Construction	21	16.8
	Lab Research & Equipment	9	7.2
	Infrastructure Development	11	8.8
	Human Resource Development	17	13.6
	Facilities for student/Faculties	9	7.2
	Library	4	3.2
	Research and Development	12	9.6
	Residential Projects	1	0.8
	Basic Sciences	3	2.4
	Medical Sciences	2	1.6
	Other	1	0.8
	Total	125	100.0

4.1 Testing the Measurement Models

For reflective measurement models there is need to assess their reliabilities and validities. Chin (2010) discussed that reliability can be measured in terms of indicator's reliabilities and internal consistency reliability. Validity, on the other hand, is confirmed through convergent validity and discriminant validity of the constructs. This section deals with requirements of the measurement models of reflective constructs in SmartPLS 3.0; containing the indicator reliability, internal consistency, discriminant validity and convergent validity (Götz *et al.,* 2010; Hair *et al.,* 2011). It is essential to verify the reliability and validity of predictor constructs, in reflective constructs models before assessing the structural models (Chin, 2010). The results of quality criteria required for measurement models are shown in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. Indicator reliability validates if the indicator variance is explained by its reflective constructs (Götz *et al.,* 2010). Table 3 exhibits that outer/standardized loadings of entire items are qualifying the minimum stipulated criteria, i.e. ≥ 0.4 (Churchill, 1979; Henseler *et al.,* 2009; Hulland, 1999) as well as maximum items are closer to preferred level of 0.7 (Hair *et al.,* 2014). The following model is based on outer loadings of the entire study variables.

Table 3: Outer/Standardized Loadings

Items/ Constructs	CP	EH	EOA	ISV	MW	TMS
CP1	0.876					
CP2	0.844					
CP3	0.818					
CP4	0.851					
CP5	0.896					
CP6	0.871					
EH1		0.868				
EH2		0.734				
EH3		0.813				
EH4		0.828				
EH5		0.78				
EH6		0.803				
EOA1			0.866			
EOA2			0.794			
EOA3			0.762			
EOA4			0.718			
EOA5			0.707			
EOA6			0.791			
ISV1				0.789		
ISV2				0.811		
ISV3				0.713		
ISV4				0.826		
ISV5				0.773		
ISV6				0.797		
MW1					0.748	
MW2					0.721	
MW3					0.776	
MW4					0.806	
MW5					0.758	
MW6					0.647	
TMS1						0.842
TMS2						0.846
TMS3						0.864
TMS4						0.854
TMS5						0.908

MW= Model the Way, ISV= Inspire a Shared Vision, CP= Challenge the Process, EOA= Enable others to Act, EH= Encourage the Heart, TMS = Top Management Support

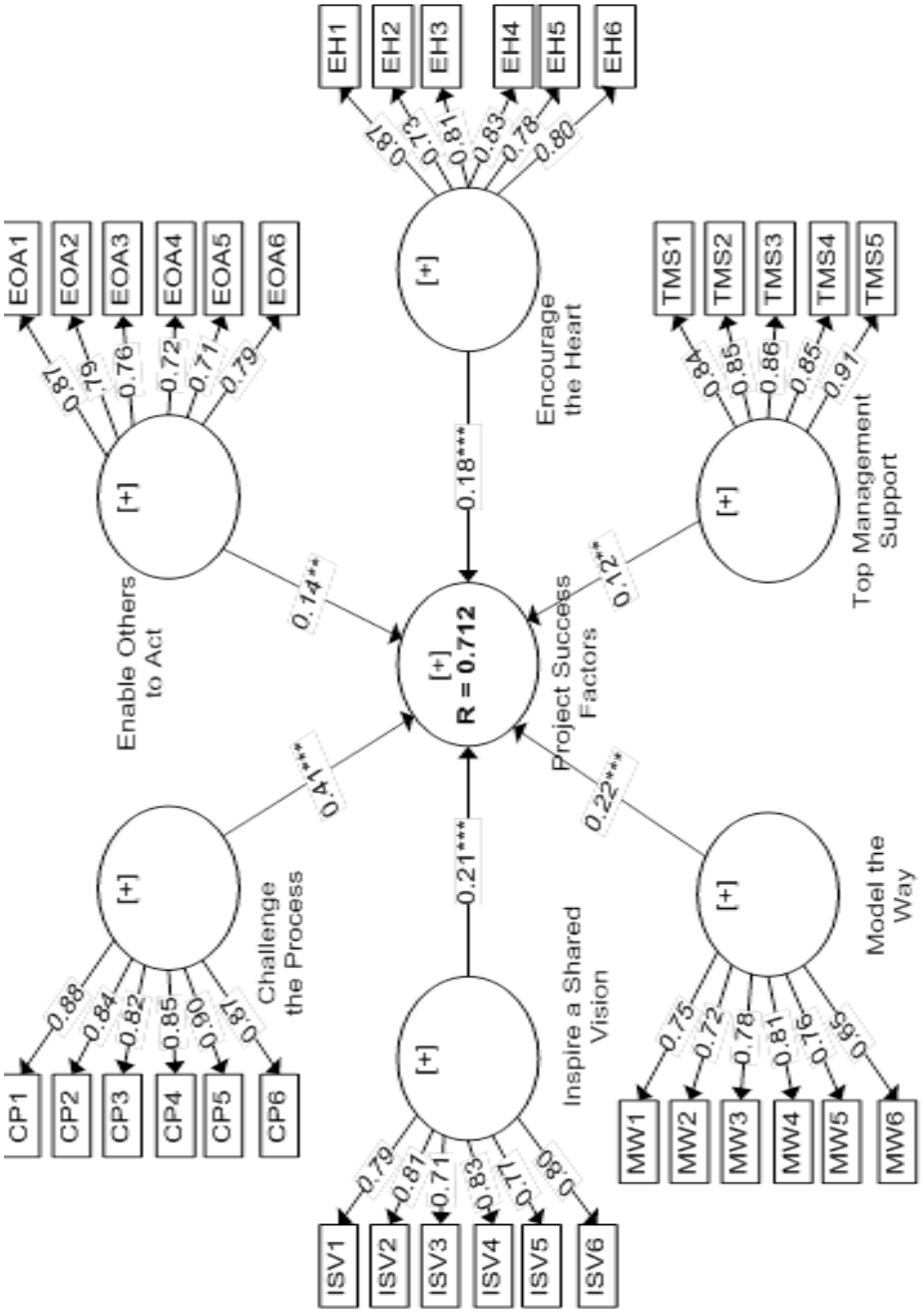

Figure 2: Measurement Model / Outer Model for Exogenous Latent Variables

Thus, it is evident from the results that all of the reflective constructs achieved indicator reliability. Figure 2 as well as Table 3 represents the results of factors loading of overall model of the study. Second, for measurement model, internal consistency is required (Hair

et al., 2013; 2014). Internal consistency is a test used to measure whether a set of indicators are reliable, and is measured through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. However, Hair *et al.* (2013) discussed that composite reliability is a better tool to measure the internal consistency as compared to Cronbach alpha. The study utilized both of the measures to have more accurate findings. Table 4 demonstrates the results of composite reliability and Cronbach's alphas of entire reflective constructs. The results confirmed that all of the study constructs meet a satisfactory level of composite reliability and Cronbach alpha having the values ≥ 0.70 (Hair *et al.,* 2011).

Convergent validity is the third requirement for testing measurement models. It is used to identify the how an indicator is positively correlated with other indicators under the same umbrella of theoretical framework (Chin, 2010). Generally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is used to explain the convergent validity of reflective constructs. Moreover, AVE is also considered equal to communality of the constructs in PLS-SEM (Hair *et al.,* 2013). As both of the measures are used to specify the indicators' average of squared loadings. The results demonstrated that values of all constructs regarding communality and AVE are greater than 0.50 and these values provided the evidence of convergent validity (Hair *et al.,* 2011). However, to achieve the AVE of project success factors six of the items, i.e. (PPQ1, PPQ2, PMG5, CCQ4, CAQ3 and CAQ5) were deleted on the basis lower factor loadings (Hair *et al.,* 2014).

Table 4: Measurement Model Quality Criteria

	Cronbach's α	**CR**	**AVE**	**Commonality**
Independent Variables				
Model the Way	0.838	0.881	0.554	0.554
Inspire a Share Vision	0.876	0.906	0.617	0.617
Challenge the Process	0.929	0.944	0.739	0.739
Enable others to Act	0.867	0.900	0.600	0.600
Encourage the Heart	0.893	0.917	0.649	0.649
Moderating Variable				
Top Management Support	0.914	0.936	0.745	0.745
Dependent Variables				
Project Success Factors	0.937	0.944	0.501	0.501

Discriminant validity is the last step to meet the quality criteria required under measurement models. Basically, discriminant validity indicates the difference of reflective constructs among each other. It is to consider that, in measurement models discriminant validity can be judged by using Fornell-Lacker criterion (Hair *et al.,* 2011). Fornell-Lacker criterion examines discriminant validity at construct level. More specifically, this criterion posits that discriminant validity of a construct is met when the variance of its own measures is greater than value of variance shared with other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 5, represents the results of Fornell-Lacker criterion. The table represents and proves that the entire square roots of the AVEs are greater than all inter-construct correlations, which confirms discriminant validity (Hair *et al.,* 2011). Finally, the analyses of the measurement model demonstrate that the validity and reliability of all reflective constructs are achieved using several criteria: 'indicator reliability', 'internal consistency', 'convergent validity' and 'discriminant validity'.

Table 5: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	CP	EOA	EH	ISV	MW	PS	TMS
CP	**0.860**						
EOA	0.273	**0.775**					
EH	0.150	0.283	**0.805**				
ISV	0.433	0.219	0.197	**0.786**			
MW	0.413	0.212	0.189	0.433	**0.744**		
PS	0.697	0.416	0.381	0.582	0.574	**1.00**	
TMS	0.316	0.190	0.162	0.252	0.259	0.415	**0.863**
Note: All the diagonal elements are the square roots of AVEs and the values non-bold are the values of latent variables correlations							
MW= Model the way, ISV= Inspire a shared vision, CP= challenge the process, EOA= Enable others to act, EH= Encourage the heart, TMS = Top Management Support							

4.2 Assessment of the Structural Model

This section deals to validate the structural models of the study. Hair *et al.* (2011) argued that while using PLS-SEM, the structural model should be analyzed on grounds of collinearity diagnostic, predictive relevance and statistical significance.

4.2.1 Collinearity Assessment

The collinearity diagnostics are confirmed through variance inflation factors (VIF) in PLS-SEM to validate the accuracy of the variables. Collinearity problem can affect the results badly as it decreases predictive power of predicting variables (Hair *et al.*, 2006). According to Hair *et al.* (2013), VIF values must remain below 5.0. The study findings confirmed the absence of multicollinearity among the dependent/independent variables of the study. Table 6 exhibits values of VIF calculated in SmartPLS 3.0. Markedly, the study data was found free from the issue of multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2013).

Table 6: VIF Values in PLS

Transformational Leadership Behaviors	**VIF**
Challenge the Process	1.981
Encourage the Heart	1.271
Enable others to Act	1.281
Inspired a Shared Vision	1.580
Model the Way	1.538
Top Management Support	1.162

4.3 Significance and Predictive Relevance of the Structural Models

Structural model in PLS-SEM can be examined to find the statistical significance of all path coefficients between exogenous and endogenous constructs. Consistent with Vinzi *et al.* (2010), the researchers used the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 3.0. Bootstrapping is specifically, used to obtain the significance levels of the path coefficients through *t*-statistics with two tailed test (Ringle *et al.*, 2005). As recommended by Hair *et al.* (2013) bootstrapping technique is applied to know the significance level of variables in reflective model. It is a nonparametric procedure that can be applied to test whether

coefficients such as outer weights, outer loadings and path coefficients are significant by estimating standard errors of the estimates.

Moreover, in bootstrapping, subsamples are created with observations randomly drawn from the original set of data with replacement ranging from minimum size of 500 to maximum 5000. The researchers chosen 500 subsamples in bootstrapping to remain more relevant to the actual data. The study rely on maximum 5% level of significance with two tailed test throughout the analyses to declare a relationship/path statistically significant because this threshold is generally used in empirical studies of management sciences (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014).

Like covariance based methods, the assessments of overall model fit such as goodness-of-fit indices are not strictly required in PLS-SEM (Chin, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2013; 2014). However, in PLS-SEM, model validity is measured through predictive relevance (Q^2). Generally, Q^2 values must be greater than zero for endogenous constructs in the structural model. Together with the resampling techniques mentioned above, the Q^2 test, developed by Geisser (1975) and Stone (1974) is used to assess the predictive relevance of the endogenous constructs. This test indicates that how well observed values are reproduced by the model and its parameter estimates. Moreover, two types of Q^2 can be obtained in PLS-SEM, depending upon the nature of prediction: first is called cross-validated communality and other is known as cross validated redundancy (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). However, Chin (1998) recommended to use the latter one to examine the predictive relevance of the theoretical/structural model. In addition, greater the value of Q^2, higher the predictive relevance of the model. Q^2 is applied in a model only with reflective constructs (Chin, 2010). In addition, Table 7 carries the results of path coefficients and level of significance among the study variables according to the hypothetical relationships of the variables.

Table 7: Model No. 1

Hypothetical Relationships		Path Coefficients	Absolute *t*-statistic value	Value of R^2	Value of Q^2
H1	MW → PS	0.22***	3.678		
	ISV → PS	0.21***	3.128		
	CP → PS	0.41***	5.801		
	EOA → PS	0.14**	2.298		
	EH → PS	0.18***	2.918		
H2	TMS → PS	0.12**	1.96		
	Project Success Factors	1.00	1.00	0.712	0.641
Note: ** and *** represent 5% and 1% level of significance, respectively					
MW = Model the Way, ISV = Inspired a Shared Vision, CP= Challenge the Process, EOA= Enable others to Act, EH = Encourage the Heart, TMS = Top Management Support, PS = Project Success Factors					

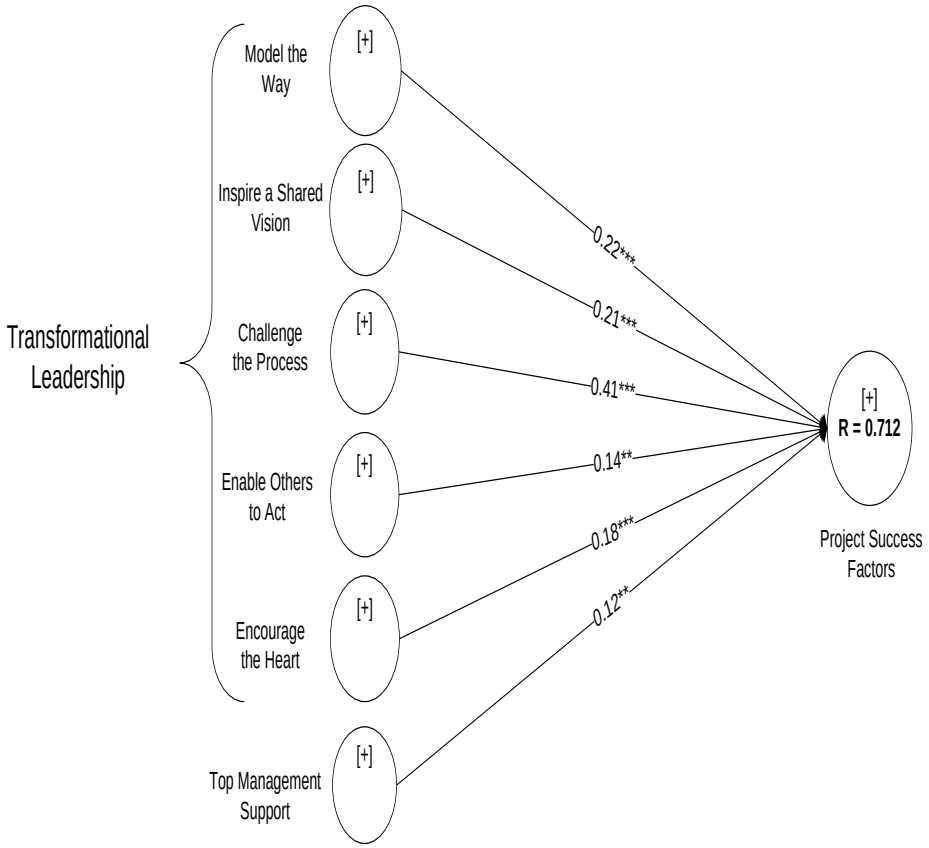

Figure 3: Direct Effect of Transformational leadership and Top Management Support

Following the guidelines of Hair *et al*. (2013), the researchers also relied on a blindfolding procedure to obtain the cross-validated redundancy as a measure to obtain predictive relevance of the study models. The study discussed the findings of structural models according to hypothetical relationships for the better understandings of the readers. At this stage, the entire study variables were tested to know the variance explained and get the predictive relevance in project success factors through direct relationship among project managers' transformational leadership behaviors and top management support without adding the interaction effect (see Table 7).

Table 7 exhibits the results of the structural paths for the model 1. The results showed that all of the relational paths have significant and positive impact on project success factors maximum at $p < 0.05$. In addition, the overall validity of this structural model is also evident as Q^2 value 0.641, is above zero, providing the support that all of the variables are adequately predicting the endogenous variable. Moreover, value of R^2 showed that these constructs explain the project success factors more than seventy percent (0.712), having the stronger statistical power in parameter estimation (Hair *et al.*, 2013). After analyzing the direct relationship of project managers' transformational leadership and top management support, interacting effect of the top management support has been investigated on the relationship between project managers' transformational leadership and project success factors as follows:

Table 8: Statistical Results of the Model with and without Moderator

Hypothetical Relationships	**Path Coefficients**	**Absolute *t*-statistic value**	**Value of R^2**	**Value of Q^2**
H_1: TL → PS	0.77***	16.256	0.69	0.673
H_2: TMS→ PS	0.14**	2.2116		
After Adding a Moderator				
TL → PS	0.72***	13.38	0.72	0.683
TMS→ PS	0.16**	2.33		
H_3: (TL × TMS) → PS	-0.17**	2.29		
ΔR^2			0.03	
Note: ***p-value is significant at 1% level of significance, **p-value is significant at 5% level of significance				
TL = Transformational Leadership, TMS = Top Management Support, PS = Project Success				

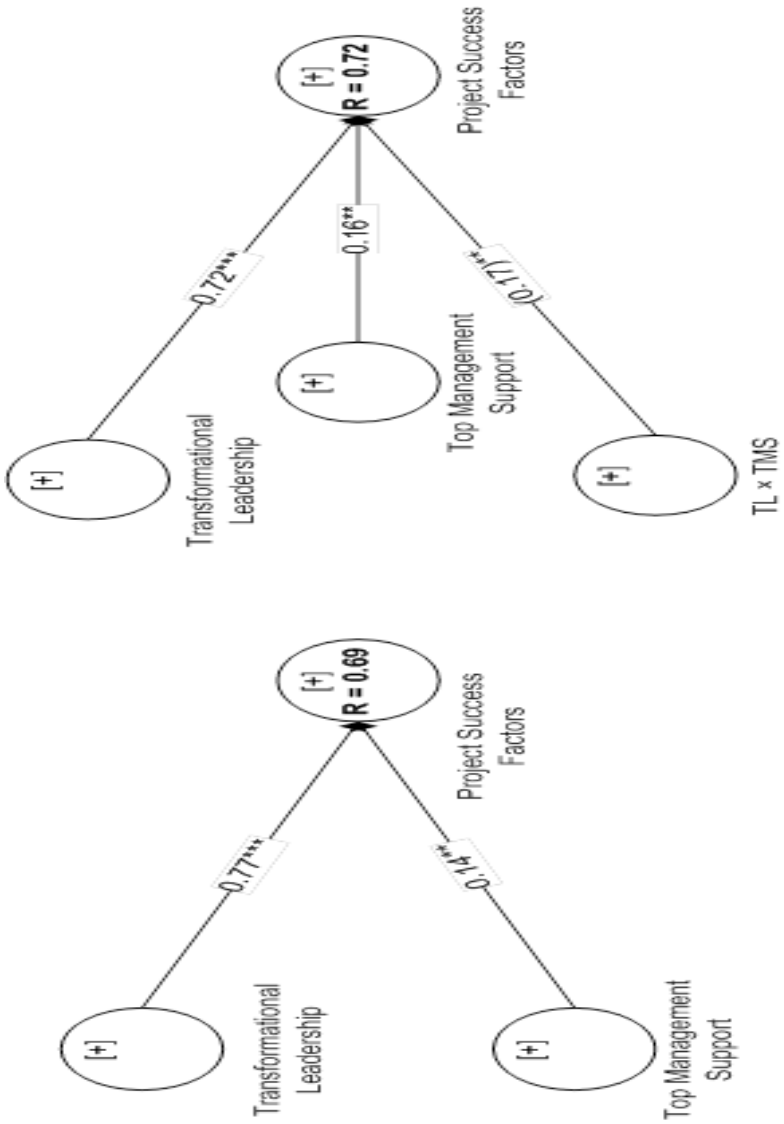

Figure 4: Direct Effect of TL and TMS **Figure 5: Direct and Interaction Effect of TMS**

Where, TL = Transformational Leadership, TMS = Top Management Support

It is evident that, when interaction effect is being added in the model, despite having negative impact on project success factors it caused a positive change of 3% in the variance of project success (compare Figure 4 and 5). R^2 plays a significant role, while analyzing the moderation effect. It is to be noted that by adding only one interaction effect in the model R^2 was changed from 0.69 to 0.72 (i.e. 3% additional variance). In addition, effect size is also used to confirm the moderation effect in any model. The effect size is premeditated by using the following formula.

$$f^2 = \frac{R_i^2 - R_m^2}{1 - R_{i^2}}$$

Where:

R_m^2 = Size of variance (without the interaction effect)

R_i^2 = Size of variance (with the interaction effect)

By replacing the values in the formula, effect size was calculated with a value of 0.107.

$$f^2 = \frac{0.72 - 0.69}{1 - 0.72} = 0.107$$

According to guidelines given by Cohen (1988, p. 410–414), the effect size may fall in one of the following categories:

- 0.02 small
- 0.15 medium
- 0.35 large

Based on the f^2 = 0.107, it is clear that the effect size of a moderator is greater than small but lower than medium range. It represents that top management support put low to medium effect on the relationship of project managers' transformational leadership and project success factors in HEC projects. Remarkably, while testing the moderator, low effect also could not be ignored. Chin *et al.* (2003, p. 211) witnessed that "*even a small interaction effect can be meaningful under extreme moderating conditions, if the resulting beta changes are meaningful, then it is important to take these conditions into account*". It is evident in Table 8, the interacting effect of project managers' transformational leadership and top management support is significant at $p < 0.05$. Therefore, top management support is proved as a moderator between project transformational leadership and project success in higher education projects of Pakistan.

Table 8 depicts the results of the structural path for the proposed model based on the hypotheses (H_1-H_3) of the study. The model is showing the direct effect of project managers' transformational leadership and top management support on project success factors as an average. These relationships showed that the predictors have significant and positive impact on predicting variable ($p < 0.01$) as shown in Figure 4. In addition, the overall validity of this structural model is evident as Q-Square value 0.69 is well above zero (see Table 8) providing the support that the model is adequately predicting the endogenous construct. In addition, value of R^2 0.69, showed that these constructs explain the project success factors sixty nine percent having the stronger statistical power in parameter estimation (Hair *et al.,* 2013). To sum, hypotheses (H_1 and H_2) are empirically substantiated.

However, it is also evident from the results that top management interaction effect is significant but negatively correlated with project success. While, top management support as a single construct is significantly and positively correlated with project success factors. In this situation, coefficients alone cannot be used for inferences (Dawson, 2013). Therefore, it is important to interpret the results visually. This is done by calculating the values of independent and moderating variables with high and low *z*-values to track the moderating effect (Dawson, 2013). Now, various online resources are available for calculation of these plots. The researchers also retrieved the online resources from www.jeremydawson.com/slopes.htm. After calculating the regression coefficients, means and standard deviations in SPSS 19 (see Table 9). Dawson guided that for continuous variable with two-way interaction, unstandardized effects can be utilized from online given resources (Dawson, 2013).

After inserting the values in the given excel sheet, the graph led the researchers toward interesting debate, that even the interaction effect of transformational leadership and top management support was negative, but visually it proved that when top management support and transformational leadership levels are low, the performance of project is lesser as compared to higher level of top management support and transformational leadership levels (see Figure 6). Hence, it can be argued that top management support play an important role in project success as independent variable as well as it can strengthen the relationship between project manager's transformational leadership and project success by providing in time resources to save the projects from failure.

Table 9: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	Sig.
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	-3.414	.873		-3.911	.000
	Transformational Leadership	.990	.127	1.079	7.825	.000
	Top Management Support	.822	.298	1.252	2.761	.007
	Product of TMS and TL	-.103	.042	-1.270	-2.465	.015
a. Dependent Variable: Project Success Factors						

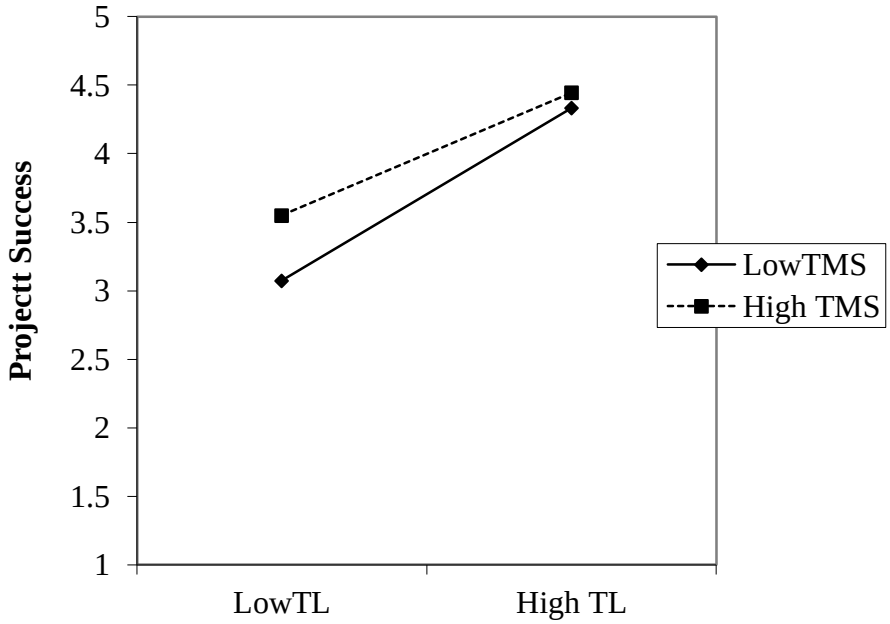

Figure 6: Interaction Effect of Top Management Support

5. Limitations

Despite significance, the researchers noted some limitations in this study. First, the focus of the study is on presumed variables, which literature suggested significantly correlated to project success factors. There may several other factors that can positively influence the project success factors. Second, the study faced some limitations in shape of inadequate sample size. It seemed difficult to collect the data especially from public sector organizations. Due to this sample size, a variance based SEM technique was employed instead of covariance based SEM modeling techniques. Other limitation may be quantitative method of data analyses, while the relationship between project managers' transformational leadership behaviors, top management support and project success factors may also be discussed through qualitative approach such as, case studies or in depth interviews. Furthermore, the empirical investigation in this research relies only on higher education projects, the results may differ when applied to other business oriented organizations. Next, the empirical settings of the study were based in Pakistan and particularly higher education sector; there may be an issue of generalizability for advanced countries. Nevertheless, the researchers believe that the study findings may be relevant to other Asian emerging economies.

6. Recommendations for Future Research

The study research design and limitations also open up several future research directions. First, it was difficult to obtain data from publicly sponsored projects. Thus, future studies can adopt different methods for data collection such as, personal distribution of the questionnaires by selecting geographically concentrated areas. Second, the future studies can be held in different organizations to bridge the research gap between the studies held in developed and developing countries. Third, the current study is cross sectional in nature and future research can be conducted through longitudinal settings. Finally, the future studies should be held in other developed and developing countries by extending the current research framework with similar variables to strengthen the concepts offered in this study.

7. Conclusions

The importance of top management support is found as glue between project managers' transformational leadership behaviors and project success factors in HEC projects in Pakistan. In reality, top management, cannot look after each and every project in the organization. Therefore, they have to realize the importance of project leaders for achieving the project success. Moreover, project leaders should be delegated necessary authority over the project resources. In addition, the manuscript can be help for top management to revise their strategies and policies toward attainment of project success. Top management must realize that their support can lead a project toward success and vice versa. Therefore, it fixes the moral liability on top management to decide rationally about the fate of a project. The study initialized the top management support as a moderator for the first time in HEC projects in Pakistan, as it has the ability to strengthen or weaken the relationship between project managers' transformational leadership and project success factors. The present study strengthens the existing knowledge by offering fresh insights into the field of project management by discussing the interacting effect of top management support. Finally the study is opening the new windows of opportunities and inviting the future researchers to extend the interrelatedness of specified relationships, particularly in developing countries

where the project success needs to be discussed with more details. However, the authors believe that the role of project managers' transformational leadership and top management support may be equally beneficial for developed and developing countries for achieving the project success.

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