

Research Article

Under qualification and Affective Commitment: The role of Transformational Leadership

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Abstract: The current study aimed to assess the association between perceived under qualification (PU) with Job attitudes (affective commitment) AC and transformational leadership (TL). Alongside direct relationship between PU and AC, the study also tested the moderating role of transformational leadership to respond to the scholarly calls for empirical attention on the interaction effect of TL on the direct association between PU and AC. Equally, the study has also addressed scholarly calls regarding person-job (misfit) from previous studies, indicating that one type of misfit 'perceived over qualification' as mainly neglected by scholars in the area. Survey methodology was used to obtain data from the staff members of four public sector universities in the UK. The findings revealed that perceived under qualification is negatively related to Job attitudes (Affective commitment) and positively related through transformational leadership (moderating factor). However, when transformational leadership is incorporated as a moderating variable, the negative attitudinal implication on Job attitudes is mitigated. The results have supported the hypothesized direct and moderated relationship. The current study extends the body of knowledge in testing the other type of Person-Job misfit known as perceived under qualification and corrects the biased understanding of Person-Job misfit of perceived over qualification, which the previous scholars have exclusively examined.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership; Affective Commitment; Perceived Under qualification; Person-Job Misfit*

1. Introduction

Managing Human Capital in a better and an effective manner has been the need of the hour and it has seen to be a great challenge for organizations. Therefore, the concept of Person Job fit and Person Job misfit has received much greater attention in the recent era, often termed in management as overqualification and under qualification (Abdalla et al., 2018). According to (Liu et al., 2015) A misfit in one's job can be conceived as a demands-abilities misfit, and it has also been stated as a characterization of a misalliance between the job demand and employee capabilities, while on the other side the term over qualification signifies the notion that employees are having more number of capabilities relative to their job demands.

The literature review on Person Job misfit has largely been neglected by researchers (Neumann, 2016). Moreover, if it has been focused, then only narrow attention has been paid, thus ignoring the type of misfit known as overqualification, thus causing biased results in explaining the relationship of person job misfit on employee job attitudes. Therefore the current study aim was to explore the impact of perceived under

qualification on employee job attitudes. Although various studies have been carried out on Perceived over qualification and Job attitudes in the past, there has been negligible work published on perceived under qualification and job attitudes and academic scholars and organizations have seen to be neglected (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016). Henceforth, a grave issue that can severely affect the well-being of not only employee but to a significant level can affect organizational performance.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Perceived under qualification and Job Attitudes

The employees with less qualification and are termed as underqualified are also involved in the counter work behavior and are dissatisfied with their job because of lacking the skills that employees need to be committed to their job (Bui et al., 2017; Kristof, 1996). Person organization fit means that there is a match found to be in individual and organizational characteristics. To achieve competitive challenges, a high degree of person organization fit is found to be a necessary factor in retaining key workforce having a greater degree of flexibility organizational commitment.

It has been stated by (O'Reilly et al., 1991) that there has been little research has been carried out in terms of investigating the perceptions of employees who do not find themselves suitable for an organization. Therefore, it suggests that individuals who subjectively find themselves having a smaller amount of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) in relation to their job duties find themselves underqualified in terms of performing the job duties. It is an evident phenomenon that when there will be a mismatch in terms of KSAs and the requirements of the job will result in lower employee performance, turnover will be increased, and absenteeism and other human resource problems will come into existence. According to Hollenbeck (1989), a person's job misfit may not be strongly associated with organization turnover but strongly associated with Job turnover. However, to what length, the perceived under qualification can influence on job attitudes is a fairly overshadowed element in the academic sector. Therefore we tested the following:

H1: Perceived under qualification is negatively related to job attitude (affective commitment)

2.2. Transformational Leadership and Affective Commitment

Budur (2020) asserts that the main objective of transformational leadership is to transform individuals' goals and values to motivate them to perform above the level of expectations. This leadership provides a positive view to encourage and empathize with the underqualified employees to see the person-job fit discrepancy as a challenging task instead of taking it as negative (Khaola & Coldwell, 2019). Transformational leaders improve individual capabilities to provide a clear vision about their future goal achievement. Similarly, it also provides the underqualified employees with a vision to overcome their misfit.

Although with the help of idealized development, transformational leaders enhance the confidence in underqualified individuals. Transformational leadership works as a challenging behavior to incorporate a positive attitude regarding self-development and achievement (Guay, 2013). The underqualified individuals gain insight from their leaders to improve their capabilities. Therefore, it proposes that perceived under qualification is positively associated with transformational leadership. Under qualification occurs when workers obtain fewer skills and cannot possibly apply them to their jobs. In addition, at times, workers do not possess some skills that their job requires, resulting in a long-term under qualification phase.

The impact of transformational leadership on affective commitment positively affects organizational commitment. Schaubroeck et al. (2012) suggest that transformational leadership is also positively related to performance. As per Yizhong et al. (2019), the effect of transformation leadership on employee

employability improves employee employability through job demands, skill choice, decision authority, organization support, and team member exchange. Raja et al. (2018) reported that transformational leadership leads towards a better organization fit.

H2: Transformational leadership is positively related to job attitude (affective commitment)

2.3. The Moderating role of transformational leadership

Typically, moderating roles have been tested on factors similar to those studied in the current study (e.g., Altunoğlu et al., 2019; Chhabra, 2016). Bass and Avolio (1994) transformational leadership is a kind of motivation that influences followers' attitudes and behaviors. According to Tims et al. (2011), transformational leaders enhance the followers' work engagement by changing their perception regarding the work environment. With the help of person-job fit theory (Liao & Chuang et al., 2007) experts are trying to find the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' involvement in the work. This theory fills the gap by including the transformational leadership concept, which affects the performance of the individuals. Bass (1985) transformational leaders raise the needs of the employees from lower levels to higher levels.

According to Ng (2017), the impact of transformation leadership behavior on employee task performance and organizational citizenship behavior has been witnessed. Monor Mahmood et al., (2019) examined the influence of transformational leadership on employee behavior. The researcher proposed that transformational leaders impact strongly on employees' creative process. Fit theorists have proposed adding key situational characteristics that can play their part in moderating fit-outcome relationships, as there have been relatively few studies in terms of moderation effects have been conducted. There is still the requirement of fresh insights regarding important organizational moderators.

Therefore the present study proposed transformational leadership as a moderating variable. It has been defined by Avolio (1994) that transformational leadership is a kind of leadership style in which the leader behaviors play a vital role in transforming and inspiring followers to perform beyond expectations. Although a vast amount of research has been carried out on leader effectiveness on shaping follower's response to work life, it has been surprisingly witnessed that even then little attention has been seen to find its impact on how employees respond to person-job misfit (under qualification). Therefore this paper aimed to bring forward the role of transformational leadership in mitigating low person-organization fit.

Lastly, transformational leadership allows them to use their judgments by encompassing them and acknowledging their individual needs. Therefore, keeping in view the statement of by Bass and Avolio, (1994), it can be asserted that through the help of transformational leadership, a supportive job environment can be provided to individuals who perceive themselves to be underqualified regarding their job duties. This has also been empirically supported by various scholars asserting that through the help of transformational leadership, an influence can be brought forward by positively influencing followers' self-development and ultimately helping them develop better job attitudes. Therefore the present study tested the following:

H3: The negative relationship between Perceived under qualification and job attitude will be mitigated when transformational leadership is incorporated.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

A sample of 351 Faculty members having vast experience from four universities public sector universities in the UK were chosen. Data were collected through survey method using questionnaire. Unit of analyses was based as organizational so this study was organizational level study.

3.2. Measures

We adapted four items from the work of Johnson and Johnson (1996) to measure PU. The items in this scale reflect the extent to which there is a lack of educational qualification and experience by assessing the Job skills required on the job. The affective commitment scale comprised of 3 items adapted from Boezeman & Ellemers (2007). Participants were asked to respond to the items regarding their emotional attachment with the organization and whether the employees strongly identify the organization's goals and have an inner desire to remain part of the organization. Transformational leadership was assessed using the 6-item scale from Wang et al. (2005).

4. Analytical Procedures

The present study used partial least square (PLS) path modeling using Smart PLS to test the theoretical model (Ringle et al., 2015). PLS path modeling for the data analysis was deployed since this approach is experiencing widespread application in academic research (Darwish et al., 2021; Umrani et al., 2020). The present study used a two-step process (Henseler et al., 2009) which includes assessment of measurement model and structural model.

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment:

According to Hair et al. (2017) and Henseler et al. (2009), assessing the measurement model considers reliability and validity examination. For this, all loadings of items mentioned in table 1 were above 0.50. In addition, AVE and CR were also above the recommended range of 0.50 (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Further details are appended in table 1.

Table 1. Loadings, AVE and CR

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Affective Commitment	AC1	0.872	0.861	0.674
	AC2	0.803		
	AC3	0.784		
Perceived Under qualification	PU1	0.691	0.887	0.53
	PU2	0.711		
	PU3	0.603		
	PU4	0.862		
Transformational Leadership	TL1	0.701	0.811	0.522
	TL2	0.672		
	TL3	0.74		
	TL4	0.724		
	TL5	0.761		
	TL6	0.771		

The study also examined the discriminant validity Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. Here we tested the square root of AVE scores which is suggested to be higher than the correlations among the latent variables. Table 2 indicates that the square root of AVE for all constructs is higher than the correlations among the latent variables. Therefore, it could be concluded that all the measures used in the present study resulted in an adequate level of discriminant validity.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Latent Variable	1	2	3
Affective Commitment	0.821		
Perceived Under qualification	0.530	0.723	
Transformational Leadership	0.522	0.542	0.728

After confirming the psychometric properties of the model, the present study used bootstrapping (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2009) to examine the significance of hypothesized relationships. Table 3,

provides the full estimates of the structural model. The results in Table 3 revealed a significantly negative relationship between PU and AC ($B=-0.331$, $t=5.491$, $p<0.00$), supporting hypothesis 1. Accordingly, the results also estimated the positive relationship between TL and AC ($B= 0.321$, $t=4.981$, $p=0.00$). Thus hypothesis 2 was also supported. Similarly, the results show that TL moderates the PU and AC relationship ($B=-0.154$, $t= 2.165$, $p=0.00$), Thus hypothesis 3 was also supported.

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Hypothesis	Relationships	Beta	SE	t-value	Decision
H1	Perceived Under qualification → Affective Commitment	-0.331	0.06	5.491	Supported
H2	Transformational → Affective Commitment	0.321	0.064	4.981	Supported
H3	Moderating Effect 1 → Affective Commitment	-0.154	0.071	2.165	Supported

Furthermore, we also assessed the variance explained in the endogenous latent variable (R^2). According to Hair et al. (2017), the acceptable level of R^2 value depends upon the context of a particular research. Based on Falk and Miller (1992), the value of R^2 0.10 is acceptable. Accordingly, Chin (1998) proposed that in PSL-SEM, R^2 0.60 can be considered substantial, 0.33 as moderate, and 0.19 as weak. The value of R^2 of the present study is 0.359 suggesting that AC and TL combine explain 35.9 percent variance in PU. Hence as per Chin (1998) recommendations the value of R^2 is moderate. However, as per Falk and Miller (1992), the value of R^2 is sufficiently acceptable since it is above the minimum cutoff value.

Predictive relevance of the model. By looking out the insightful nature endogenous latent variables, the present study used the cross redundancy measure (Q^2) for the relevance of the predictive model assessment as per the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017) and Chin (1998). Assessment of predictive relevance is a supplementary test to check the goodness of fit (GoF) index for the model (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013). According to Henseler et al. (2009), when the value(s) of Q^2 is greater than zero that means the model has predictive relevance. Table IV shows the Cross validated redundancy Q^2 test results. Results in table 4 suggest that the model has predictive relevance. Besides this, effect size f^2 was also assessed. The values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are considered weak, moderate, and strong effects (Cohn, 1993; Henseler & Fassott, 2010). Table 5 shows the effect size of TL as a moderating variable as (0.121), meaning between weak and moderate.

Table 4. Q-Square Assessment

Total	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Affective Commitment	612	477.058	0.22

Table 5. F-Square Assessment

	Affective Commitment
Perceived Under-qualification	0.135
Transformational	0.121

5. Discussion and Implications

The present study has provided theoretical implications by providing additional empirical support to person job misfit theory (Liu et al., 2015; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013) by discussing thoroughly the other type of misfit known as perceived under qualification. The findings help to correct our understanding on how job attitudes can be influenced through misfit (under qualification) (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). According to Erdogan et al. (2009), keeping in view the research studies of previous scholars perceived over qualification is found to be an important antecedent of negative work outcomes, but there has been a negligible amount of work, and empirical evidence is available for examining the impact of perceived under qualification on job attitudes (Wu et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2016). Therefore this study provides a new perception by exploring the other dimension of person job misfit theory by pinpointing the issue of perceived under qualification on the job attitudes. This study extends the literature of Person Job misfit by addressing and responding to the scholarly calls by investigating the impact and direction of demand-abilities misfit (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Erdogan et al., 2011).

This study provides a new direction to understand and resolve the issue of perceived under qualification by identifying its relationship with transformational leadership and job attitude. This study concludes that the negative tendency of misfit of perceived under qualification can be reduced to a certain extent by bringing forward and strengthening the concept of transformational leadership within the organizations. It has been commented by Pahi et al. (2020) that transformational leaders influence abilities and address the skill gap of employees by conveying a clear vision and, along with it, instill both transferrable and organization-specific skills through the help of training and development. Secondly, they motivate the employees through the channel of inspirational communication and providing them personal recognition. Lastly, transformational leadership allows them to use their judgments by encompassing them and acknowledging their individual needs (Vashdi, Levitats, & Grimland, 2019). We believe that by introducing the factor of leadership, the skill gaps of employees could be reduced to a certain extent and this very new insight calls for further scholarly discussions to enrich the concept of misfit and how to deal with it in a well-designed manner rather than avoiding the issue which significantly prevails in nearly every organization.

Keeping in view the early fit literature review on perceived under qualification has been found to be having negative outcomes (Edwards, 2008) and the current study proposes the solution to mitigate the negative outcomes by incorporating the factor of transformational leadership as a moderating prospect. The findings also extend the person-Job misfit literature especially in terms of academic institutes and universities in the UK, by underlining the importance of leaders and their role in terms of increasing the self-esteem of underqualified individuals by inculcating a sense of positivity and making them feel valued and responsible in terms of their performance for organizational effectiveness (Follmer et al., 2018). Finally, the present study has brought forward the various applicable understandings in relation to Perceived Under qualification and employee Job attitudes relevant to four highly well-recognized public universities in UK. Primarily the results suggest that perceived under qualification impacts negatively the Job attitudes, which provides an implication to academic institutions to start paying attention to those individuals who are found to be lacking in skills in terms of their Job performance. The academic institutes and universities can take considerable effort to maximize their universities' performance by identifying those who are found to be underperforming and have low self-esteem about themselves. Universities can achieve this very goal if they start focusing on their leadership approaches by applying the principles of transformational leadership to transform the individuals to perform beyond expectations and help them grow so that organizational effectiveness can be achieved. Empirically, our results have proved that transformational leadership is positively associated with job attitude (affective commitment).

Additionally, the results provide empirical support that the incorporation of moderating variable 'Transformational Leadership' mitigates the negative impact of Perceived Under qualification on employee job attitudes. Due to the incorporation of this moderating variable, the performance of underperformers can be enhanced to a certain extent. This study will be converging its attention towards those organizational business setups where there is seen to be found a high degree of person job misfit which significantly results out in tremendously affecting job attitudes due to perceived under qualification and there is a dire need of transforming the attitudes of employees towards their job duties. Therefore the results in the present study suggest that the policymakers in academic institutions of UK should give considerable attention in terms of bringing forward the Leadership role in the form of Transformational Leadership in order to deal with the issue of perceived under qualification as the presence of influential leaders can help the organization to manage their employees and survive in a competitive era effectively (Ribeiro, Yücel, & Gomes, 2018; Peachey, Burton, & Wells, 2014). This study will specifically help the administrative and educational institutions to locate and address their issues.

This study may also help organizations give a second thought and focus on giving due concentration and reasoning's behind undesirable employees attitudes due to perceived under qualification. It is a factor rarely touched by organizations even though it has prevailed in organizations at a greater level. The study

concentrated on improving the employee's attitudes, which is seen as one of the most significant assets for an organization by significantly helping organizations accomplish their goals and objectives. Therefore, this study will assist the organizations to pinpoint their pitfalls due to the prevalence of perceived under qualification perceived on job attitudes among employees. Nonetheless, there are some important limitations that we urge future researchers to consider

Firstly, as the data for the constructs were collected through questionnaires, there are chances of self-serving bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003); as a result, the study under consideration cannot neglect the limitations of survey-based research. Secondly, transformational leadership was utilized as the moderating variable, whereby other variables can also be used to understand how they interact with the association between PU and AC. Some of the variables could be coworker support, transactional leadership, servant leadership and so on. Alongside this, we also recommend future scholars to further extend the literature review by examining the impact of perceived under qualification on Job attitudes by incorporating some other moderating variables which could have been utilized in the present study. Lastly, there can be a generalizability issue as this study is conducted within the UK higher education sector, thus limiting the generalizability of the results in another cultural context. Therefore, replication of this study in terms of other cultural contexts for future research is recommended to enrich the contribution of the present study.

6. Conclusion

The present study was planned to evaluate the impact of Perceived Under qualification on employee job attitudes, and transformational leadership was incorporated in the present study as the moderating variable. It came under the consideration of this study that those individuals who perceive themselves to be underqualified in terms of their education, skills, and performance can respond to their this Person-Job misfit by resolving this issue by introducing and strengthening the concept of transformational leadership that nullifies the negative impact of perceived under qualification on employee job attitudes. This study highlights the significance of leadership role in transforming the performance of individuals and organizations. This study demonstrates the fact that when leaders are brought forward at the forefront in order to address the developmental issues of employees and reduce the perception of under qualification among the employees will ultimately lower the cost concerning employee turnover such as training costs, separation, and recruiting cost and the quality of work-life of misfit perceivers will be improved. We believe that the present study further stimulates the scholarly discussions on Perceived Under qualification and employee attitudes and assists the organization in handling those individuals in which there is found to the tendency of Person-Job misfit perception.

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