



**Working from home – how’s it working? An examination on the effects of transformational and transactional leadership in a shift to virtual working**

by

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Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Digital Business Analytics

In

École de Management Léonard de Vinci

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Date: 06/08/2020

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents, Monica Zortea and Stephen Galante who listened to every idea I had, every finding I discovered, and let me discuss this project with them at all hours of the day. I would not have been able to produce a thesis like this had it not been for their massive amount of emotional support. Secondly, I would like to thank Eren Akkah, who served as a true transformational leader throughout this process. I am evergrateful for his consistent support, several rounds of reviews, and hours of meetings for all in all, it led me to create a piece of work that I am especially proud of.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to all.

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Auteur(s) :	non renseigné
Titre :	03:08:2020 final disseration .docx
Description :	non renseigné
Analysé le :	03/08/2021 20:18
ID Document :	jq4567og
Nom du fichier :	03:08:2020 Final Disseration .docx
Type de fichier :	docx
Nombre de mots :	9 138
Nombre de caractères :	66 202
Taille originale du fichier (kB) :	570.46
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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research is to examine the effects on organizational commitment of a sudden shift from the physical work environment to a fully virtual workplace. More specifically, the research focused on the differences between how the transformational leadership style and the transactional leadership style affect the change in employees' organizational commitment. The purpose is to determine which leadership style leads to desired positive effects in the workplace and to understand the effects of these leadership's styles in a time of great uncertainty and change. The study was based upon the transformational and transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment theory. Data was collected through surveys on employees using widely established scales to measure the employees' perception of leadership style, the organizational commitment prior to virtual work, and their organizational commitment in the present moment. Results portrayed that organizational commitment overall decreased in this transition and that transformational leaders were able to sustain and/or increase organizational commitment whereas there were no significant findings for transactional leaders. Even further, the two most important traits within transformational leaders were inspirational motivation and idealized influence. Within transactional leadership traits, the management-by-exception trait within transactional leadership was found to negatively affect the change in organizational commitment whereas contingent rewards had a positive effect on the change in organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Telework, Work-from-home

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## **1. Introduction**

Unprecedented. Lifechanging. Shocking. These are three words that without a doubt, symbolize the COVID-19 era. Mid-March 2020: the start of our worlds' massive change, the beginning of the reckoning that we now know as COVID-19. It has impacted every aspect of our lives. By April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, "half of humanity" across the world was required to stay at home underneath some form of a confinement or shelter-in-place (Sandford, 2020). Underneath these new measures, employees worldwide were forced to shift from the physical workplace to virtual work—regardless of whether they had ever worked from home before. No one could have prepared for a shift this vast. This rapid transition to a completely different work environment has serious implications for organizations worldwide. For many, virtual working began as a "2 weeks measure" that has now evolved into a "for the indefinite future" measure.

Despite the fact that organizations worldwide have made this rapid shift, there has been little research into how this change has affected employees (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Equally important, little research has been conducted on how this shift to a completely different work environment has affected employee-manager relationships, how to best manage employees, and how different leadership styles affect employees within this new setting. With that said, it is crucial for managers to gain as much understanding and knowledge as possible into how they can best manage their employees in a temporary shift to virtual working like this. In like manner, one key area that is considered to be a foundational concern for managers is their employees' organizational commitment (Yavirach & Prof, 2015). Organizational commitment has been found to be one of the most important attributes relating employee job-satisfaction, employee productivity, and motivation (Steers, 1977). Therefore, this study seeks out to help leaders understand how two different leadership styles, transformational and transactional leadership, affect organizational commitment in a rapid shift to virtual working.

Studying organizational commitment in different contexts is a crucial part optimizing organizational efficiency and performance. As today's world becomes more volatile and uncertain, and business becomes increasingly competitive, one way that organizations can gain sustainable competitive advantage is through committed employees. If managers can understand how to contribute to optimizing organizational commitment through such uncertainty in environments, they can become more effective and more successful, and lead to better success for the organization itself.

There are plenty of different leadership theories. However, the reason I have chosen to examine transformational and transactional leadership is because of their theoretical bases. In a switch to a completely virtual work environment, relationships have become crucial to helping cure social isolation. Therefore, because transformational leadership revolves around connection, understanding how this type of leadership style affects the change in organizational commitment is important. On the other hand, the opposing leadership theory to transformational leadership is transactional leadership (Bycio et al., 1995). The transactional leadership theory revolves around rewards, punishments, and reinforcements (Bick et al., 2020).(Bycio et al., 1995). This leadership style is more results-driven and based on transactions, therefore, it will be equally important to investigate the effects on this leadership style on organizational commitment in such a sudden shift of work environment.

Overall, this study will fill the existing research gap to give managers insight into what management style can lead to the optimal organizational commitment in a shift of the fundamentals of how we work. The research objectives of this study will be to:

- Define the change in organizational commitment when employees shifted from the physical workplace to a completely virtual workplace
- Determine which leadership style (between transformational and transactional leadership) has the more positive impact on organizational commitment
- Determine which factors within each leadership style are most related to organizational commitment in the virtual workplace

In the following sections, I will explore the existing literature on both transformational and transactional leadership and organizational commitment in both the physical and virtual workplace. Next, I will explain the theoretical motivation for the hypotheses for this study and explain the conceptual theories that support these hypotheses. I will continue by explaining the methodology that I utilized to conduct research and present the results for my research. I will conclude by interpreting these results and explaining both the theoretical and managerial implications that come from these results along with avenues for future research and limitations from the study.

## **2. Literature Review**

With a seemingly massive shift to working from home, COVID-19 has forever altered the way that we work. Prior to the pandemic, virtual working and the concept of working-from-home has seen a rise in popularity over the recent years. In fact, in a 2018 study conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it was found that 25% of US employees occasionally worked from home, displaying both an increasingly popular capability and trend (Hater & Bass, 1988) With that said, when COVID-19 struck, millions across the world went from having never worked from home to suddenly working in an impromptu home-office or home set-up; organizations across the world were forced to re-evaluate how they functioned in order to accommodate their employees. This sudden shift to mass virtual management is unprecedented. In fact, in a study conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, it was found that 35.2% of the US workforce were working *entirely* from home in May 2020 in comparison to a much lower statistic of only 8.2% in February 2020 ((George Ogbonna, 2013). This statistic in it of itself displays how although many had begun to work from home on occasion, the concept of working completely virtually was something completely unfamiliar to millions.

With the onset and challenges of a sudden shift to working from home, an entire new array of challenges and complex issues arise including but not limited to virtual management and making sure that employees continue to feel committed to their respective organizations. Within

this literature review, I will examine two of the most widely-researched management styles: transformational and transactional leadership. Additionally, I will focus on the relationship between these leadership styles and organizational commitment in both a virtual and physical workplace.

## 2.1 An Examination on Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership

Within this section, I will examine the key differences between transactional and transformational leadership and the recent implications of these leadership styles within both the physical and virtual workplace.

### 2.1.1 Transformational Leadership

Established in 1978, James Macgregor originally coined the term “transformational leadership” when describing political leaders (Cameron & Green, 2012); the concept of transformational leadership was further developed and applied to psychological and management settings by researchers B.M Bass and J.B Avalor (George Ogbonna, 2013). The basis of the transformational leadership is to lead subordinates through the transforming their motivations, raising their sense of mission, and lifting their self-esteem and aspirations (Salma et al., 2015). There are four widely-established concepts within transformational leadership ((Salma et al., 2015):

- **Charisma and idealized influence:** the extent that a leader behaves admirably/is viewed admirably by followers, displays a strong set of beliefs that allow subordinates to easily follow, and acts as a role-model to others
- **Inspirational motivation:** the ability that a leader possesses to inspire others and demonstrate an optimistic, encouraging vision
- **Intellectual stimulation:** the extent that a leader encourages imagination and for the constant rethinking of new ideas and new ways to overcome hurdles as a team within the organization
- **Personal and individual attention:** the degree to which the leader carefully listens to each follower, serves as a mentor/coach, and displays appreciation of each of his/her followers’ contributions to the team

### 2.1.2 Transactional Leadership

The leadership style theory that is known to be the opposite of transformational leadership is transactional leadership. Contrary to transformational leadership, transactional leadership revolves around the “transactions between leader and followers”. More specifically, transactional leadership is often characterized as the exchange between rewards, penalties, and positive/negative reinforcements (George Ogbonna, 2013). There are two major components widely-agreed upon throughout literature within transactional leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000):

- **Contingent rewards:** the extent to which a leader provides rewards for in-role performance and other achievements
- **Management by exception (active/passive):** how carefully leaders monitor their subordinates, respond according to their subordinates’ actions, and introduce policies that steer their followers away from making mistakes

### 2.1.3 Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership

There are major differences between transformational and transactional leadership. Table 1 displays a simple, summarized overview of the differences between transformational and transactional leadership.

Within this section, I will compare recent findings on the impact of transformational and transactional leadership in the workplace. Since the transformational leadership theory emerged, researchers have begun to do deep analyses and exploration into the implications of these two leadership styles into different workplaces, and in more recent years, the virtual workplace.

#### **Table 1. Key Differences Between Transformational and Transactional Leadership**

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Transactional leaders do not feel easy to discuss with employees about plans.	Transformational leaders ready to discuss with employees about plans before execution.
Leader set rewards and punishments for employees to accomplish the goal	Employees complete goal through superior principles and ethics
Motivates employees by tempting their self interest	Motivates employees by give priority to group interests first
Works surrounded by the organizational traditions	Works to transform the organizational traditions by implementing new thoughts
Management-by-exception: continue the status quo; pressure correct actions to recover performance.	Individualized reflection: Each behavior is intended for each person to convey kindness and support. Intellectual stimulation: support new and creative ideas to solve problems.

(Source: (Judge & Bono, 2000; Rubin et al., 2005))

Many studies display that in comparison to fellow transactional leaders, transformational leaders are found to be more emotionally in-tune to their surroundings and overall, more effective as leaders (Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013). Simultaneously, these studies themselves address the fact that there is large room for bias and that the relationship between transformational leadership and things like leadership effectiveness still needs to be evaluated further (Hater & Bass, 1988). Additionally, empirical evidence has portrayed stronger correlations between transformational leaders and positive employee metrics including but not limited to lower turn-over rates, higher employee satisfaction, and better, and better in-role performance (Bass et al., 2003). With that said, transformational leadership expert Bernard Bass states that in all contexts, transformational leadership leads to better employee outcomes (John J. Sosik, 1997). However, one cannot definitively state that one leadership theory leads to all good outcomes in every situational context. In fact, there quite a bit of evidence that states that transactional leadership is equally if not more positively correlated with positive employee metrics; for example, in a study conducted to measure military unit performance and cohesion, it was found that *both* transactional leadership and transformational leadership are positively associated with performance output (John J. Sosik, 1997).

Though virtual working has been gaining popularity for years, there is less research on how the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles affect employee outcomes

in virtual working scenarios. In fact, the first empirical study on these leadership theories and their implications in the virtual workplace did not take place until 1997 by John Sosik. In Sosik's investigation into the effects of leadership style on how a virtual team works, Sosik discovered that those who were working underneath transformational leaders, were more likely to have higher levels of "perceived performance, extra effort, and satisfaction with the leader" in comparison to transactional leaders (John J. Sosik, 1997); within this study, teams that were underneath transformational leaders had a higher number of questions, higher variation of solutions to different problems, and a higher quantity of overall original ideas (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2003). Sosik concludes that the reasoning for these results are due to a transformational leader's ability to motivate and inspire their followers (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2003). Similarly, in a virtual simulation of group dynamics, it was found that team members were more satisfied with transformational leaders in comparison to transactional leaders (Agu, 2015). However, in this same study, it was found that teams had higher, more efficient levels of performance under transactional leaders (Meyer, 2016). The plethora of research discussed above concerning transformational and transactional leadership has made one thing abundantly clear: different business scenarios lead to different results for different metrics. Therefore, it is imperative for managers to understand what leadership styles impact their desired metrics.

## 2.2. Organizational Commitment

Within this section, I will explore what organizational commitment is and recent findings on organizational commitment's effects within the physical and virtual workplace. Organizational commitment refers to the degree to which an employee feels involved, attached, and identifies with the organization that they work for (Meyer, 2016). There are two different approaches taken by researchers when observing and measuring organizational commitment, the unidimensional approach and the multidimensional approach (Klein et al., 2014). The unidimensional approach began gaining popularity in the 1970s from researchers Lyman Porter, William Crampon, and Frank Smith (*What Is Organisational Commitment? Definition and Explanation*, 2017). This theory essentially states that there is a "single conceptual definition" of organizational commitment and can be measured as such (Meyer, 2016). In contrast, the multidimensional



approach otherwise known as the three-component model (TCM) contains three major facets within organizational commitment (Klein et al., 2014):

- **Affective commitment:** the level of emotional and identification with the organization, how much an employee wants to be with the organization
- **Continuance commitment:** the losses that an employee would experience if he/she left the organization
- **Normative commitment:** the degree to which an employee feels a “sense of obligation” to the organization

Though these two approaches might seem a bit different, they are more similar than they appear. Both approaches are attempting to measure the bond and the degree to how an employee relates to the organization and both approaches state that the more an employee feels committed, the better the outcomes for the organization itself. All in all, the TCM approach is measuring different types of relationships that come within organizational commitment (Meyer, 2016). Several studies display that when analyzing organizational commitment, the unidimensional approach has more reliability, more validity, and less redundancy in a wide range of industries (Agu, 2015). Researchers state that this is partly due to the fact that the unidimensional approach allows for direct associations across a myriad of targets whereas, the TCM model is often studied solely based upon different components (Klein & Park, 2015). Overall, it is clear that the unidimensional model is the most widely used when measuring, observing, and understanding organizational commitment.

### 2.2.1 Organizational Commitment in the Physical and Virtual Workplace

Organizational commitment is extremely important to managers and organizations themselves because high organizational commitment has been found positively correlated with important metrics including job-satisfaction, “spending less time away from their job”, and being less likely to leave an organization (Golden, 2006). Additionally, organizational commitment has also been found to be negatively correlated within employee absenteeism and employee turnover. Overall, a wide amount of research shows that the more an employee feels committed to an organization, the better it is for the organization in all facets. The entire basis upon the theory of

organizational commitment states that the more an employee feels committed to an organization, motivation, continuation, and action follow suit (Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). With this said, it is no secret that a plethora of organizations within a myriad of industries are seeking for their employees to feel a strong sense of organizational commitment.

In today's environment and the increase in virtual working, it is important to understand how organizational commitment changes in a virtual setting. On one hand, several studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between the amount someone virtually works and their level of organizational commitment. For example, in a 2006 study conducted by Timothy Golden, it was found that the more employees worked-from-home, the more organizational commitment they had (Lim & Teo, 2000). It is important to note, however, that this particular study did not include full-time virtual employees. Furthermore, in a 2012 meta-analytic analysis, a positive correlation between virtual working and organizational commitment was found, with an even-higher correlation for younger employees (Bycio et al., 1995).

On the other hand, earlier studies found more negative associations between organizational commitment and virtual working. In a 2000 study, researchers found a negative correlation between working from home and organizational commitment (Bycio et al., 1995). Authors Lim and Teo explain that a possible reason for this negative association could be because employees with higher levels of organizational commitment genuinely like being in the physical workplace and interacting with the organization. It is notable to reveal that this study was conducted twenty-one years ago and therefore, technology was not as advanced the way it is today in how it connects people together. In summary, there is more literature and evidence of positive associations between virtual working and organizational commitment.

### 2.3 Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership Effects on Organizational Commitment in the Workplace

In this section, I will examine the existing literature concerning how the transactional and transformational leadership styles affect organizational commitment in both the physical and virtual workplace.

Regarding the physical workplace, there have been numerous studies that display positive associations between both transformational and transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment in a variety of industries. For example, in a study conducted on hospital nurses, positive correlations were found between overall organizational commitment and both transactional and transformational leadership (Toh et al., 2019); although both leadership styles were found to have positive correlations with organizational commitment, there was a stronger association between transformational leaders and organizational commitment, specifically a stronger association between the charisma factor within transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Gulluce et al., 2016; Porter, 2015). This strong association is most likely because organizational commitment contains the emotional attachment that one has to the values and identity of the organization they work for and because this is can be considered an emotional component of organizational commitment, it only makes sense that it is tied to a personality factor within transformational leadership. Similarly, in an empirical investigation into these two different leadership styles and organizational commitment within the hotel industry, there was almost an exactly equal correlation found between each leadership style and organizational commitment (Dai et al., 2013). These same findings can be found in different sectors including but not limited to banks and retirement homes (Lombardo & Mierzwa, 2012). All in all, these similar findings have one thing in common: transformational leadership has a stronger correlation with organizational commitment. On the other hand, other studies portray negative associations between organizational commitment and transactional leadership (Dai et al., 2013). Conclusively, the majority of literature concerning transformational vs. transactional leadership portrays that both leadership styles are positively associated with organizational commitment with stronger relationships between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

There is less research concerning how leadership style affect employee's organizational commitment in a virtual context. However, there current existing research displays those transformational leaders are more comfortable communicating face-to-face which could potentially serve as a major problem for transformational leaders with virtual employees (Iriqat

& Khalaf, 2017). In a study conducted through in-depth interviews, researchers Christopher Lombardo and Thomas Mierzwa found that employees with transformational leaders, who were viewed as motivational, had higher organizational commitment (Iriqat & Khalaf, 2017). Nonetheless, this study did not focus or compare remote employee organizational commitment with transactional leaders. Furthermore, Raed Iriqat and Dana Khalaf conducted a different study within a similar context focusing on remote employees and examining which factors within different leadership styles had the biggest correlation with organizational commitment (Hater & Bass, 1988). Within this study, they discovered that remote employee organizational commitment had high positive correlations with their respective manager's ability to engage, energize, and empower others (Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013; Özaralli, 2003; Sosik et al., 1997). Although this particular study did not focus specifically on transformational leadership, it included the manager personality traits that can often be found in transformational leaders. There is little to no research or similar research on how these transformational or transactional leadership styles affect organizational commitment in a virtual business setting.

Although there is research on how transformational and transactional leadership styles affects employees and their organizational commitment, there is little to no research on how these two leadership styles affect organizational commitment within a virtual business context. Even further, there is no research on how these two different leadership styles affect organizational commitment when there is a sudden shift from in-person working to virtual working. This is especially necessary for organizations and managers to understand in today's world as the work-from-home culture continues to stick around and especially because managers across the world have had to suddenly go from an in-person setting to a completely virtual setting due to COVID-19. Managers must gain insight into how they can best serve, retain, and ultimately best-manage their employees. Due to shortage in articles and information related to the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on organizational commitment in remote work, and I have decided to conduct a study about the impacts of transformational and transactional leadership when there is a sudden change from a physical work setting to a virtual work setting.

Table 2 presents a summary of the literature review to help readers grasp a quick understanding of each component of research presented.

**Table 2. Literature Synthesis Review**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Key Argument(s)</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Connection to Transformational, Transactional Leadership,</b>
The Oxford Review	N/A	Organizational Commitment	Defining organizational commitment and the three major parts of organizational commitment are normative commitment, affective commitment, and continuance commitment	Definition	N/A	Displays a different existing approach to organizational commitment
Gary J. Blau, Kimberly B. Boal	1987	Conceptualizing How Job Involvement and Organizational Commitment Affect Turnover and Absenteeism	There is a negative correlation between organizational commitment and absenteeism. Additionally, the unidimensional approach to organizational commitment can be considered an attitudinal	Utilizes a conceptual framework along with existing literature to define the relationship	Qualitative	Speaks to the importance of why organizational commitment is an extremely valuable metric and explains how this could help organizations
John Hater and Bernard M. Bass	1988	Superiors' Evaluations and Subordinates' Perceptions of Transformational	Transformational leaders were defined as the top-performing leaders by their subordinates	US corporation specializing in delivery services for	Qualitative	To support the existing evidence that displays that transformational leaders are revered higher than transactional leaders

Peter Bycio, Joyce S. Allen, Rick Hackett	1995	Further Assessments of Bass's (1985) Conceptualization of Transactional and Transformational Leadership	Positive relationships were found between both transactional leadership and transformational leadership and desirable employee outcome variables; however, transformational leadership was found to have stronger and more	Nurses in the United States	Qualitative	The charisma component of transformational leadership was most correlated with organizational commitment. Contrary to expectations, individual considerations did not have as much of an effect on organizational commitment.
John J. Sosik	1997	Effects of Transformational Leadership and Anonymity on Idea Generation in Computer-Mediated Groups	In a completely virtual groups, participants with transformational leaders were more likely to experience higher levels of "perceived performance, extra effort, and satisfaction with the leader" as opposed to transactional leaders. Participants with	Virtual setting under manually-formed test it wasn't a real business setting	Mixed	To display how people in virtual settings respond to transformational or transactional leadership styles and displaying a contrast between the effects of these two leadership styles in a virtual context
Gary Yukl	1999	An Evaluation of Conceptual Weaknesses in Transformational and Charismatic Leadership Theories	This article asserted that there are several flaws within the theoretical frameworks of transformational and transactional leadership for example, ambiguity, omission of behaviors, and	Literature review concerning the conceptual weaknesses of transformational and transactional	N/A	Defines a different perspective on what existing literature has deemed as weaknesses within transformational and transactional leadership

Timothy A. Judge and Joyce E. Bono	2000	Five-Factor Model of Personality and Transformational Leadership	Though there were not strong correlations between any of the Big Five personality traits and transformational leadership, however, Agreeableness, Extraversion and Openness to Experience were most correlated with charisma and individualized	US Community Leadership Programs	Qualitative	To support the existing evidence that shows transformational leadership is linked to positive organizational outcomes as well as to give better insight into some of the personality traits that can be found within transformational leaders
Lim, Vivien K G, Teo, Thompson S H	2000	An empirical investigation of factors affecting attitudes towards	Those who felt greater job insecurity had a negative attitude towards teleworking and to the authors' surprise, there is a	Study conducted on IT professionals in Singapore	Qualitative	This article displays a differing opinion contrary to recent studies displaying a negative association between organizational commitment and attitude towards teleworking as an option for working
Bernard Bass, Dong Jung, Yair Beson, Bruce Avioli	2003	Predicting Unit Performance by Assessing Transformational and Transactional Leadership	Both transactional leadership and transformational leadership styles predicted unit performance with the possible reason for transactional leadership being so successful	US Army platoon members, platoon leaders, and sergeants	Mixed	This shows an opposing view displaying that both transformational and transactional predict success unit performance. This differs from other research that states that only transformational leadership is a predictor of work performance.



Jim Blascovich, Crystal L. Hoyt,	2003	Transformational and transactional leadership in virtual and physical environments	Within a virtual simulation, transactional leaders had higher overall performance, however, transformational leaders' teams had higher overall employee satisfaction. More specifically, teams led by transactional leaders had a	Virtual and physical laboratory setting in University of California students	Mixed	To establish a newer contrasting finding that displays that virtual teams under transactional leaders had an overall higher quantitative performance while on the other hand, the findings about teams led underneath transformational leaders were similar to the majority of previous findings that people are overall happier with transformational leaders.
Özaralli, Nurdan	2003	Effects of transformational leadership on empowerment and team effectiveness	In teams with transformational leaders, the more transformational leadership behaviors their leader had, the more empowered the employees felt and the more empowered	Turkish employees in various industries	Qualitative	Team effectiveness has been found to have positive effects on organizational commitment and therefore this article supports the fact that transformational leaders have more empowered employees and more effective teams.
Timothy Golden	2006	Avoiding depletion in virtual work: Telework and the intervening impact of work exhaustion on commitment and	The higher degree of teleworking, the higher organizational commitment someone had.	Utilization of part-time virtual employees (no one was a full-time virtual employee) in a	Qualitative	Portrays that the more that someone works-from-home, the more committed they are to the organization. However, it's important to note that no one in this study was a full-time virtual employee therefore, these employees still got in-person interaction.

Lombar do, Christopher P, Mierzwa, Thomas J	2012	Remote Management Styles: Effects of Relational Psychological Contracts and Leadership Style on Teleworkers	Organizational commitment increased in teleworkers when HR encouraged using relational psychological contracts and transformational leaders with more motivational approach will cause an increase in teleworkers' organizational commitment	Interviews conducted on contractors, customer-contact workers, knowledge workers (engineers, technology-oriented), and virtual teams. Teleworkers and how	Qualitative	This speaks to a consistent finding that the motivation component within transformational leadership has seen to have positive effects on organizational commitment, even in telework settings.
Cameron, Esther, Green, Mike	2012	Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools, and Techniques of Organizational Change	Author Eshter Cameron and Mike Green summarized that overall, transformational leadership revolves around "raising the follower's sense of purpose" whereas transactional leadership is viewed as an exchange between	Literature review textbook concerning change management and leadership styles	N/A	This assertion portrays the key differences between transformational and transactional leadership and supports the hypothesis that the inspirational component of transformational leadership would be found most strongly associated with success, which in this case, is increased organizational commitment.
Brittany Harker Martin and Rhiannon MacDonnell	2012	Is telework effective for organizations?	There is a small yet positive correlation between organizational commitment and virtual working, which is higher for younger	A meta-analytic study using databases, dissertations, and	Mixed	Exemplifies that in the past, telework has been positively correlated with organizational commitment.

Natepan na Yavirach	2012	The Impact of Transformational and Transactional Leadership to Subordinate's Job Satisfaction	Transformational leadership found higher significant relationship to subordinate's job satisfaction and high relationship to organizational commitment.	Thailand university managers and Thailand university subordi	Qualitative	Illustrates the supported notion that transformational leader has a stronger positive outcome on organizational commitment in comparison to transactional leadership, however, transactional leadership was still found to be positively correlated with organizational commitment
Odumeru, James, Ifeany, George	2013	Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership Theories: Evidence in Literature	A comparison between existing literature on transactional and transformational leadership styles. The literature review asserts that transactional leaders tend to be more responsive whereas the transformational leader is more proactive and	Literature review concerning the differences between transformational and transactional leadership in	N/A	Helps establish the differences between transactional and transformational leadership
Silke Astrid Eisenbeiß and Sabine Boerner	2013	A Double-edged Sword: Transformational Leadership and Individual Creativity	Transformational leadership promotes followers' creativity but at the same time increases followers' dependency upon their leaders, which in turn reduces their	11 International companies in different industries (engineering, software	Qualitative	To display an interesting point-of-view to how there is a potential negative consequence to transformational leadership.
Howard Klein & Joseph Cooper	2013	The Assessment of Commitment: Advantages of a Unidimensional, Target-Free Approach	The unidimensional approach to measuring organizational commitment was found to have more advantages over other organizational commitment measures	Utilized participants from different industries (hospitals, juries, manufacturing,	Qualitative	Depicts the fact that the unidimensional approach to organizational commitment has a clearer conceptualization/definition, it can be applied to a variety of industries/environments, and has better convergence and coherence.

Umme Salma Sultana, 2Mohd Ridzuan Darun and 3Liu Yao	2015	Transactional or Transformational Leadership: Which Works Best for Now?	In both Transactional and Transformational leadership styles have weaknesses and strengths, although Transformational leadership style is more acceptable in present context.	Literature review that weighs the pros and cons of both transactional and transformational	N/A	Comparing the differences between transformational and transactional and showing that both have weaknesses in business settings.
Ogechi Lily AguSamuel Adegbo yega University, Ogwa, Nigeria	2015	Work Engagement, Organizational Commitment, Self-Efficacy and Organizational Growth: A Literature	Demonstrates that existing literature portrays the importance of organizational commitment and work engagement on desirable employee and organizational outcomes	Literature review discussing recent and past findings on work engagement, organizational	N/A	Establishes the important role that organizational commitment plays in employee retention, work attendance, willingness to engage, and performance/ effectiveness and explains how organizational commitment researcher Porter views organizational commitment as a unidimensional scale.
E. Kevin Kelloway, Julian Barling, Elizabeth Kelley, Julie Comtois, Bernadet	2015	Remote transformational leadership	In a remote setting, transformational leadership had the strongest, positive effect on desirable organizational and individual outcomes	Laboratory investigation, remote workers, completely virtual	Qualitative	When receiving both charismatic and intellectually stimulating communication from transformational leaders, there was higher in-role performance, job satisfaction, and group performance.

Dai You-De Dai You-Yu Chen Kuan-Yang Wu Hui-Chun	2016	Transformational vs transactional leadership: which is better? A study on Employees of International Tourist Hotels in Taipei City	Transformational and transactional leadership both affect distribute justice positively and transformational leadership leads to more trust in employees. Transformational leaders have a positive impact on organizational commitment with the help of distributive justice	Hotel employees in Taipei City	Qualitative	Displays a somewhat consistent finding throughout literature that transactional leadership influences organizational commitment negatively.
John P. Meyer	2016	Handbook of Employee Commitment	There are two main approaches to organizational commitment: the unidimensional approach and the multidimensional approach.	N/A	Mixed	Explains the differences between the two types of approaches when researchers are considering organizational commitment.
Khalaf, Dana M. S., Iriqat, Raed A. M.	2017	Using E-Leadership as a Strategic Tool in Enhancing Organizational Commitment of Virtual Teams in Foreign	E-leadership styles that include envision, engage, energize, empower, execute, and elasticity had a positive impact on organizational commitment in remote-work employees	Virtual teams in foreign commercial banks in Northern Western Bank in Palestine	Qualitative	The subcomponent personality traits within the virtual leaders that are almost identical to transformational leadership subcomponents were found to have a positive effect on organizational commitment, more specifically, the energize subcomponent which can be seen as similar to the motivation subcomponent of transformational leadership had the highest correlation to
Bureau of Labor Statistics	2019	Job Flexibilities and Work Schedules -- 2017-2018 Data from	2017-2018 Data on exactly how Americans were able to work at home and if they had flexibilities.	US Raw Data on American Worklife - Obtaine	Quantitative	This data is used to show a comparison between the flexibilities/work-from-home capabilities were given before the pandemic.

Sharon Toh Pei Sung, Stephen Laison Sondoh Jr.	2019	Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles Towards Organizational Commitment	Strong correlation between both transformational and transactional and organizational commitment	Hotel employees including housekeeping, food and beverage	Qualitative	Both leadership styles were found to have positive correlations with organizational commitment. Sung and Sondoh cite the reason for this being that it motivates employees when they are being rewarded as well as led by leaders who motivate are both important for an employee to feel committed.
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### 3. Theory & Hypothesis

It is imperative to gain a deeper understanding into how different leadership styles affect different work contexts. As COVID-19 has forced the world to suddenly transition from a physical work setting to a work-from-home environment. Managers must all of a sudden learn to become virtual leaders for their employees. As mentioned throughout the literature review, transformational and transactional leadership styles have different implications within different settings. With that said, throughout this chapter, I will discuss my research question and the theories concerning my research question, and introduce the hypotheses that I will test through my study.

What are the effects of transformational vs. transactional leadership on organizational commitment in a sudden shift from an in-person workplace to a virtual workplace? It is important to investigate this question because, as mentioned earlier, there is little research on the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on organizational commitment in a virtual setting. However, there are theories concerning these two specific leadership styles, their effects on employees, and more specifically, their effects on organizational commitment. The current theoretical basis for this research establishes that transformational leaders cause more positive effects on their employees (Gulluce et al., 2016; Toh et al., 2019). Several studies in a myriad of different business settings portray positive correlations between transformational leaders and positive employee metrics. More specifically, studies have shown a positive relationship between transformational leadership and metrics that concern how an employee *feels*. For instance, positive associations have been found between transformational leadership and employee self-empowerment, job satisfaction, and higher perceived performance (Hoyt & Blascovich, 2003). Furthermore, the most relevant application of this theory to the research question can be found in the positive associations between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Several research studies have displayed a moderate to strong correlation between transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Bycio et al., 1995; Salma et al., 2015).

The opposing end of the transformational leadership theory is the transactional leadership theory. The transactional leadership theory revolves more heavily on contingent positive and negative reinforcements and carefully watching over the subordinates (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Researchers have found that though transactional leadership has some positive associations between desirable employee metrics including but not limited to job satisfaction, team effectiveness, and in-role performance, these correlations are often weak to moderate in comparison to transformational leadership (Bycio et al., 1995; Salma et al., 2015)

When employees shift from working primarily in-office to completely virtual, especially in the fashion that occurred due to COVID-19, there are bound to be measurable effects; aside from shattering an employee's daily routine, the lack of daily work-life social contact has been proven to lead to social isolation (Digital Ocean, 2020). Likewise, organizational commitment will certainly change as well. There is no existing theory or literature that speaks to whether there will be an overall positive or negative change in organizational commitment in this context. However, one can logically predict that the vast change in the environment will lead to a change in how an employee feels, especially towards their organization. Hence, this change in environment is most likely to lead to a change in organizational commitment.

*H1(alt): There is a statistically significant difference between employee organizational commitment in the physical workplace and the employee organizational commitment after a rapid shift to a virtual workplace.*

Leaders have to adapt in the event of such a shift, especially as employee behaviors and feelings are adapting. As employees go from their normal daily lives in the office to completely at home, this is bound to cause hesitation; employees are not only in a period of massive uncertainty, but they are also adjusting to an entirely new way of life. In addition to adjusting to change and feelings of resistance, there is also the dilemma of remote-work exhaustion, social isolation, and the lack of regular physical behavioral cues. For instance, in one study conducted on IT remote workers, 82% reported feeling drained and burnt out (*State of Remote Work 2018*



*Report: What It's Like to Be a Remote Worker in 2018*, 2018). It is no wonder that remote workers report feeling exhausted. Sitting behind a screen the entire day with no in-person social interaction is bound to take some type of toll. Even prior to COVID-19, a 2018 study showed that one fifth of remote workers reported feeling lonely (Bycio et al., 1995). Plus, remote work eliminates for the entire comfort of physical social cues. There are no more smiles in the hallway or the subtle nod from a manager; all of these physical social cues served as confirmation and/or the facilitation of connection within the employee-manager-organization relationship. Employees are missing these interactions that serve as the foundation for the workplace. For this reason, in a virtual work setting, finding ways to connect, inspire, and motivate your employees will be essential in tending to these issues. The entirety of transformational leadership theory is based on the notion of connection, charisma, individual attention (Hater & Bass, 1988). These managers are therefore more likely to carry their transformational behaviors into a virtual setting and find ways to overcome the challenges of virtual working. With their ability to form and develop relationships, they will most likely be able to find creative ways to connect with their employees during this period of change. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, transformational leaders are also known for their ability to inspire which will be crucial in helping the employees that are feeling fatigued or isolated. For these reasons, I believe that transformational leaders will see an overall more positive increase in organizational commitment in a shift to virtual working.

*H2(alt): Employees with transformational leaders, who have suddenly shifted from in-person working to completely working from home experience a positive change in organizational commitment.*

As discussed above, transformational leaders are known for their skill to build relationships and motivate their subordinates (Umer & Taimoor Article, 2017). As employees experience a rapid shift in working environment, they are experiencing things like ambiguity, uncertainty, fatigue. To combat this, employees need encouragement, reassurance, and connection—especially in times of massive change. The transformational leadership components

revolving around connection and uplifting, individual consideration and inspirational motivation will be crucial to organizational commitment. As previously noted, the inspirational motivation component within transformational leadership describes the leader's ability to uplift his/her employees, provide optimism, and communicate an encouraging vision (Bacha & Walker, 2013). Uplifting employees through inspirational motivation and the providing of encouragement during a transition period, is likely to be particularly impactful. In a difficult shift for many, giving employees hope with an inspiring shared vision and hope should positively affect organizational commitment. Equally important, no human reacts the exact same way to change or difficult times; each person reacts differently and has different needs and concerns. For this reason, individual consideration from a manager should become even more important in a time of rapid change. Employees who feel as though their manager is taking into account their personal needs, especially during periods of high uncertainty, are likely to feel more at-ease and therefore, more committed to their organization.

Previous studies have displayed positive relationships between all four components of transformational leadership and organizational commitment (George Ogbonna, 2013). Although these four components are essential in order to be considered a transformational leader, inspirational motivation and individual consideration are likely to be more impactful than idealized influence and intellectual stimulation; this is because idealized influence and intellectual stimulation are centered more around integrity, fairness, and the instillment of curiosity within employees as opposed to connection, support, and comfort—which is expected to be more important while employees adjust and acclimate to a new method of working.

*H3(alt): In a rapid shift from the physical working environment to virtual working, inspirational motivation and individual consideration are more strongly, positively related with organizational commitment than other facets of transformational leadership.*

At the same time, because transactional leadership often has weaker to moderate correlations to desirable employee metrics in comparison to transformational leadership, I

believe that this same pattern will follow within this study (Avolio & Bass, 1995). As discussed above, this change in working environment has left employees feeling more exhausted and more isolated. During this period of change, employees need empathy, understanding, and connection. However, these are not the traits that transactional leaders are known for; rather, the theoretical basis for transactional leadership revolves around exchanges, rewards, and punishments (Lee, 2020). When one treats interactions more like exchanges, this is not going to facilitate or deepen relationships, which is what employees are craving for. Additionally, because this change inevitably causes uncertainty and stress, employees look to their leaders for guidance and support (Salma et al., 2015). In comparison to transformational leaders, transactional leaders are not known for their ability to inspire and comfort during difficult situations (Avolio & Bass, 1995). This lack of emotional connection during a strenuous change will most likely have negative effects on how an employee feels, thereby in turn causing a decrease in organizational commitment. With this said, in a quick shift from a physical work setting to working from home, I predict that transactional leaders will have more difficulty adapting and connecting to their employees.

*H4(alt): Employees with transactional leaders, who have suddenly shifted from in-person working to completely working from home will experience a negative change in organizational commitment.*

As discussed, throughout research, overall transformational leadership and its dimensions have seen strong correlations with organizational commitment (Kevin Kelloway et al., 2003; Lombardo & Mierzwa, 2012). On the contrary, the dimensions of transactional leadership have been found to have a weaker relationship to organizational commitment (Yavirach & Prof, 2015). In a time of change and uncertainty, it only makes sense that employees lean on their leaders for emotionally-based attributes for comfort and motivation—which is not included in the dimensions of transactional leadership. In fact, both components of transactional leadership revolve around interaction based upon performance (Salma et al., 2015); this is the opposite of

interaction centered around connection, fulfillment, and hope. On the same note and as indicated previously, management-by-exception describes the observing of employee performance and taking action based upon it (Salma et al., 2015). As employees experience a change in environment and potentially experience loneliness and exhaustion, managers monitoring for employee mistakes or just initiating exchanges solely on performance, are less likely to help comfort employees and/or cause them to be more committed. Consequently, management-by-exception should have a negative impact on organizational commitment in a quick shift to virtual working. On the other hand, contingent rewards, which are centered around rewards as a form of performance recognition, while has the possibility of providing motivation, is not centered around connection. The contingent rewards facet has also been found to be positively related to organizational commitment (Bass et al., 2003). For this reason, management-by-exception will most likely have a stronger, negative impact on organizational commitment in comparison to contingent rewards.

*H5(alt): In a rapid shift from the physical working environment to virtual working, management-by-exception is more strongly, negatively related with organizational commitment than contingent rewards.*

#### **4. Methodology**

As discussed, our research objective was to understand how transformational and transactional leadership styles affect employees' organizational commitment when there is a shift from in-person working to fully working remotely. In order to find this change and the impacts of each leadership style, I chose the quantitative approach through the administering of an online survey. Throughout this section, I will explain why I have chosen the survey approach, I will explain exactly what types of questions were in my survey, why I used these particular questions, and methods I utilized to combat particular weaknesses to this methodology. Additionally, I will explain my sampling technique and how I collected this data.

## 4.1 Quantitative Approach

I have chosen the survey quantitative approach because surveys are the most commonly used way of gathering a large amount of data quickly and efficiently (*4 Main Benefits of Survey Research*, 2019). It is possible that one could have used interviews using these survey questions and combine this approach by also asking deeper, qualitative questions to the interviewees to shed light onto why they have chosen certain responses. However, because there is so little research on the change in organizational commitment in virtual workplaces already (especially in relation to the transformational and transactional leadership styles), I think that the first step is obtaining an initial outline of the problem. In order to delve into this research problem, it is necessary that we begin by obtaining the largest sample possible and assess the effects at large. Through beginning with a larger sample size, one can gain the initial overview that would be necessary for more in-depth future research into the specificities of this problem within different industries and environments.

As discussed, surveys are an effective tool to gaining a larger sample size in comparison to interviews because of the amount of money and time that interviews take (*In-Depth Interview vs Online Survey*, 2020). Additionally, surveys allow for an easier-retrieval of data for statistical analyses, which will be the primary objective for this online survey. I used a combination of two sub-methodologies: I conducted online surveys and telephone surveys. I utilized online surveys because they are easily deployable and less expensive (*Types of Surveys with Examples | Types of Survey Research | QuestionPro*, 2020). However, online surveys are known to have a low response rate, therefore, I utilized telephone surveys to combat this potential issue. I called those that I knew met my target audience requirements to walk them through step-by-step each of my questions. Equally important, the use of surveys is the most predominantly-used methodology in research concerning transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and organizational commitment (*4 Main Benefits of Survey Research*, 2019).

## 4.2 Online Survey: Target Sample & Contents

Throughout this portion, I will discuss my target sample for the online survey, how I approached them, and the exact contents of my survey.

#### 4.2.1 Target Participants & Sampling Strategy

The target sample for this survey was anyone that shifted in March 2020 (specifically when the pandemic struck) from working in office to working from a distance from their manager. In order to most accurately measure the effects of the different leadership styles on organizational commitment within this shift in environment, it was crucial that the participants remained at the same organization during both time periods (pre-pandemic and post-pandemic). I distributed this survey online through emailing my personal network, shared the online survey on a professional network social media (LinkedIn), and directly asked my personal network to share this online survey to their colleagues. This can be considered both snowball sampling as well as convenience sampling (*Snowball Sampling: Definition, Method, Advantages and Disadvantages* | *QuestionPro*, 2020). I also called people within my personal network and conducted telephone surveys and ended the call asking them to forward the survey link to their network.

#### 4.2.2 Survey Contents

There were three sections of the survey: a section that contains screening and demographic questions, a section dedicated to understanding the employee's perception of his/her manager's leadership style, and lastly a section dedicated to determining the employee's organizational commitment in the physical workplace and the employee's organizational commitment in virtual workplace.

In the first section, I utilized screening questions and demographic control variable questions. The screening questions ensured that the survey participants are only people that transitioned from the physical workplace to working from a distance and only people that have remained at the same organization throughout this transition. If participants answered no to any of these questions, they were directed to the end of the survey, as they were not relevant matches for this study. I also used demographic control variables that previous similar studies have utilized to see if there are any potential connections between different variables and organizational commitment within this new environment. I also utilized these control variables in

hopes to prove and portray that regardless of them, the results would hold true. In a study conducted on the influence of the transformational leadership on organizational commitment and job satisfaction by researchers Waqas Umer and Syed Taimoor, they asked survey respondents for gender, age, education level, organizational position level, and years of experience within the organization (Umer & Taimoor Article, 2017). I used these same demographic questions to gain a better understanding of the employees that I am surveying. I also measured the number of years the participant has spent with their manager to understand if the number of years has any sort of relationship on the change in organizational commitment in such a shift.

In effort to first measure the employees' manager style, I chose to use a shortened version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Rater Form created by leadership theory experts Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass (Tejeda et al., 2001). The MLQ survey is the most widely used scale for measuring transformational and transactional leadership styles (Tejeda et al., 2001); hundreds of researchers, managers, and organizations have utilized versions and variants of the MLQ survey to understand whether or not a leader is transformational or transactional (Tejeda et al., 2001). Additionally due to time and financial constraints, I used a modified, shortened version of this MLQ survey. The purpose of using this shortened version of the MLQ was to help prevent survey fatigue, a common reason for why survey participants quit in the middle of completing a survey (Pecararo, 2012). Using a shortened version of the MLQ survey helped establish my goal of gathering the largest data sample size possible while also utilizing a scale based on the MLQ survey. In a study titled "Transformational Vs. Transactional Leadership: Which is Better?", researchers shortened the MLQ rater questionnaire to a 12-item scale. This 12-item scale measures the four components of transformational leadership as well as the two components of transactional leadership (Dai et al., 2013). Similar to the longer version of the MLQ rater questionnaire, this 12-item scale utilizes a Likert 5-point scale to measure the employee perceptions of their immediate manager's leadership style. This 12-item scale has been tested for validity (Dai et al., 2013). I coded each question based on which component of the leadership style it relates to (Intellectual Stimulation=IS, Inspirational Motivation= IM,

Individual Consideration=IC, Idealized Influence=II, Contingent Reward=CR, Management by Exception Active= MBEA).

In order to understand the employees 'organizational commitment pre- and post- working from home, I utilized Klein et. Al's unidimensional target-free (KUT) measurement. This measurement of organizational commitment contains four questions with a 5-point Likert scale (Klein et al., 2014). This scale is most widely used by organizational commitment researchers (Klein et al., 2014). Additionally, the unidimensional measurement for organizational commitment has evolved throughout time into the KUT measurement; the KUT measurement has not only been the most widely-used by researchers, it has also been tested for validity (Klein et al., 2014). Within the section asking about the participant's organizational commitment, there were two sub-sections: a section asking for the participant's organizational commitment before COVID-19 struck (and employees were in the physical workplace) and a section asking for the participant's present organizational commitment now that the participant is working fully from home.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1. Response Rate**

A total of 50 emails were sent out to potential participants describing the requirements to participate (working on-site before the pandemic, working-from-home at the present moment, and remaining at the same company since before March 2020). Within these emails, I asked the potential participants to also share with the colleagues they knew that met these requirements—this can be considered a convenience snowball sample. Additionally, I shared on my professional and social networks (Facebook and LinkedIn) and asked colleagues and friends to share on their social networks as well.

Overall, there were 393 total responses. 110 of the participants began the survey and did not complete it, indicating a 28% response rate. 122 of the participants (31% of total participants) did not meet the survey screening requirements (they were either working fully from a distance prior to the pandemic, working fully in-office in the present moment, or they had switched



companies since the pandemic struck). All in all, this sample consists of 169 qualifying participants.

## 5.2. Sample Participants

Table 3 portrays the demographic profile of the survey respondents. The majority of the participants were female at 55.95%, with male respondents at 44.05%. 50.89% of participants were between the ages of 20-30 years old. 20.12% were between the ages of 51 and older, 15.38% were between the ages of 31-40 years old, and 13.61% was between the ages of 41-50 years old. Furthermore, the bulk of respondents' highest education level was an undergraduate degree at 60.95%, a master's degree at 28.4%. 4.73% highest level of education was a PhD, 4.14% had only received a high school degree, and 1.78% wrote that that they had a different level of education. Next, the majority of participants were individual contributors at 60.12% and managers at 39.88%. Furthermore, the majority of respondents had been with their manager for 1-3 years at 60.95%, less than 1 year 13.61%, more than 5 years 13.02%, and 3-5 years 12.43%. Lastly, most respondents had spent 1-3 years with the organization at 48.52%, more than 5 years at 31.36%, 3-5 years at 18.34%, and less than 1 year at 1.78%.

## 5.3. Reliability of Questionnaire

In order for research to be relevant, one must ensure that they reduce to the best of their ability, any threats to validity. To confirm that my results could be considered reliable, I conducted an internal reliability test on each scale mentioned in section 4.2.2, within the survey. Table 4 displays the Cronbach's Alpha value for each scale within the questionnaire.

In order for a study to be deemed acceptable, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient must have a minimum of 0.7 (Zahreen et al., 2018). Each of the scales within the questionnaire had a Cronbach's reliability over 0.7, indicating that the results could be considered reliable. The internal consistency of the transformational leadership scale was  $\alpha=0.88$  and the internal consistency of the transactional leadership scale was  $\alpha=0.83$ —these are both considered a good level of reliability (Zahreen et al., 2018). The scale used to measure organizational commitment in the office/on-site was  $\alpha=0.94$  and the scale used to measure organizational commitment in the

present moment was  $\alpha=0.95$ —both scales can be considered to have excellent reliability (Zahreen et al., 2018).

#### 5.4 Descriptive Statistics & Bivariate Relationships

I conducted descriptive statistics and a bivariate analysis to gain better insight into the data and understand the relationships between different variables. Before conducting this analysis, I created composite variables, averaging across all the scale items to create scale scores for all constructs. Furthermore, I included the standardized residual of organizational commitment, a variable that will be discussed further in section 5.5.6. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics and bivariate relationships for each variable. Transformational leadership is significantly positive correlated to organizational commitment before the pandemic and in the present moment (for pre-pandemic organizational commitment,  $r=.302$  and for present organizational commitment,  $r=.548$   $p<.001$ , indicating an extremely high level of significance). Transformational leadership is also significantly, positively correlated to the standardized residual for organizational commitment ( $r=.452$ ,  $p<.001$ ). On the other hand, transactional leadership does not have a statistically significant relationship with organizational commitment in either time.

Moreover, all four of the transformational leadership components are all significantly and positively correlated to the standardized residual of organizational commitment. Firstly, inspirational motivation has the strongest positive relationship in comparison to the other four components of transformational leadership to the standardized residual of organizational commitment ( $r=.403$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Idealized influence has the second highest correlation to the standardized organizational commitment ( $r=.386$ ,  $p<0.001$ ); individualized consideration falls closely third in terms of being positively correlated to the standardized residual of organizational commitment ( $r=.385$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Lastly, intellectual stimulation has the lowest correlation to the standardized residual of organizational commitment in relation to all four components of transformational leadership ( $r=.363$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Overall, the four components between

transformational leadership and the standardized residual of commitment have moderate to weak positive relationships, however, they are all statistically significant.

**Table 3 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Demographic Variables	N	%
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
Male	74	44.05%
Female	94	55.95%
<b><i>Age</i></b>		
20-30 years old	86	50.89%
31-40 years old	26	15.38%
41-50 years old	23	13.61%
51 and older	34	20.12%
<b><i>High school</i></b>		
7	7	4.14%
Undergraduate / Bachelor's Degree	103	60.95%
Master's Degree	48	28.40%
PhD	8	4.73%
Other	3	1.78%
<b><i>Organizational Position</i></b>		
Individual contributor	101	60.12%
Managerial Level	67	39.88%
<b><i>Years with Manager</i></b>		
Less than 1 year	23	13.61%
1-3 years	103	60.95%
3-5 years	21	12.43%
More than 5 years	22	13.02%

### ***Years with Organization***

Less than 1 year	3	1.78%
1-3 Years	82	48.52%
3-5 Years	31	18.34%
More than 5 years	53	31.36%

**Table 4 Reliability Test Results**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
Transformational Leadership	0.884	8
Transactional Leadership	0.839	4
Pre-Pandemic Organizational Commitment	0.948	4
Present Organizational Commitment	0.954	4

Likewise, the two components of transactional leadership have statistically significant correlations to the standardized residual of organizational commitment. By way of contrast, the management-by-exception component has a negatively correlated relationship to the standardized residual of organizational commitment ( $r=-.199$ ,  $p=.014$ ), whereas contingent reward a positive relationship to the standardized residual of organizational commitment ( $r=.338$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Both relationships can be considered moderate to weak. The relationship between management-by-exception and the standardized residual of organizational commitment is especially weak, especially in comparison to all the dimensions across both transactional and transformational leadership.

### **5.5 Change in Organizational Commitment & Leadership Style Impact**

Within this section, I will present the results of the change in organizational commitment as well as present two analyses that display how the two leadership styles as well as their sub-traits affect the change in organizational commitment.

#### 5.5.1 Paired-Samples T-test

To determine if there was a significant difference between organizational commitment in the physical workplace and organizational commitment in the working-from-home setting, I conducted a Paired-Samples T-Test. A Paired-Samples T-test is used to compare means on “the same variable but for two different variables” (Aldrich, 2018, p. 318).

Therefore, the Paired Sample T-Test was conducted to evaluate the effect and difference in a sudden shift to working from home. There was a significant difference between the organizational commitment before the pandemic ( $M=4.0977$ ;  $SD=.808$ ) and the present organizational commitment ( $M=3.7467$ ;  $SD=.97382$ );  $t(150)=5.319$ ,  $p<.001$ . Therefore, we can confirm my Hypothesis 1, that there was a significant difference in organizational commitment in the two different time periods. By the same notion, a one-tailed Paired Samples T-Test displays that organizational commitment decreased after a shift to working-from-home.

#### 5.5.2 Regression Analyses

In order to find the exact difference in organizational commitment, I regressed the current organizational commitment score against the organizational commitment score from before the pandemic and utilized the residual variable created from this regression, as the difference score in organizational commitment (Smith & Beaton<sup>34</sup>, 2008). This method was originally created and used by authors P. Smith and D. Beaton in their study titled, “Measuring change in psychosocial working conditions: methodological issues to consider when data are collected at baseline and one follow-up time point” (Smith & Beaton<sup>34</sup>, 2008). In total, four separate regressions were used to test H2, H3, H4, and H5. Table 7 presents the results from these regressions. Transformational leadership was found positively related to the change in organizational commitment, therefore, employees with more transformational leaders reported less of a decrease in organizational commitment after a switch from working on-site to working-

from-home ( $\beta=.440$ ,  $\Delta R^2= 0.187$ ,  $P<0.001$ ,  $SE= 0.089$ ). These results display that employee with transformational leaders had a consistent level of organizational commitment.



**Table 5 Descriptive Statistics & Bivariate Analysis**

<b>Variab le</b>	<b>Me an</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Pre OC</b>	<b>Prese nt OC</b>	<b>TSF L</b>	<b>TSC TL</b>	<b>Resid ual</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>IM</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>MB E</b>	<b>CR</b>
<b>Pre</b>	4.0	0.8	1	.600**	.302	0.069	0.000	.203*	.294	.283	.219	-0.0	.17
<b>Present OC</b>	3.7 5	0.9 7	.60 0**	1	.548 **	0.121	.800**	.445**	.467 **	.494 **	.445 **	-.23 0**	.36 9**
<b>TSFL</b>	2.8	0.8	.30	.548**	1	.240*	.452**	.873**	.857	.861	.738	-.24	.53
<b>TSCT</b>	1.2	0.7	0.0	0.121	.240	1	0.119	0.141	.274	.282	0.03	.679	.77
<b>Resid</b>	0.0	1.0	0.0	.800**	.452	0.119	1	.385**	.363	.403	.386	-.19	.33
<b>IC</b>	2.8	1.0	.20	.445**	.873	0.141	.385**	1	.618	.615	.690	-.31	.46
<b>IS</b>	2.7	1.0	.29	.467**	.857	.274*	.363**	.618**	1	.684	.480	-0.1	.47
<b>IM</b>	2.5	1.0	.28	.494**	.861	.282*	.403**	.615**	.684	1	.506	-0.1	.50
<b>II</b>	3.1	1.0	.21	.445**	.738	0.032	.386**	.690**	.480	.506	1	-.29	.29
<b>MBE</b>	0.7	0.9	-0.0	-.230*	-.24	.679*	-.199*	-.313*	-0.1	-0.1	-.29	1	0.0
<b>CR</b>	1.8	1.0	.17	.369**	.537	.776*	.338**	.461**	.477	.506	.298	0.06	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 6 Paired Sample T-Test**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-Pandemic OC	4.0977	.80879	.06582
	Present OC	3.7467	.97382	.07925

		Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-Pandemic OC & Present OC	.600	.000

**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-Pandemic OC – Present OC	.35099	.81096	.06599	.22059	.48139	5.319	150	<0.001

**Paired Samples Effect Sizes**

		Standardized Cohen's d	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Pre-Pandemic OC – Present OC	.81096	.433	.265	.599

r 1	Present OC	Hedges' correction	.81299	.432	.265	.597
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a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.

Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Regardless of age, gender, years with the organization, years with the manager, and organizational position level, transformational leadership has a positive impact on the change in organizational commitment. Transformational leaders were able to sustain their employees' level of organizational commitment. Therefore, we can reject the null Hypothesis 2. Contrarily, transactional leadership was not found to be a significant predictor of the change in organizational commitment ( $\beta=.012$ ,  $\Delta R^2= 0.187$ ,  $P<0.878$ ,  $SE= 0.110$ ).

I next calculated a regression for the components of each leadership style separately. There was only one statistically significant finding amongst all components of transformational leadership style. Individual consideration was not found to be a significant predictor of the change in organizational commitment ( $\beta=.082$ ,  $\Delta R^2= 0.195$ ,  $P<0.529$ ,  $SE= 0.127$ ); intellectual stimulation was not found to be a significant predictor of the change in organizational commitment ( $\beta=.067$ ,  $\Delta R^2= 0.195$ ,  $P<0.560$ ,  $SE= 0.110$ ); inspirational motivation was found to have a moderate to weak positive, significant relationship with change in organizational commitment ( $\beta=.204$ ,  $\Delta R^2= 0.195$ ,  $P<0.1$ ,  $SE= 0.108$ ). Lastly, idealized influence was not found to be a significant predictor of the change in organizational commitment ( $\beta=.204$ ,  $\Delta R^2= 0.195$ ,  $P<0.1$ ,  $SE= 0.108$ ).

Concerning the two components of transactional leadership, both contingent reward and management-by-exception were found to be significant predictors of the change in organizational commitment. Management-by-exception was negatively related to the change in organizational commitment ( $\beta = -.218$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = 0.144$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ,  $SE = 0.084$ ); this indicates that the more the manager practiced acts of management-by-exception, the larger the negative decrease in organizational commitment in a change to working-from-home. Reversely, contingent rewards were found to be positively related to the change in organizational commitment ( $\beta = .334$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = 0.144$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ,  $SE = 0.075$ ). This displays that the more a leader utilized contingent rewards, the more the organizational commitment would positively increase.

### 5.5.3 Dominance Analysis

In order to provide a more scientific approach to determining the importance of each leadership theory style, I conducted a Dominance Analysis (Budescu, 1993). The purpose of a Dominance Analysis is to determine the relative importance of the independent variables (in this case, the personality traits) on a target dependent variable through a multivariate regression model (Budescu, 1993).

**Table 7 Regression Analysis**

	<b>Common for H2, H3, H4, H5</b>	<b>H2</b>	<b>H3</b>	<b>H4</b>	<b>H5</b>
	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
Gender	0.009	-0.041	-0.045	0.019	-0.037
Age	0.047	0.061	0.056	0.065	0.054
Years with Manager	0.024	-0.012	-0.013	0.020	-0.016
Organizational Position	0.088	0.059	0.076	0.071	0.037
Years with Manager	0.169 <sup>+</sup>	0.092	0.096	0.141	0.113

Years with Organization	-0.170	-0.098	-0.138	-0.151	-0.145
Transformational Leadership		0.443**			
Transactional Leadership				0.104	
Individual Consideration			0.082		
Intellectual Stimulation			0.067		
Inspirational Motivation			0.204 <sup>+</sup>		
Idealized Influence			0.181		
Management-by-Exception					-0.218**
Contingent Reward					0.333**
$\Delta R^2$		0.187	0.195	0.010	0.144
$R^2$	0.035	0.222	0.230	0.044	0.179
Adjusted $R^2$	-0.006	0.178	0.174	-0.003	0.132
Model F	0.848	4.994	4.118	0.932	3.809

Notes Standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) presented; \*\* $P < 0.01$ , + $P < 0.10$ .

Hypothesis2 & Hypothesis4: Controls entered on Step 1, Transformational and Transactional Leadership entered on Step 2.

Hypothesis3: Controls entered on Step 1; four components of leadership entered on Step 2.

Hypothesis5: Controls entered on Step 1; two components of transactional leadership entered on Step 2.

$\Delta R^2$ =incremental change in  $R^2$  when variable(s) are entered at a given step;  $\Delta F^2$ =F value for the change in variance at a given step;  $R^2$ =variance explained at the given step; Model F=overall F at a given step.

**Table 8 Dominance Analysis Transformational Leadership Traits**

		<b>Transformational Leadership</b>		
		General Dominance Tests		Complete Dominance Tests
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>General Dominance Statistic</b>	<b>Dominance Ranking</b>	<b>Completely Dominates over</b>
Organizational Commitment	IC	0.0463 (21.76%)	3	IS
	IS	0.0422 (19.82%)	4	
	IM	0.0638 (29.95%)	1	IC, IS, II
	II	0.0606 (28.47%)	2	IC, IS

**Table 9 Dominance Analysis Transactional Leadership Traits**

		<b>Transactional Leadership</b>		
		General Dominance Tests		Complete Dominance Tests
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>General Dominance Statistic</b>	<b>Dominance Ranking</b>	<b>Completely Dominates over</b>
Organizational Commitment	CR	0.1098 (72.67%)	1	MBEA
	MBEA	0.0413 (27.33%)	2	

A Dominance Analysis is particularly useful when determining the effects of an independent variable on the dependent variable, particularly within a group of other independent variables (Budescu, 1993). As stated by David Budescu in his article “Dominance Analysis: A New Approach to the Problem of Relative Importance of Predictors in Multiple Regression”, one variable is stated to “dominate another if it is more useful than its competitor in all subset

regressions”. Ultimately, I conducted this dominance analysis to understand which leadership trait within both types of leadership theories was the most relevant in predicting the change in organizational commitment in a shift from on-site to working-from-home.

I conducted a dominance analysis for each leadership theory individually, a dominance analysis test for the transformational leadership traits and a dominance analysis test for the transactional leadership traits. One can observe in Table 8 that Inspirational Motivation ranks the highest in predicting organizational commitment in a shift to working-from-home and it indeed has the highest dominance statistic (value=0.0638, 29.95%, rank 1). Inspirational Motivation also completely dominates individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence. Henceforth, amongst the transformational leadership traits, inspirational motivation is the strongest predictor of organizational commitment. Next, we can observe that idealized influence is the second strongest predictor of organizational commitment in this context (value=0.0606, 28.47%, rank 2). Idealized Influence completely dominates individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration are the two weakest traits in terms of predicting organizational commitment. Individualized consideration is the third strongest predictor (value=0.0463, 21.76%, rank 3) and intellectual stimulation is the overall weakest predictor of intellectual stimulation (value=0.0422, 19.82%, rank 4). This dominance analysis helps to partially confirm Hypothesis 3 which states that inspirational motivation and individualized consideration are the most important factors within transformational leadership. In this case, the dominance analysis portrays that indeed inspirational motivation is the most important factor, however, individualized consideration is the third most important factor and that in reality, and in reality, idealized influence is the second-most important factor.

Next in terms of transactional leadership, one can observe from Table 9 that similar to the results from the regression analysis in Table 7, contingent rewards was the most important leadership trait within transactional leadership (value=0.1098, 72.67%, rank 1). Contingent rewards completely dominate management-by-exception, which is the weakest trait of the two main transactional leadership traits (value=0.0413, 27.33%, rank 2). This helps me to confirm

Hypothesis 5 that management-by-exception is the least important of the two main transactional leadership traits.

## **6. Conclusions & Recommendations**

Within this section, I will delve into the results from my statistical analysis, the theoretical implications, the implications they have for managers and their employees, future avenues for research, and the limitations revolving around the study.

### **6.1. Discussion of Results**

For the most part, researchers have suggested that transformational leadership is the key to positive employee effects in the workplace (Bass et al., 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988; Hoyt & Blascovich, 2003; O.S et al., 2013). However, in a virtual workplace context, the findings related to which leadership style is more effective is less available and more mixed (Agu, 2015; John J. Sosik, 1997). Overall, this study was designed to gather the initial and foundational empirical evidence into not only how organizational commitment changed in a temporary shift from working in-office to working-from-home, but also to define what type of leader is able to impact employee organizational commitment in a time of rapid change and high uncertainty like this.

As expected, my results display that there was a significant change in organizational commitment. This was expected due to the fact that it was a massive change in the environment and recent research has proven that this shift in environment has been particularly difficult for employees as well (Bick et al., 2020; Prochazka et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Even further, my results suggest that employees with transformational leaders were already committed to their work. This finding holds similar to the majority of research that shows positive relationships between organizational commitment and transformational leadership. More importantly, my results displayed that transformational leaders were able to keep their employees committed during the switch in working in-office to working-from-home. This finding remained in line with my expectations that transformational leaders would be able to devise creative ways to have a positive impact on organizational commitment during this change. The confirmation of this finding could be due to the fact that transformational leaders were likely able to provide



connection, emotional support, and inspire their employees during a time of change and uncertainty—thus serving as a metaphorical crutch to combat any stress or loneliness the employees could potentially have been experiencing.

Additionally, my results suggest that when people shift from working-in-office to working-from-home, inspirational motivation and idealized influence had the strongest positive impact on employees' organizational commitment and that inspirational motivation is the most important factor within the four main transformational leadership traits and idealized influence is the second most important transformational leadership trait. This is slightly dissimilar to previous studies which have found positive relationships between all four of the components of transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Bass et al., 2003; Umer & Taimoor Article, 2017). However, due to the unique basis of the dominance analysis and the study at hand, one cannot definitively state that this finding is necessarily completely different from the findings mentioned above; no researchers have conducted a dominance analysis on transformational or transactional leadership and organizational commitment. Most leaders that have the traits of inspirational motivation or idealized influence, are likely to have the other two remaining traits of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation.

Inspirational motivation was the strongest trait within the four main traits in transformational leadership; this could be because employees shifted to working-from-home, they lost their sense of normalcy and social connection, and began to feel more fatigued (Bower, 2020). Inspirational motivation from a manager can help fatigued employees re-commit and sustain their strive towards the shared company vision (Bick et al., 2020). Furthermore, "leaders with inspirational motivation create a strong sense of team spirit...which enables followers to identify more closely with the organization's goals" (Chebon et al., 2019). Using inspirational motivation to unify employees during a period of high-uncertainty, stress, and change, helps re-ground the said employees, enhance productivity levels, and allow the employees to continue feeling committed to the organization (Chebon et al., 2019). These findings concurred with several studies that portray the importance of inspirational motivation on all positive employee performance outcomes (Brown & Treviño, 2009; Kirimi Ardon Barine & David Minja, 2014). All in all,

inspirational motivation, the promoting of a shared vision, continued optimism, and the encouragement for unity within a difficult transition, is a strong and reliable way to sustain organizational commitment during a period of transition similar to this.

Something that was particularly surprising was the fact that within the dominance analysis (Table 8), idealized influence was more important than idealized consideration. This same finding was also found within my regression analysis (Table 7). On the contrary, this finding is in agreement to that of Stanley Chebon, Wilson Auasa, and Luns Chirchir in their examination of the effects of idealized influence and inspirational motivation on employee performance (Chebon et al., 2019). Similarly, researchers Sosik, Godshalk, and Yammarino found that when employees had high idealized influence for their managers, these leaders were able to reduce negative stress within the employee's work (Sosik et al., 2004). This conclusion also agreed with that of Leila Afshari in the article "Idealized Influence and Commitment: A Granular Approach in Understanding Leadership" which states that idealized influence is one of the most important traits of transformational leadership on organizational commitment (Afshari, 2021). The discovery also concurs with Hyati et al which states that idealized influence is an imperative prerequisite to achieving overall positive employee outcomes (Hayati et al., 2014). Leaders that hold a strong position of idealized influence are often regarded as charismatic, having an effective vision, and being known to better engage with their employees—especially during a period of high-stress and therefore, are able to help maintain their employees' organizational commitment.

These above findings partially confirm Hypothesis 3, which ultimately states the importance of inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. It confirms the fact that inspirational motivation is more important than the other leadership traits, however, it cannot be confirmed that individualized consideration is the second most important transformational leadership trait. Furthermore, it also makes sense that intellectual stimulation was found to be the least important trait on the change in organizational commitment. As stated, employees are craving now more than ever and especially in a time of change—leadership, emotional connection, motivation, and understanding. Employees are looking upon their managers as their

role models who can take care of or at least ease the stressors of this time of high uncertainty. Managers who are pushing their employees to confront work issues in a different or more creative way are not necessarily going to have an impact on how their employees are feeling towards their organization or as a whole, during the time of change nor their organizational commitment, therefore making intellectual stimulation less important than inspirational motivation.

I was not able to reject the null Hypothesis 4 which states that transactional leaders had no effect or a positive effect on their employees' organizational commitment in a shift to working-from-home. With that said, because the findings regarding transactional leadership as a whole were not statistically significant, I cannot definitively state that this finding differs from recent literature concerning transactional leadership and organizational commitment. On the contrary, the findings regarding transactional leadership's components *were* statistically significant. My results suggested that management-by-exception had a further negative impact on the change in organizational commitment whereas contingent rewards had a positive impact on the change in organizational commitment. These results help me to partially reject the null Hypothesis 5. It makes sense that management-by-exception has a negative impact on the change in organizational commitment in a shift to virtual work. If a manager is only interacting with their employee to enforce corrective actions while simultaneously employees are experiencing a loss of connection—this further creates a divide between not only the manager and the employee but also the employee and the employee's commitment to the organization. It is harder to contribute to the employee's organizational commitment if the only thing you as a manager are doing is intervening to manage them when a mistake is made. On the opposing end and to my surprise, contingent rewards had a positive impact on the change in organizational commitment. This could be because rewards were something that help brighten employees' days and help bring the employees closer to the organization—therefore sustaining commitment. This finding regarding contingent rewards has also been seen in recent literature (O.S et al., 2013).

The most important takeaway in this all is that if a leader is not a transformational leader, we see the levels of their employees' organizational commitment decrease in a temporary shift from working on-site to working-from-home.

## 6.2.Theoretical Implications

As stated, no prior research has focused on any type of change in organizational commitment, nor has it focused on how transformational nor transactional leadership has affected the change in organizational commitment when there is a shift in any type of dynamics. With more relevance, no prior research has examined the effects of these leadership styles on employees' organizational commitment in terms of a sudden shift to working in-office to working-from-home.

My research has presented new-found information to fill this research gap. For employees who experienced the quick shift in working environment and also had transformational leaders, the transformational leaders were able to transform their employees' attitudes positively in a context of high-uncertainty and rapid change. These new research points contributes to a new finding within existing research that transformational leadership is a potential method to influencing employees in environments filled with high uncertainty. On the other hand, transactional leadership has no significant effect on influencing others in this context, therefore this suggests that the construct of transactional leadership and its structure revolving around order and transactional-based interactions is not effective in positively influencing employees in the context of high-uncertainty and change.

Overall, my research provides a theoretical contribution towards the impacts and effects of transformational and transactional leadership within a period of rapid change. It fills the existing research gap about how organizational commitment changed within this specific shift in dynamics and portrays that transformational leaders are able to transform employee attitudes and sustain organizational commitment during a period of high-stress.

## 6.3.Conclusion & Managerial Implications

Even if managers lean on the transactional leadership side, this does not mean that they cannot adapt and adopt transformational leadership practices. In a temporary shift to working-

from-home, managers need to self-reflect and understand the magnitude of the power they have on their employees. More specifically, it is important for managers to understand how, in an environment filled with uncertainty and fast change, their actions become more important and can have a direct impact on employee organizational commitment, which serves as an antecedent for dozens of other positive employee outcomes (Klein & Park, 2015).

As a foundational start to approaching high uncertainty and change, managers should begin to tune into transformational leadership practices. Managers can begin by focusing on how they inspire their employees while also incorporating the other aspects of transformational leadership that can for the most part be adapted through practice and intention. For example, managers can think about what types of messages/visions they want to communicate to their team, they can check in with their employees and make themselves available and willing to participate in vulnerable conversations to provide the aspect of individualized consideration. Managers should place a special focus on building and/or maintaining inspirational motivation and their own idealized influence. To build a rapport filled with inspirational motivation, managers should uphold a high level of encouragement, enthusiasm, and to consistently deliver a unifying, shared vision for both the employee's future as well as the organization's future. To continue to build their idealized influence, managers should remember the importance of building loyalty, remaining ethical in their everyday practices, and holding confidence within themselves and their employees.

This study also suggests that managers should begin and/or continue to think about how they can incentivize their employees during times of high-uncertainty. This will help utilize the contingent rewards finding from the study; it is vital that managers comprehend what types of rewards are most valuable to their employees. This valuable information will come through beyond-the-surface-level conversations with their subordinates. In fact, managers can practice/continue utilizing their newfound enthusiasm (or current enthusiasm based on the type of leader) to further develop their relationships with their subordinates to discover which rewards would most motivate and satisfy their employees.

Overall, managers hold great responsibilities in their hands as working-from-home gains massive popularity and it is crucial that they adopt transformational leadership practices if they would like to at least sustain their employees' organizational commitment.

#### 4. Future Research

As discussed within the literature review, though research revolving virtual work has skyrocketed since COVID-19, there has been little research on how the shift to working-from-home has affected organizational commitment and there has also been little research on how managers' leadership styles affect organizational commitment in this context as well. With that said, this study serves as a preliminary basis and a foundation for future researchers to better understand how transformational and transactional leadership styles affect employees' organizational commitment. Now that there is a preliminary basis of knowledge for this topic, researchers can now begin to research more in-depth information. Future research can utilize both surveys and in-depth interviews to also gain more insight into why respondents answered the way that they do. Additionally, researchers can choose to focus on specific industries and geographic locations to see if either of these factors receive display different results on the change in employee organizational commitment. Furthermore, researchers can also make this a two-sided study in which both employees and managers rate themselves to get a more holistic understanding of the manager's leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 1995) Lastly, throughout this study I briefly touched on how employees were reported to be feeling more fatigued during this transition, future research can use employee burnout as a mediator to see how this affects different scores.

#### 6.5 Limitations

It is worth noting that there were several limitations within this study that could have potential impacts on my results. Firstly, I did not use the most popular tool for measuring transformational leadership style (the MLQ) due to lack of financial resources and time constraints. Additionally, within measuring the change in organizational commitment, we asked participants to recall their organizational commitment prior to the shift to working-from-home.

Upward bias could play a major role in how these participants recall their organizational commitment during this time and therefore misconstrue what the organizational commitment at the time really was during the time before the pandemic. Also, to recall upon organizational commitment at a point and time is another difficulty because one could potentially think of their organizational commitment five years ago or their organizational commitment one month before the pandemic – there is no real way of determining what the participant was thinking about during this time leading to bias.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: The Survey

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#### Start of Block: Introduction

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. The purpose of this study will be to **gain a deeper understanding** into how the shift from the **physical workplace to virtual work has affected employees**.

Your data will remain completely anonymous and will be only utilized for academic purposes. It will not be shared with anyone and will remain **100% confidential!** Additionally, in one month, one participant who has finished the survey will be chosen to **win a \$100 VISA gift card** so if you'd like to be entered, make sure to enter your email at the end of the survey!

Q1 Please think about the PRE-PANDEMIC PERIOD (before March 2020) and state the extent to which you were working in the same physical space (e.g., in the same office space) with your current immediate manager.

- I was working 100% on-site in my usual place of business, outside my home (examples include an office, manufacturing site, store, hospital, or sites required by my business travel.) (1)
- I was working on-site in my usual place of business for the majority of the time (2)
- I was working equally on-site in my usual place of business and working from distance (3)
- I was working from a distance for the majority of time (4)
- I was working completely from a distance (5)

*Skip To: QID31 If WFH\_STATUS\_PRE\_COVID = I was working completely from a distance*



Q2 Please think about your **CURRENT SITUATION** and state the extent to which you are working in the same physical space (e.g., in the same office space) with your current immediate manager.

- I am working fully on-site in my usual place of business, outside my home (examples include an office, manufacturing site, store, hospital, or sites required by my business travel.) (1)
- I am working on-site in my usual place of business for the majority of the time (2)
- I am working equally on-site in my usual place of business and working from distance (3)
- I am working from a distance for the majority of time (4)
- I am working completely from a distance (5)

*Skip To: QID31 If WFH\_STATUS\_POST\_COVID = I am working fully on-site in my usual place of business, outside my home (examples include an office, manufacturing site, store, hospital, or sites required by my business travel.)*



Q3 Are you working at the same company that you were working at in March 2020 (pre-pandemic)?

- Yes. I have been working at the same company since March 2020 (1)
- No. I switched companies during/after March 2020 (2)

*Skip To: QID31 If SAME\_COMPANY = No. I switched companies during/after March 2020*

Q4 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
  - Female (2)
  - Non-binary / third gender (3)
  - Prefer not to say (4)
-

Q5 What is your age?

- 20-30 years old (1)
  - 31-40 years old (2)
  - 41-50 years old (3)
  - 51 and older (4)
- 

Q6 What is your level of education?

- High school (1)
  - Undergraduate / Bachelor's Degree (2)
  - Masters Degree (3)
  - PHd (4)
  - Other (5)
-

Q7 What is your organizational position level?

- Individual contributor (1)
- Managerial Level (2)

Q8 How many years have you been working with your immediate manager?

- Less than 1 year (1)
- 1-3 years (2)
- 3-5 years (3)
- More than 5 years (4)

Q9 How many years have you been working with your current organization?

- Less than 1 year (1)
- 1-3 Years (2)
- 3-5 Years (3)
- More than 5 years (4)

Q10 Please think about your immediate supervisor and judge how frequently each statement describes him/her.

	Not at all (0)	Once in a while (1)	Sometimes (2)	Fairly often (3)	Frequently, if not always (4)
My supervisor can understand my situation and gives me encouragement and assistance					
When I am unable to complete my work, my supervisor reprimands me					
My supervisor encourages me to take challenges					
My supervisor precisely records any of my mistakes					
My supervisor gives me what I want in exchange for my hard work					
My supervisor encourages us to make efforts towards fulfilling the company vision					
My supervisor encourages me to think about problems from a new perspective					
My supervisor tells me that I can get special rewards when I show good work performance					



My supervisor spends time to understand my needs

I believe I can complete my work under the leadership of my supervisor

My supervisor encourages me to rethink opinions that have never been doubted in the past

Now we'll be asking you to think back and reflect on you and the organization you work for **BEFORE the pandemic.**

Q11 Please think about yourself in your organization in the PRE-PANDEMIC PERIOD (before March 2020) and indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Moderately disagree (2)	Slightly disagree (3)	Neither disagree nor agree (4)	Slightly agree (5)	Moderately agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I was willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful (MOW_OC_POST1)							
I talked up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for (MOW_OC_POST2)							

I would have  
accepted almost any  
type of job  
assignment in order  
to keep working for  
this organization  
(MOW\_OC\_POST3)

I found that my  
values and the  
organization's values  
are very similar  
(MOW\_OC\_POST4)

I was proud to tell  
others that I am part  
of this organization  
(MOW\_OC\_POST5)

This organization  
really inspired the  
very best in me in the  
way of job  
performance  
(MOW\_OC\_POST6)

I was extremely glad  
that I chose this  
organization to work  
for over others I was  
considering at the  
time I joined  
(MOW\_OC\_POST7)

I really cared about  
the fate of this  
organization  
(MOW\_OC\_POST8)

I believed that for me  
this was the best of  
all possible  
organizations for  
which to work  
(MOW\_OC\_POST9)

Q12

Please think about yourself in your organization in the **PRE-PANDEMIC PERIOD (before March 2020)** and answer the questions below.

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Moderately (3)	Quite a bit (4)	Extremely (5)
How committed were you to your organization before the pandemic? (OC_PRE1)					
To what extent did you care about your organization before the pandemic? (OC_PRE2)					
How dedicated were you to your organization before the pandemic? (OC_PRE3)					
To what extent did you choose to be committed to your organization before the pandemic? (OC_PRE4)					

Q13

Please think about yourself in your organization in the **PRE-PANDEMIC PERIOD (before March 2020)** and answer the questions below.

	To a very little extent/Not at All (1)	To a Little Extent (2)	To a Moderate Extent (3)	To a Large Extent (4)	To a Very Large Extent (5)
At my work, I felt bursting with energy (WE_PRE_V1)					
At my job, I felt strong and vigorous (WE_PRE_V2)					
When I got up in the morning, I felt like going to work (WE_PRE_V3)					
I was enthusiastic about my job (WE_PRE_D1)					
My job inspired me (WE_PRE_D2)					
I was proud on the work that I did (WE_PRE_D3)					
I was immersed in my work (WE_PRE_A1)					
I got carried away when I was working (WE_PRE_A2)					
I felt happy when I was working intensely (WE_PRE_A3)					

I am willing to put in  
a great deal of effort  
beyond that normally  
expected in order to  
help this organization  
be successful  
(MOW\_OC\_POST1)

I talk up this  
organization to my  
friends as a great  
organization to work  
for  
(MOW\_OC\_POST2)

I would accept  
almost any type of  
job assignment in  
order to keep  
working for this  
organization  
(MOW\_OC\_POST3)

I find that my values  
and the organization's  
values are very  
similar  
(MOW\_OC\_POST4)

I am proud to tell  
others that I am part  
of this organization  
(MOW\_OC\_POST5)

This organization  
really inspires the  
very best in me in the  
way of job  
performance  
(MOW\_OC\_POST6)

I am extremely glad  
that I chose this  
organization to work  
for over others I was  
considering at the  
time I joined  
(MOW\_OC\_POST7)

I really care about the  
fate of this  
organization  
(MOW\_OC\_POST8)

For me this is the  
best of all possible  
organizations for  
which to work  
(MOW\_OC\_POST9)

You're almost there. Just a few more questions.

In this section, we'll be asking you to reflect on yourself and the organization you work for in the **CURRENTLY in the present moment**. Reflect whether your attitude has changed.

Q14 Please think about yourself in your organization **CURRENTLY** and indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Q15 Please think about yourself in your organization CURRENTLY and answer the following questions related with your organization

	Not at all (1)	Slightly (2)	Moderately (3)	Quite a bit (4)	Extremely (5)
How committed are you to your organization currently? (OC_POST1)					
To what extent do you care about your organization currently? (OC_POST2)					
How dedicated are you to your organization currently? (OC_POST3)					
To what extent have you chosen to be committed to your organization? (Q17_POST4)					

Q16 Please think about yourself in your organization currently and state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following.

	To a very little extent/Not at All (1)	To a Little Extent (2)	To a Moderate Extent (3)	To a Large Extent (4)	To a Very Large Extent (5)
At my work, I feel bursting with energy (WE_POST_V1)					
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (WE_POST_V2)					
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work (WE_POST_V3)					
I am enthusiastic about my job (WE_POST_D1)					
My job inspires me (WE_POST_D2)					
I am proud on the work that I do (WE_POST_D3)					
I am immersed in my work (WE_POST_A1)					
I get carried away when I'm working (WE_POST_A2)					
I feel happy when I am working intensely (WE_POST_A3)					



Congratulations! You've finished completing the survey. If you'd like to be entered in to win the \$100 VISA gift card, enter your email. Just a reminder that your email, personal information, and responses will be **COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL**. **Just make sure to press submit on the next page so that your answers get fully submitted.**

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*Display This Question:*

*If WFH\_STATUS\_PRE\_COVID = I was working completely from a distance*

*Or WFH\_STATUS\_POST\_COVID = I am working fully on-site in my usual place of business, outside my home (examples include an office, manufacturing site, store, hospital, or sites required by my business travel.)*

*Or SAME\_COMPANY = No. I switched companies during/after March 2020*

Unfortunately, you don't qualify for this survey because I am looking to specifically examine the effects of those that have moved from in-office to working-from-a-distance. But don't fret, you can still enter to win! If you know someone that transitioned from working in-office to working-from-a-distance after March 2020, here's how you can still enter to win \$100 VISA gift card.

1. Copy, paste, & forward this survey link ([https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5z0TVWUzeEpJmXY](https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5z0TVWUzeEpJmXY)) to the colleague that transitioned in March, 2020 from working in-office to working virtually
2. Tell your colleague to finish the survey and enter both of your emails at the end
3. You both will be entered to win the \$100 VISA gift card

*Skip To: End of Survey If DISPLAY\_NOT\_INCLUDED Is Displayed*

Thank You! The fact that you are reading this message indicates that you have completed my survey and that I owe you a debt of thanks.

I appreciate the time that you have taken to assist me in my analysis. With your help and insight, I will now be able to conduct research on how a temporary shift in the workplace environment affects employees.

If you submitted your email to enter into the \$100 VISA gift card raffle, I will be sending an email to all respondents on May 5th (after data collection has finished), to announce the winner. Once again, I am extremely grateful for your contribution, your valuable time, and your honest information.

Thank you so much,  
Annamarie Galante

If you found this survey through Survey Circle, here is your one-click code to collect survey points: Redeem Survey Code with one click: <https://www.surveycircle.com/VRZ5-8RKP-HVSF-36K4>