

UNDERSTANDING ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN CONTEXT OF WORK FROM HOME VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP DURING COVID-19 - PANDEMIC IN INDIA

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Abstract *The COVID-19 induced lockdown had forced the organisations to adopt work from home (WFH), putting virtual leadership to test. The article aims to explore the employee's ability to learn and adapt to a new work environment at home through organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment influenced by virtual leadership. Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) was used using the Likert scale (5 points) with virtual leadership contribution, and employee commitment as variables in conducting virtual duties. The findings revealed that the transformational leadership in the virtual work environment pattern shows that employee's willingness, individually and in teams, require reward to influence behaviour. OCB was found to be task-based as active and passive leadership management coupled with charismatic leadership was found to influence change in employee behaviour, overcome challenges, and show allegiance to leadership inputs during virtual work processes and methods. The results indicated that commitment from employees is conditional in the work from home (WFH) context, while the role of leadership abilities to influence OCB is dependent on culture, willingness and readiness. It is backed by leadership coaching and training for easier employee transition towards a work environment that is an individual and team level commitment output shaped by forces of psychosocial needs.*

Keywords: *Organisational Commitment, Organisational Citizenship Behavior, Work from Home, Virtual Leadership*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the confinement of humans in their homes, which has also affected the workers across sectors. While organisations are trying to cope with the uncertainty of business future due to COVID-19, the focus on HRM (human resources management) to guide the workforce in the businesses using strategies to cope with the disruptions of lockdown has become the central theme for managing public health impacting industry sectors (Jernigan et al., 2020). The WFH (work from home) has emerged as an option for those selected industries and management function, which are able to use IT (information technology), and process IS (information systems) adopting to meet the transitional operations need of the organisations (Vahdat, 2021). The current business context stresses the diverse nature and divides the workforce into two segments: WFH

(work from home) and essential staff to attend mission-critical operations in utilities, army, media, and nuclear power sector. The lockdown restricting the social movement of the people by governments repeatedly in 2020–2021 has forced organisations to rethink their employee staffing strategy which is an HRM challenge, in the current circumstances of COVID-19 (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020). This is increasingly leading to a structural and behavioural adjustment in work processes at operations perspective, to accommodate and adopt the new IT-based work methods, IT-based communication to support the economic activity in organisations. The prevalence of WFH has been a mainstay for international organisations during COVID-19 as the uncertainty of business (Caligiuri et al., 2020), the sector and government response towards the pandemic has led to increased usage in internet-based communication, internet-based communication, task allocation and service output

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emphasizing the role of HRM to aid operations even more (Ismail, 2021). The employees in WFH accomplish tasks and face internet-based online monitoring with HR policy-based control of employees engaged in work processes.

The acceptance of the WFH model has led to change in the employer–employee relationship as the modalities of work hours, communication pattern, control and monitoring are guided by new HR policies (Affandi et al., 2020). Anaza (2015) argued that increasingly the employers and employees are now using IT new tools to align the digital distance is creating an impact on both employees and employers in international projects, headquarters to branch offices or site communication context (Zhong et al., 2021). While HRM policies are being changed to meet the imminent needs of the corporate operations to support the WFH based demands and to survive economically, Kaushik and Guleria (2020) argued that the employees switching from office environment to home environment has been significantly challenged. This transition has internet connectivity issues, device inadequacy issues, and additional software-learning requirements to communicate at ‘one to one’, ‘one to many’, ‘many to many’ that has stressed the staff learning curve (Farooq & Sultana, 2021). These are structural, technical and process-based challenges, which also faced a bigger barrier of behavioural and psychological challenges for employees in pre-, during and post-COVID-19 pandemic phases (Green et al., 2020). The WFH circumstances of work routine, work-extended hours, and to match the office level work productivity achieved is witnessing a gap. Employees are exposed to the new set of HR policies for controlling the new work environment productivity and output, while there is a pressure of IT tools learning requirement (Awada et al., 2021), IS readability and comprehension that has been equated with the education sector facing similar dichotomies (Wessels et al., 2019).

The use of ‘social exchange theory’ to design a construct as to how the employees in a different work setting can extend the psychological contract amidst the constraints of digitalization of process are pertinent. In this digital era, the role of psychological contract has wider implications for people, technology, and HRM bringing in multi-level contextual issues for employer-employee relationship during COVID-19 (Abelsen et al., 2021). The challenges and barriers to digitalization of employer-employee online communication in the work process existed before (Hilbrecht et al., 2013) but have evolved and intensified with team collaborations (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Past research by Kelliher and Anderson (2010) showed that flexibility impacts the intensification of work in non-virtual work methods as well. There is a wider range of tools available for work processes while the gaps in the expectations of the employment relationship are definitely facing adjustment issues during prolonged lockdown due to WFH directives but the absence of office-based social interaction, lack of

work boundary, poor ergonomics, zero physical activity, poor work-life balance has affected productivity and output (Ford et al., 2021; Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). The criticality of the Organisational Commitment and Organisational citizenship behaviour from management and employee perspective is heightened now, as frequent changes in HR policies in digital work arrangement require the companies to redefine the relationship. This issue is pertinent for the IT sector in the Indian context, where situational factors due to COVID-19 require a deeper probe in guiding a future direction towards the above issue.

The rationale of the study upholds the reciprocal exchange of both management (employers) and the task contributors (employees) and addresses deeper issues of job security, retention and staffing, organisational identification amidst the COVID-19 pandemic along with citizenship behaviour and employee commitment towards performance. The research is important now in 2021, as the organisations need to explore HR policies during this change period of COVID-19, as new work practices in the WFH environment against new HR policies are bound to be imposed. The Organisational Commitment and Organisational citizenship behaviour are therefore the key elements that testify the employee attitude against the management HR response towards the changing HR policies during COVID-19, which needs to be tested in this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisational Commitment

Geldenhuis et al. (2014) defined Organisational Commitment as the individual’s intention to choose objects in the environment to find purpose in life. Achmad (2017) stated that the Organisational culture plays a bigger role as it acts antecedent, it defines the norms, power dimensions, roles, achievement and support of the employer towards the employee. The Organisational Commitment, however, focuses specifically on select employee behaviours as an individual or in groups, as it is often referred as their identity socially. Marescaux et al. (2013) argued that commitment is an outward attitude, as it exposes the employee’s cognitive and affective components in the work environment. Sahi et al. (2014) argued that attitude is either employee behaviour is positive or negative, while Burris et al. (2008) link committed employees to exhibit behaviours such as identification, attachment or loyalty towards the organisation. Yang (2012) argued the motivational component is important for task achievement. Myer et al. (2001) stated Organisational Commitment as the process dimension, which involves the work experiences, role states, and psychological contract needs a deeper introspection, while Morrison (2008) stated that negative work relationships and

organisation culture impact OCB, job satisfaction, cohesion and intension to turnover. The uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic in the work environment with social distancing during lockdown has affected the adjustment behaviour of quick change. Additionally, Chanana (2021) showed how organisational work culture in the home environment has been a disruptor, therefore transferring OCB to a home setting in telecommuting platform, requires to be explored in the employee engagement dimension. The commitment dimension fits those employees, who are able to adapt values directly in work output, and imbibe human resource practices that represent flexibility in its policies to transfer office norms indirectly towards homework environment culture (Spurk & Straub, 2020). The above discussion shows the wide variety of evidence in a different industry context, with a model in place that is under pressure from new variables in the WFH work practices in the business environment, and work processes in employer–employee context.

The issue is important from the current research perspective, as the digital divide of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the workforce environment with new forms of work processes, policies and norms that are impacting the perception of employees. There is a need for a new level of Organisational Commitment review from employee's perspective which shows their willingness to be online, and use digital tools working remotely in WFH environment. It is an important issue, as existing employees' acceptance of new HR norms and policies post COVID-19 is a normative commitment being tested to a level (Waizenegger et al., 2020). It is a cost factor for the organisation when the employee Commitment becomes zero with their leaving, which eliminates the first dimension of employee affective Commitment of positive feelings of Organisational identification along with the second dimension of continuance Commitment. Given the state of affairs, employee practices like downsizing, and layoffs is related to unwritten loyalty contract, irrespective of new WFH suits the employees and impacts their current Commitment levels differently. While it is the core element for organisations to be competitive for revenue generation, the issue of virtual leadership to manage and control employee virtual behaviour is emerging as a need, there are deeper issues of Commitment in a virtual environment that require introspection. The virtual model of work environment however presents many challenges for the leadership, which is why the OCB (organisational citizen behaviour) is explored.

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Emami et al. (2012) cited that the Organ definition of Organisation Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) in the work-related behaviours of employees, at all stages of the organisational hierarchy contributing to the effective functioning of operations. The author identified OCB

dimensions- courtesy, helping and conscientiousness and was updated with new dimensions (civic virtue, altruism, and sportsmanship). The work later on added organisational citizenship behaviour towards individual (OCBI) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour towards organisation (OCBO). The former refers to those sets of employee behaviours which are related to individual contributions towards organisational effectiveness. The second dimension of OCBO is related to individual actions towards the aggregate citizenship meeting the internationalization of rules, norms. The theories show at the elemental level it leads to a personality trait, but the externalisation of the internal behaviour to exchange social communication with peers, subordinates, supervisors (Chiaburu et al., 2013). Thus, Xerri and Brunetto (2013) acknowledged that OCB is related to the employees, their behaviour and the intent of behaviour is directed towards the 'person-organisation fit' (Khaola & Sebotsa, 2015), their individual and/or team effort and receive job satisfaction, Organisational Commitment. Examples from Google show that employees are adhering to formal and informal rules, as a part of organisational compliance, the mechanism creates a positive impact on service quality, operations outcomes, and leadership (Dekas et al., 2013).

Kataria et al. (2012) research findings showed that even though the OCB literature focuses on individual and the group level, organisational level phenomenon, relates to 'resource allocation theory'. Nielsen et al. (2012) referred to Hackman's analysis stating that the resource allocation is the need for balancing the needs, and priorities in determining the effective course of action. The implications of this theory have two dimensions – firstly, the basic allocation decision, secondly it is a contingency mechanism. Further, research shows cognitive resource allocation in the social relationship networks as the time invested, and frequency of interaction leads to establish the emotional strength of employer-employee relationship (Khaola & Coldwell, 2017). Citing Katz (1985), who stated that employee behaviours are key to organisational success and need to be in employment, Vigoda (2000) argued that it has a positive linkage to in-role performance, job congruence when employee perform roles and improving performance functions in the organisation (Purnama, 2013). There is, however, a fundamental difference between OCB and role behaviour, as the former is voluntary while the latter is formally required. Therefore, employee behaviours that support the change or transition exhibits the spontaneity and creativity, and supports the learning behaviour to aid the organisational cause (Turnipseed & VandeWaa, 2020). OCB needs integration to promote efficiency (Acquaah, 2004) and offers higher effectiveness, it uses altruism in the effort while at the same time it needs to adhere to obedience with norms and rules of the organisation. Chiang and Hsieh (2012) additionally stated that the categories of OCB – is mostly

either (i) intentional, (ii) voluntary, (iii) primarily benefits the organisation (not the employee), and (iv) positively valued by the employee and organisation. The outcomes of the above discussion therefore focus this research towards the staff performance defined through OCB in virtual work from home environment.

The technologies are used not only to bridge distances in corporate network relationships, but it extends the socio-centric perspective, towards socio-technical perspective involving a higher number of stakeholders. The groups, departments across the organisational hierarchy interact with the task perspective – extending the personal social networks, and official communities using their time and effort. Turnipseed and VandeWaa (2020) argued that using the psychological construct and resource allocation model – as attention, capacity, processing resources, and cognitive effort is an indication of employee's goals, disposition, priorities, and evaluation of task demands. The task demands in the physical or digital operations requires a moment to moment availability, while in a complex work environment of dual-task condition, the primary and secondary task judgement needs to follow protocols (instructions on methods) or harnessing of knowledge based on experience (tacit knowledge instead of explicit knowledge). The question of managerial reciprocity and fairness in aligning the HR norms, and HR policies in WFH practices during 2020-2021 needs a greater probe as managers in the employment perspective of any staff perceive this as Commitment. The academic literature has also indicated how OCB is linked to the performance relationship of employer–employees.

VIRTUAL WORK ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

The context of the research is the Virtual work environment (VWE) that supports the WFH practice for the employees. The offices that are spread across geographical locations in which the asynchronous communication is taking place on the digital platform suffer from the face to face (a rich form of communication) against the virtual team communication (Cascio, 2000; Raghuram et al., 2001; Mihhailova, 2009; Verburg et al., 2013; Eisenberg & Krishnan, 2018). COVID-19 has led to the growing volume of teams across organisations, which have transformed themselves by embracing technology enabled communication systems for individuals as well as teams. According to Mihhailova et al. (2011), this is a structural fault as IT and team management norms are there to manage a VWE. Further, Moser and Axtell (2013) stated that conflict management or sharing/collaboration is not able to clarify the purpose, and build trust in leaders within online teams (Guinaliú & Jordán, 2016)

impacting the work goals in a virtual team management setting.

Virtual Leadership

The power of e-leadership in the virtual environment is challenged as the range of behaviours in the virtual environment is not able to manifest in the employer–employee relationship (DasGupta, 2011). The remote virtual interactions of the team members or the departments require to show the performance in the virtual environment (Harris et al., 2013). Even though the teams are trying to improve their performance by showing citizenship behaviour through new HR norms and online commitment, as the challenge is to impact the employees even if they work from home. The traditional research shows that leaders are successful only when they are taking the right decisions, offering strategic direction and reassurances to employees (Alfehaid & Mohamed, 2019). In terms of project management of teams, over the locations, there is a distribution of digitalization of work processes, where the effectiveness of leadership is dependent on how the leadership collectively overcomes the challenge.

In the digital environment, the leadership needs to show digital mastery (Roy, 2012), using listening more in the virtual environment (Kerfoot, 2010). Pullan (2016) stated that the virtual leadership is a mix of behavioural skills applied in the IT platform skills. Caulat (2012) added that leaders in a virtual environment need to recognize that there is a need for support as traditional office and virtuality challenges are different. Byrd (2019) argued that all employees may not support or endorse working from home, even though it has been an HR-based directive, the role of leadership is to not only endorse but to actively support in garnering acceptance. Mehtab et al. (2017) argued that each employee also needs to do virtual work to meet company ethos, meeting online etiquettes. It is evident that the technology and social components for the employees as individual or team members are transformed into a different psychological plane altogether.

The attempt to keep technology simple is what leadership requires, but of the IT products 'off the shelf', 'IT customised versions' have features that require the employees to learn. This depends on the leadership technology selection decision – richness and scope. The mix of hardware and software optimized for a communication system and the process streamlined, in testing the virtual environment rests on the leadership structural analysis of communication. Leaders also need to set clear communication standards at the formal team level, the meeting level but the role of IT in generating IS for HR-based outcomes in operations cannot be ignored (Melián-González & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2017). Equally

important is informal communication pre- and post-virtual meetings, should be able to consider the Organisational access to the virtual rooms that establishes trust and intimacy between the leadership and employees. The virtual environment offers online anonymity as features in the technology allow employees to switch off visual mode, or not be a member of the virtual session at all. This is why the HR directive online codes of new work routines for virtual offices (Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014). McCann and Kohntopp (2019) state that virtual leadership is a multi-tasking ability that is enabling the employees to contribute to the aggregate workforce productivity. The findings show that leadership need employees to show higher communication skills, ability to motivate, and functional level of competence creating engagement (Bast, 2019). The combination of IT in virtual communication also needs to blend higher frequency of communication frequency, to compensate for the lack of richness of the face-to-face version that has affected the training functions (Mahmood et al., 2018). This helps to build stronger personal relationships to build an effective virtual team and boost Commitment through team performance and reduce turnover intention (Santhanam et al., 2017). It implies that the effectiveness of the team is dependent on the skill and use of tools leading to the impact. Byrd (2019) argued that using the 'Path goal leadership' in the steep learning and development framework, is useful for the geographically dispersed workforce skill-building process. The author acknowledged that the leadership in virtuality needs to be an online relationship builder, communication designer, which uses the technology in order to manage the task environment of the group communication consistent, flexible and fluid (Stranzl et al., 2021). Leadership also has to keep a track of social elements of communication, and track the work processes with a nurturing angle.

Critical Discussion

Leaders are shown to be a predictor of OCB as they are engaged in transactional, transformational, path-goal theory of leadership, or leader-member exchange theory. It is evident, in all the cases, the employees needing to reach a goal require them to learn new skills to be a part of group and continuously upgrade their competencies (Marneros et al., 2020). This is a rewarding behaviour that tests the degree to which the employee is willing to show OCB. In a learning environment, activities like altruism, sportsmanship, and conscientiousness, are related to the leadership behaviour that uses feedback and extrinsic motivation to result in a positive output in OCT scores. While Organisational effectiveness is an ideal state that HR, operations managers desire, in the virtual environment, the leadership ability to

enforce norms for exhibiting OCB is a research gap during COVID-19.

Conceptual Framework

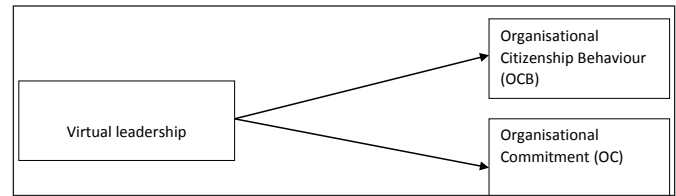


Fig. 1

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method uses a survey methodology by distributing an online survey questionnaire to over 400 employees who are working from home across different industry sectors in India. The measuring instrument used is organisational commitment scale (OCS) and only relevant questions are selected that are applicable in this research study. There are 16 items in the OCS, which use citizens to understand the individual behaviour. The research instrument survey questions added additional questions in the virtual leadership contribution to impact the employee commitment at the organisational level. The use of the five-point Likert scale that ranges between 5 as Strongly agree and 1 as strongly disagree. The Cronbach α for OCQ subscales is satisfactory as the α coefficients (0.93 value Commitment) and (0.70 Commitment to stay) with the current context of WFH during COVID-19 is considered. The 'Value Commitment' in OCS scale – 'I am willing to put extra effort than what is normally expected in this order (job) in the organisation' and secondly the commitment to stay in WFH VWE under virtual leadership is tested – 'I am prepared to accept any kind of extra virtual duties in job to remain and continue work in this organisation.' The adjustments to the OCS questionnaire therefore included virtual leadership elements to evaluate the employee's perception. The variables in virtual leadership are – transformational leadership, transactional leadership, organisational citizen behaviour in the VWE, organisational commitment in the VWE and organisational commitment.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The aim is to assess the degree of virtual leadership impacts the employee OCB (organisational citizenship behaviour) in the VWE context leading to virtual commitment as the outcomes. The standard deviation and means from the employee scores for the variables are represented in the Table 1.

Table 1

	M	SD	N
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>			
Charismatic Leadership	0.379	0.59	400
Individualised consideration	3.98	0.55	400
Stimulation Virtual Env adaptation	3.53	0.69	400
<i>Transactional Leadership</i>			
Reward	3.31	0.67	400
Active management	3.55	0.68	400
Passive management	2.10	0.88	400
<i>OCB (Organisational Citizenship Behaviour)</i>			
General OCB	4.1	0.39	400
<i>Commitment to Work in the VWE</i>			
Value commitment	3.99	0.51	400
Commitment to stay	3.69	0.69	400

The responses show that the VWE involves considerable leadership transformational role, with the mid-point of 3.0 in the middle of scale, passive management by leaders virtually

scored less against the others. The results highlighted that employee need individualised consideration as they get initiated in the VWE, while leaders also need to guide them by constantly stimulating virtual environment adaptation, all of which are rated high. The employees showed positive efforts in the new work environment initiation process as their OCB (4.10) against their commitment where the value commitment at (3.99) higher than commitment to stay and continue in the VWE. It implies that leadership intervention has helped employees working in virtual environment to be associated to the task, and show a willingness to shift from traditional (face to face) to VWE during COVID-19. It is evident that the employees have tried to behave as 'good employee showing conformance behaviour' against the HR protocols and norms during COVID-19. While the commitment to stay and work in new environment (3.69) is less than value commitment, it refers to the employee adjustment and accommodation to new IT communication tools, and adapt to the digitalization of work processes.

The Pearson correlation analysis in Table 2 explores the relationship between the variables.

Table 2

	CL	IC	IS	CR	AM	PM	VC	CS	OCB
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>									
Charismatic leadership	–								
Individualised consideration	0.79	–							
Stimulation virtual env adaptation	0.68	0.55	–						
<i>Transactional Leadership</i>									
Reward	0.39	0.42	0.39	–					
Active management	0.51	0.42	0.37	0.45	–				
Passive management	0.31	0.22	0.09	0.21	0.03	–			
<i>Commitment to Work in VWE</i>									
Value Commitment	0.67	0.49	0.37	0.29	0.33	0.21	0.26		–
Commitment to stay	0.49	0.26	0.08	0.016	0.17	0.45	0.47	0.38	
<i>OCB (Organisational Citizenship Behaviour)</i>									
General OCB	0.55	0.43	0.37	0.25	0.31	0.23	0.54	0.31	0.33

The results above depict correlations to be positively correlated with transformational leadership factors on the employee reward and passive management is an exception. It is also interesting that the transactional leadership in the

VWE is weak in other areas, except active management against the reward. The results show that employees are willing to conform to the VWE acceptance only when there is the reward of online team inclusion that fosters scalability and self-esteem in the VWE.

Table 3

Virtual Leadership Style Factor	Value Commitment			Commitment to Work in VWE		
	df	ß	R²	df	ß	R²
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>						
Charismatic leadership	1	0.61	0.13	1	0.21	0.01
Individualised consideration	1	-0.03	0.01	1	0.5	0
Stimulation virtual environment adaptation	1	-0.03	0	1	-0.04	0

Virtual Leadership Style Factor	Value Commitment			Commitment to Work in VWE		
	df	β	R^2	df	β	R^2
Transformational leadership total	3			3		0.03
<i>Transactional Leadership</i>						
Reward	1	0.8		1	-0.19	0.02
Active management	1	0.5		1	0.12	0.01
Passive management	1	0.5		1	-0.17	0.01
Transactional leadership total	3			3		0.019
Total	6	0.38		6		0.029
*p < 0.05	400			400		

The intercorrelations are statistically significant, which is expressed as the degree of relatedness among the employee adjusting in transformational leadership behaviour in the VWE. Next, we conducted a regression analysis to understand the typology of leadership in the VWE on employee organisational commitment, OCB successively. The above regression output analysis shows that the transformational leadership style factor at (39%) and transactional leadership style at (29%). Within these leadership styles, the employee individual consideration varied significantly depict that in a virtual environment leadership adopting charisma is using creativity to influence employees to work in the VWE. Again, the reward and passive management are negative. The value of Commitment for the employees in virtual learning environment show that they are more affected by the changes due to COVID-19 in work process, from traditional to Virtual work environment (VWE) while the commitment to work in VWE is negative in transactional leadership. In OCB, there is significant variance between transformational leadership as well.

CONCLUSION

The impact of transformational, transactional leadership behaviour in the VWE on employee commitment behaviour showed that indirectly, transformational leadership impacts more than that transactional leadership. The commitment of the employees in the VWE needs a combination: firstly, the transformational leadership during transition. Secondly, the results show that the transformational leadership and transactional leadership vary in terms of influencing employee in accepting WFH (work from home) having strong to moderate influence in VWE acceptance and adoption. Although the transactional leadership in the virtual leadership context, it has a low impact on two elements 'Value Commitment', on 'OCB', but has strong relation on 'employee commitment to stay in the VWE'. Incidentally, within the transformational leadership styles in the VWE, charismatic leadership has helped employees in coaching and counselling for joining the WFH virtual working method. The employees, it is evident sought support during

the transition from the traditional to the VWE, seeks consideration to overcome challenges, respect for abiding HR norms, appreciation and reward for complying to new work rules that required to meet the operations service KPIs (key performance indicators). Charismatic leadership is only a part as it has stirred employee intellectual stimulation, as employees were suffering from role ambiguity, whether to work in traditional or VWE where new IT tools for communication is important. The leadership deliverables include explaining the reality of virtuality, offering seamless communication to upskill and learn, and help in learning.

IT communication tools have been proved to be more dependable during this transition in the work environment. In the transactional environment of leadership and with regard to virtual leadership, there are two elements, active management and passive management of the workforce in the VWE where the latter is found to be weak, while active management scores significantly better. It implies that for the VWE process to be initiated, the virtual leadership behaviour has been instrumental in overcoming the perception of WFH (work from home) needed initial phase of intellectual stimulation, as the employees perceived change in work processes and procedures to create stress during change. Leaving the old traditional method of working and shifting towards digitalization of work process, needed leadership support and a dependable one, where active management worked. This element has shown moderate influence on the employee commitment to accept the transition to the VWE to stay. The reward as a factor has been driving employees to accept a new method of the work process as passive management of leadership like Laissez-Faire leadership style of behaviours fail. The leadership directives for each stage of transition have been followed apart from HR norms and policies bringing in performance effectiveness and garnering entire employee support for leadership guiding through. The results depict that employee organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour taking slow learners of IT communication a prerequisite to qualify for the reward. The criticality of types of leadership behaviour in the VWE also has a transactional leadership dimension, as it has helped to set expectations, new online

responsibilities, and the online team joining as a reward or recognition. Indian workplaces have thus shown the above trends, as meeting transition phases encounter the challenges to be overcome, that has virtual leadership playing a fundamental role with individualized consideration as each individual response to the change process is different. While the reward is transactional leadership impact, the presence of attending each employee by case in the virtual environment, shows mediating effects of leadership guidance to play a key role in ushering OCB in employees. The results also show that circumstances of sudden lockdown imposed by political governance at a national level, which has influenced a change in societal behaviour to accept it. It implies self-efficacy and adaptability in learning IT communications tool for achieving task-oriented output in an online service-based OCB confirming the research output of Kao (2017) in the COVID-19 pandemic context. For the organisation, it is imperative to show allegiance to exhibit collective behaviour that has set the activities rolling in learning IT communication tools for employees to reorient towards the VWE. According to research conducted by Jung and Yoon (2015), abiding national lockdown during COVID-19 at the institutional level had leadership roles in the virtual context to support change stages for employees meeting their structural needs (IT, telecommunication and hardware), as well as psychological needs in order to let them enter a new social order of virtual workforce within the organisation.

The current study adds knowledge as to how Indian leaders (in the role of supervisors, assistant managers, team leads, and project leads) have played a mediating role in developing a systems approach to change, generate employee Commitment at individual and team level and at the same time exhibit Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. The results have confirmed that commitment from employees in the VWE during the change process, requires virtual leadership behaviour but more so, in terms of employees willing to adhere to new online work methods and stay with the organisation. The findings, however, stress on training materials for IT-based VWE to be successful needs training, understand pace of change, and understand employee readiness, challenges towards easier transition towards the VWE.

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