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Transformational Leadership and Psychological Safety: The Mediating Role of Active Empathetic Listening, Behavioral Integrity and Trust in Leader

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the direct and indirect effect of transformational leadership on psychological safety. Literature shows that active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity of a leader and trust in a leader are significant positive outcomes of transformational leadership, Moreover, these concepts are important constructs for building a psychologically safe environment. However, no previous study has empirically investigated these constructs together in creating psychological safety in health sector and in a developing country. Therefore, this research is conducted in health sector of Peshawar district, KP, Pakistan. The hypotheses were tested with a sample of 200 respondents (including head nurses, and nurses) belonging to different hospitals (i.e. two public hospitals and two private hospitals). The research used multiple sources of evidence and avoided common source biasness. This research found that transformational leadership relates significantly with a leader's behavioral integrity and active empathetic listening. Moreover, transformational leaders create trust in follower directly as well as indirectly through active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity (partial mediation). It is also found that transformational leadership influences psychologically safe environment through active empathetic listening and trust in a leader (i.e. full mediation). However, behavioral integrity does not act as a mediator between transformational leadership and psychological safety, and influences psychological safety through trust in leader (i.e. full mediation). In order to generalize these findings, researchers should conduct future research on this topic in large number of industrial and organizational contexts. Moreover, contemporary managers should be encouraged to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors and enhance psychological safety, leading to healthier workplace and organizational success.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership, Psychological Safety, Active Empathetic Listening, Behavioral Integrity, and Trust in Leader.*

Introduction

Transformational leadership is well-known leadership style that has attained the focus of practitioners and researchers because of its effectiveness and variety of positive follower outcomes (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). The conceptualization of transformational leadership shows that these leaders show consistency in their words and actions (i.e. behavioral integrity) as well as show empathy and actively listen to their followers (i.e. active empathetic listening). The concepts of behavioral integrity and active empathetic listening hold significance in their concerned disciplines i.e. ethics and communication respectively. Moreover, these two are the most important attributes of an effective leader. Listening is considered as a key management competency and strongly relates with leadership perception (Brownell, 1990, Kluger and Zaidel, 2013), and integrity is key expectation of subordinates from their supervisor or leader (Baccili, 2001). Specifically active empathetic listening has grabbed attention from different fields such as management, marketing, psychology and so on, displaying positive outcomes (such as trust of speak, high quality relationship, satisfaction with listener and so on). Therefore, effectively listening subordinates may appear to be a relatively routine experience for a supervisor, yet it is a significant element of workplace communication (van Vuuren et al., 2007). However, most of the leading leadership theories do not discuss listening, or assign it a central role in leadership, although it is a critical leadership skill (Kluger and Zaidel, 2013). On the other hand, in organizational research and practice leader's integrity is gaining attention as it results in organizational growth and effectiveness (Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence, 2012). As leader's integrity provides positive outcomes at work (Craig and Gustafson 1998, Davis and Rothstein 2006, Palanski and Yammarino 2009) and prevents ethical failures (Sims and Brinkman, 2003). Moreover, It is shown by the literature that behavioral integrity is "a new and promising area for research" (Simons, Tomlinson, and Leroy, 2011, p. 338), with little research to support the notion that an obvious characteristic of an effective leader is integrity (Moorman, Darnold, and Priesemuth, 2013). One of the common positive outcomes of transformational leadership, active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity of leader is trust in leader. The central aspect in a relationship of transformational leader with subordinates is trust, demonstrated by management and organizational literature (Butler et al., 1999, Gillespie and Mann, 2000, Podsakoff et al., 1990, Simon, 1999). Moreover, Palanski and Yammarino (2011) noted that trust is a key antecedent for many desirable outcomes (such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), more willingness to accept change, lower turnover intentions, better performance, higher satisfaction and greater organizational commitment). Therefore, trust is regarded as an important topic in organizational research (Palanski and Yammarino, 2009). Another related and important concept that is led by these variables is psychological safety, an environment where employees are comfortable being themselves (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety is created when leaders exhibit positive behaviors, show consistency between words and deeds, listen to the followers with empathy and consequently followers trust their leaders. The focus of this study is on these concepts following positive psychology movement and positive organizational behavior (POB). Positive psychology movement and organization behavior emphasize positive leadership style and positive outcomes in order to flourish organizations through positively oriented strengths and positive psychological capacities (Layard, 2006, Roberts, 2006).

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Transformational Leadership

Leadership greatly influences organizational success (Judge and Piccolo, 2004), whereas contemporary researchers emphasize on transformational leadership style (Bass, 1990, Judge and Piccolo, 2004, Liu et al., 2010, Lowe and Gardner, 2001, Nielsen, Randall, et al., 2008, Kelloway et al., 2012) that is considered as a positive and high quality leadership style (Judge and Piccolo, 2004, Liu et al., 2010). It is shown by the literature that researchers agree that transformational leadership results in a variety of positive outcomes pertaining to organization (Bass, 1990, Judge and Piccolo, 2004, Liu et al., 2010). Judge and Piccolo (2004) who examined different leadership styles called it robust leadership. Initially, Burns (1978) introduced the

theory of transformational leadership, which was then extended by influential conceptualization proposed by Bass (1985, 1998, 1999).

According to Bass (1985, 1998, 1999), transformational leadership exhibits four behaviors i.e. individualized consideration, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Individualized consideration is exhibited when leaders provide support to the followers, pay personal attention to their development, consider their needs and abilities, show empathy, and listen to them attentively. Idealized Influence is exhibited when leaders behave charismatically, act as a role models, transcend their self-interest for the betterment of the group, shows moral commitment to their followers and gains followers' trust, respect and identification. Intellectual stimulation is exhibited when leaders motivate innovation among the followers and motivate them to challenge the status quo and take decisions themselves. While, Inspirational motivation is exhibited when leaders originate and articulate a meaningful vision, and motivate their followers to attain beyound what they originally thought attainable.

Relationship of transformational leadership with active empathic listening, behavioral integrity and trust in leader

Transformational leaders exhibit active empathetic listening by empathizing with the followers and by listening to them attentively (i.e. individualized consideration)(Sharifirad, 2013) (see section 2.2). Initially Comer and Drollinger (1999) proposed the term active empathetic listening from the perspective of sales (i.e. in buyerseller relationship), however this concept does not confines to sales setting. While discussing active empathetic listening, Comer and Drollinger (1999) emphasized that empathy makes an effective listener. Whereas, Sharifirad (2013) states that empathy is embedded in the behavior of a transformational leader, making a transformational leader an active empathetic listener. Moreover, actively listening and empathizing with their followers makes transformational leaders effective leaders as asserted by Rynders (1999). Cooper, Seibold and Suchner (1997) emphasized that listening skill is desired in organizational contexts and Kluger and Zaidel (2013) emphasized that listening is strongly related to leadership. However, little research is done to address workplace listening, whereas listening is a vital management skill that positively affects followers' mental health, reduces followers' stress and produces desirable outcomes (Kubota et al., 2004, Mineyama et al., 2007). While analyzing empathetic listening Arnett and Nakagawa (1983) asserted that in interpersoanl literature the concept of empathetic listening has become a powerful force. Similarly Sharifirad (2013) debated that active empathic listening is relevant in all interpersonal relationships, specifically between leaders and followers where leaders should practice active empathetic listening with their followers. Kluger and Zaidel (2013) found that relationship-oriented leaders practice empathic listening, whereas Sharifirad (2013) found that a significant relationship exists between transformational leadership and skill of active empathetic listening.

Hypothesis 1a: Transformational leadership is positively related to active empathetic listening.

Another important aspect of transformational leadership is behavioral integrity (see section 2.3) (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Palanski and Yammarino, 2009, Simons, 1999). After proposing the conceptualization of transformational leader, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) then clarified that strong ethical core values and integrity (i.e. expressing their moral character in words and behaviors) is possessed by transformational leaders. Moreover, the issue of ethics and morality of transformational leadership was investigated by Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002) who found that transformational leadership positively relates with the perceived integrity of a leader (i.e. perceptions of followers about the ethical behavior of leader), yet they did not investigate whether transformational leadership relates with behavioral integrity. Simons (1999) suggests it is more fruitful to investigate behavioral integrity (i.e. consistency aspect of integrity) rather than statements of integrity. Although, there is scarcity of evidence that transformational leadership relates with behavioral integrity, a study found that high behavioral integrity is possessed by transformational leaders within a hotel-management firm (Tracey and Hinkin, 1994). However, the authors did not clarify

the sampling technique and the sample size used which raise the question of accuracy and robustness of results (Coughlan, Cronin and Ryan, 2007).

Hypothesis 1b: Transformational leadership is positively related to behavioral integrity of leader.

It is shown by the literature that transformational leadership influence followers mainly by developing followers' trust (Pillai et al., 1999, Yukl, 1999) (see section 2.4 for trust in leader), where numerous studies (such as Podsakoff et al. (1990), Connell et al. (2003), Casimir et al. (2006) and Liu et al. (2010)) found a link of transformational leadership with trust. Followers' trust in the leader is developed by transformational leadership behaviors such as idealized influence (where leader act as a role model etc.) and individualized care (caring about individual follower etc.) etc (Pillai et al.,1999, Jung and Avolio, 2000) that correspond with antecedents of trust such as integrity, consideration, care and so on (Liu et al., 2010). Moreover, in a meta-analysis Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found that among several antecedents, trust in leader is strongly predicted by transformational leadership.

Hypothesis 1c: Transformational leadership is positively related to trust in the leader.

A transformational leader's behavior significantly enhances the followers' sense of psychological safety (Nemanich and Vera, 2009, Sharifirad, 2013) (see section 2.5). this is because employees feel psychologically safe i.e. free of fear when they are supported and encouraged by transformational leaders (Shamir et al., 1993, Sharifirad, 2013). Moreover, psychological safety is created by personal attention, advice, care and guidance that transformational leaders give to their followers (Nemanich and Vera, 2009, Shin and Zhou, 2003). However, the empirical evidence is scarce with respect to the relationship of transformational leadership with psychological safety (i.e. Nemanich and Vera (2009) in a field study of acquisition integration with 71 work teams, and Shahrifirad (2013) with sample of management students found positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological safety).

Hypothesis 1d: Transformational leadership is positively related to perceived psychological safety.

Active Empathetic Listening

It is shown by the literature that successful communication and healthy working relationships are developed as a result of effective listening, whereas this is backed by growing evidence (Aggarwal et al., 2005, Comer and Drollinger, 1999, Ramsey and Sohi, 1997). However, Bodie et al. (2008) found that there are as many definitions of listening as there are researchers studying it. Moreover, scholars from different disciplines such as management, psychology, anthropology, communication, and linguistics have contributed to the concept of listening, yet Bodie et al. (2008) did not mention marketing scholars' contribution who investigated active empathetic listening (i.e. effective listening). Furthermore, Sharifirad (2013) state that within the workplace several efforts are made to give definition of listening, and to attach different words to listening in order to provide a more practical and precise meaning. Alessandra, Wexler and Barrera (1992) proposed that there is a hierarchy of listening consisting of marginal listening, evaluative listening, and active listening. Each of them is explained by Comer and Drollinger (1999) as follow: in marginal listening words are heard but the listener is easily distracted, the listener lacks attention to speaker and do not receive all the material, and is unlikely to respond appropriately. In evaluative listening, the listener concentrates on what is being said i.e. focuses on the literal meaning but does not pay attention to non-verbal communication or communication through more subtle verbal cues, and is likely to misinterpret the intended message. And, in active listening, the listener receives, processes and responds (non-verbally and verbally) to non-verbal as well as verbal messages to motivate speaker to continue. Although, active listening is a higher level than marginal and evaluative listening, yet active listening is criticized for its mechanistic nature and failure to project a genuine level of concern (Brownell, 1990, Covey, 1989, Tracy, 1993). That is, authors did not include this genuine level of concern in higher level listening (such as Alessandra, Wexler and Barrera (1992), Hunt and Cussela (1983), and Lewis and

Reinsch (1988)). However, Arnett and Nakagawa (1983), Comer and Drollinger (1999), Newstrom (2011) and Stewart (1983) contend that effective listening and communication requires learning about emotions and feelings of the speaker and showing care to the speaker while responding. This was supported by Steil et al. (1983) and Brownell (1990), who debated that empathy is important in listening. Consequently, Comer and Drollinger (1999) proposed active empathetic listening, the fourth and highest level of listening, which combines empathy with active listening. Active empathetic listening is defined as "a process whereby the listener receives verbal and non-verbal messages, processes them cognitively, responds to them verbally and non-verbally, and attempts to assess their underlying meaning intuitively by putting themselves in the speaker's place throughout" (Comer and Drollinger, 1999, p.18). Thus, active empathetic listening helps to understand deeper issues and probe real problem (Comer and Drollinger, 1999).

Fenniman (2010) and Gearhart and Bodie (2011) state that there is consensus in the literature that sensing, evaluating and responding are the three components of multidimensional process of listening (such as Jones, 2011, Ramsey and Sohi 1997, Steil et al., 1983). Comer and Drollinger (1999) adapted these three dimensions to introduce these as dimensions of active empathetic listening (sensing, processing or evaluating, and responding) with empathy incorporated in each. The description of each proposed by Comer and Drollinger (1999) is as follow: sensing incorporates hearing words, receiving implied non-verbal messages and detecting tone, mood and feelings of the speaker. Processing or evaluating incorporates understanding and interpreting the message of a speaker in terms of literal meaning and feelings created by non-verbal and verbal messages of speaker. While, responding incorporates sending back signals (verbally or non-verbally) to a speaker to show message is being heard. This also indicates speaker that he or she can continue and that listener has actively and empathetically listened to the message.

Relationship of active empathetic listening with trust in leader and perceived psychological safety

Literature debates that there is a direct relationship between trust and quality of listening in both management (Brownell, 1990) and personal selling (Ramsey and Sohi, 1997) contexts. In a manufacturing setting, Stine et al. (1995) found that supervisory listening enhanced perceptions of subordinate relating to trust, intrinsic motivation and support.

Moreover, Brownell (1994) debates that listening is a key management competency. However, Bodie (2011) state little is known about operationalization of actual listening. Fenniman (2010) noted that the theoretical lens of empathetic listening established by Rogers (1961) was aligned with the Active Empathetic Listening Scale and its sub-scales developed by Drollinger et al. (2006). Also, Fenniman (2010) and Bodie and Jones (2012) used the scale of active empathetic listening scale made by Drollinger et al. (2006), where Bodie and Jones (2012) used the scale to measure an aspect of supportive listening. Moreover, Drollinger et al. (2006) recommended future research to use the active empathetic listening scale in different contexts. Comer and Drollinger (1999) assert that active empathetic listening (i.e. a high quality listening) develops trust in buyer-seller relationship. Drollinger et al. (2006) then created and validated the questionnaire of active empathetic listening and found that trust positively correlates with scale of active empathetic listening. In 2012, Drollinger and Comer found that practitioners of active empathic listening develop trust through empathy (i.e. better understanding and meeting the needs of speaker), and by showing care and consideration towards the speaker. These finding are significant as literature related to the field of psychology demonstrates that trust and empathy are related with each other and they collectively build healthy relationships (Goleman, 1994).

Hypothesis 2a: Active empathetic listening by leader is positively related to trust in leader.

Supervisor's supportive behaviors contribute to psychological safety experienced by subordinates at work (Edmondson, 2004, Tynan, 2005). Rogers (2012) noted that one of the most important ways of creating psychological safety is exhibiting empathy to understand others.and Listening is an underlying supervisory

competence and supervisors who listen and pay attention to their followers' needs create psychological safety (Abraham, 2004, Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006). Fenniman (2010) found that there is a relationship between supervisors' perceived empathetic listening and psychological safety (in terms of particular supervisor-subordinate relationship). Yet, data collection was carried in a small professional services organization, giving rise to issue of generalizability of results of the study. In 2013, Sharifirad found that a leader's active empathetic listening will lead to the followers' perception of psychologically safe environment. According to Fenniman (2010), active empathetic listening possess a similar theoretical background to that of psychological safety.

Hypothesis 2b: Active empathetic listening by the leader is positively related to the perception of psychological safety.

It is shown by the literature that transformational leadership positively relates with active empathetic listening and active empathetic listening positively relates with trust in leader and perceived psychological safety. In accordance with the approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), these relationship imply that in this case the mediating variable is active empathetic listening. Moreover, Sharifirad (2013) found that active emphathetic listening acts as a mediating variable in a a relationship between transformational leadership and follower outcomes (such as well-being and innovative work behavior) .
Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 3a: Active empathetic listening by a leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and trust in leader.

Hypothesis 3b: Active empathetic listening by leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and perceived psychological safety.

Behavioral Integrity

Thirty articles' review by Palanski and Yammarino (2007) demonstrated that in management literature integrity has different meanings such as authenticity, wholeness, consistency in adversity, morality or ethics, word/action consistency. Integrity can be measured by perceived leader integrity and behavioral integrity. Perceived leader integrity is measured by a questionnaire made by Craig and Gustafson (1998) (in terms of absence or presence of leader's unethical behavior, yet not necessarily the occurrence of exemplary ethical behavior). Whereas, behavioral integrity is measured using a scale developed by Simons (1999) (in terms of leader's word deed consistency). Prottas (2008) states that perceived behavioral integrity captures perceptions of employee related to their managers' ethical behavior. While, behavioral integrity is mainly regarded as consistency of an actor's words and actions (Simons, 1999). Moreover, Palanski and Yammarino (2009) added the word 'acting entity' instead of the word 'actor' to this definition of behavioral integrity. From the discussion so far we gather that behavioral integrity is conceptualized at different levels of analysis i.e. individual level (Simons, 1999) as well as at group and organization level (Palanski and Yammarino, 2009).

Despite the numerous overlapping definitions of integrity, behavioral integrity is viewed as adjunctive virtue (i.e. virtue which is not morally good or bad in itself, but is necessary for achieving moral uprightness) that should be considered (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007, 2009). Moreover, while discussing integrity in general, other researchers such as Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), Paine (2005), Tracey and Hinkin (1994), and Worden (2003) also discussed behavioral integrity as a significant concept of integrity. A study by Martin et al. (2013) compared the meaning of leader integrity in Ireland, U.S., Germany, Austria, China and Hong Kong and found that behavioral integrity emerged as an essential characteristic of leader integrity. Moreover, behavioral integrity is noted to contribute to general integrity judgments and is a subjectively ascribed trait or a perceiver construct (Simons, 1999).

Simons (2002) proposes a robust conceptualization of behavioral integrity, consisting of two theoretical components i.e. the perceiver's assessment of a referent's word–deed alignment (fit between espoused and enacted values) and promise-keeping. Whereas, a leader's conduct is a significant influence on the perceptions of followers, which influence followers actions and reactions (Moorman et al., 2013). Perceived behavioral integrity is the extent to which a supervisor or leader engages in behaviors that corresponds with their management styles, priorities and statements pertaining to values, expectations, and (Simons, 1999, 2002). While the incongruence between values and acts is perceived as a behavioral integrity breach for the leader (Kannan-Narasimhan, 2012).

According to Simons (2002), this incongruence may be due to the supervisor's need to satisfy diverse constituencies, the supervisor's uncertainty or confusion related to values and policies of the company, and the supervisor's own personality characteristics.

Previous studies have investigated behavioral integrity with resultant outcomes, such as organizational profitability (Simons and McLean-Parks, 2000), emergence of leader in leaderless work groups (Palanski and Carroll, 2006), organizational citizenship behaviors (Dineen et al., 2006), reduction of intention to commit unethical acts by the followers (Peterson, 2004), and follower satisfaction with leader and trust in leader (Palanski and Yammarino, 2011).

Relationship of behavioral integrity of leader with trust in leader and perceived psychological safety

In many organizational studies, trust in leader is regarded as a central desirable characteristic that creates positive perceptions about work environment. In a well-known conceptualization of trust proposed by Mayer et al. (1995) integrity is one of the three factors (whereas other factors are ability and benevolence) that contribute to trust.

Moreover, according to Rotter (1967, p. 650), trust is "an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon". This definition of trust comes closest to behavioral integrity (i.e. words and deeds consistency). Whitener et al. (1998) proposed manager's behavioral integrity influence employees' perceptions of managerial trustworthiness.

It is shown by the literature both theoretically and empirically that behavioral integrity is a key antecedent to trust (Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence, 2012, Moorman et al., 2013). Simons (1999, 2002, 2008) debated that behavioral integrity of a leader is a constituent part of trust in the leader, signaling that a leader is trustworthy. Moreover, leader's behavioral integrity influences the followers through trust. Whereas followers may view their leader's poor consistency of words and actions as a cue that the leader mistrust's them and responds by reciprocation i.e. by mistrusting. Specifically, characterbased trust also known as cognition-based trust (see section 2.4) in a leader results from behavioral integrity of the leader (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002, Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence, 2012,).

It was found by Simons et al. (2007) that behavioral integrity strongly predicted trust and is especially important for building trust in diverse workforces, providing initial empirical evidence on this relationship. However, Simons et al. (2007) measured trust as willingness to be vulnerable and did not measure relationship and character-based trust proposed by Dirks and Ferrin (2002). Palanski and Yammarino (2009) proposed relationship of individual, group and organization behavioral integrity with trust in individual, group and organization, respectively. Later, findings of three studies (online experiment, field study and longitudinal lab study) conducted by Palanski, and Yammarino (2011) indicated that the influence of behavioral integrity of a leader is exerted on job performance of the follower through trust in a leader. Strong support is provided by Palanski, and Yammarino (2011) for the relationship of behavioral integrity with trust that holds across situations and people such as professionals in workplace settings, participants in temporary, task-oriented groups and adults with work experience. Moreover, Kannan-

Narasimhan and Lawrence (2012) also found the relationship of behavioral integrity of senior management and immediate supervisor with the trust of follower in senior management and immediate supervisor, respectively. However, the study was carried in a small Indian organization, resulting in small sample size which limits generalizability of the results (Coughlan et al.,2007). In a sample of university students and working professionals Moorman et al. (2013) found that behavioral integrity explains unique and significant variance in trust as well as in direct integrity. However, Moorman et al. (2013) did not clarify the selection of different samples, sample sizes and sampling technique, which raise question of integrity of this research (Coughlan et al., 2007).

Hypothesis 4a: Behavioral integrity of a leader is positively related to trust in that leader.

Edmondson (1999) and Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) found that leaders influence psychological safety. Unfortunately, Edmondson (1999) did not specify leader behaviors precisely, whereas Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) found that leader specific behavior, leader inclusiveness (defined as words and deeds by a leader that invite and appreciate others' contribution) promote psychological safety. According to Edmondson (2004a), if leaders value something and express it through words and actions, their followers will perceive psychological safety with respect to what is being valued. Palanski and Vogelgesang (2011) explain this point in detail and state that psychological safety is present when standards for actions or leader's values are well defined and unambiguous.

While, psychological safety is absent when there is uncertainty about a leader's values or about the boundary between unacceptable and acceptable activities. Leader behavioral integrity minimizes ambiguity through consistent, transparent and understandable behaviors and consequently creates psychological safety. While, low behavioral integrity of a leader creates ambiguity through exhibition of inconsistent behaviors and consequently lowers followers sense of psychological safety. Even, leader behavioral integrity with respect to questionable values is more desirable for followers and less psychologically damaging than a leader's low behavioral integrity. Accordingly, in an experimental study by Palanski and Vogelgesang (2011) it was found that behavioral integrity of leader facilitates followers' sense of psychological safety. Moreover, Leroy et al. (2012a) conducted a survey of 54 nursing teams and found that a leader's (head nurse) behavioral integrity for patient safety positively relates with team priority of patient safety as well as with psychological safety. Behavioral integrity for safety means that a leader practices what he or she preaches with respect to patient safety, which indicates that leader's concern for patient safety is genuine and trustworthy (resulting in psychological safety) (Edmondson, 2004, Simons, 2008). Although Leroy et al.'s (2012a) study considered behavioral integrity with respect to safety, they linked it with followers' sense of psychologically safe environment in general, which means followers sense of self expression without fear of negative consequences.

Hypothesis 4b. Behavioral integrity of a leader is positively related to perceived psychological safety

If transformational leadership positively relates with behavioral integrity of a leader, and behavioral integrity of a leader positively relates with trust in leader and perceived psychological safety, and based on evidence (see Leroy, Palanski, Simons, 2012b) that behavioral integrity acts as mediator between leadership and follower outcomes (such as commitment and performance), following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 5a: Behavioral integrity of a leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and trust in leader.

Hypothesis 5b: Behavioral integrity of a leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and perceived psychological safety.

Trust

Mayer et al. (1995) defined trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (p. 712). However, measures of trust developed by Mayer et al. (1995) demonstrated low reliability. Later, Mayer and Gavin (2005) validated a revised version of trust based on this definition. Accordingly, Liu et al. (2010) described trust in a leader as the willingness of sub-ordinates to be vulnerable to their leaders. According to Mayer and Gavin (2005), an employee can be vulnerable to a manager via both active behaviors (such as sharing potentially damaging information) and passive behaviors (lack of engaging in self-protective behaviors, which employesengages in when trust is absent).

Theoretically and empirically, it is found by previous studies (such as Colquitt et al. (2007), Davis et al. (2000), Dietz and Hartog (2006) and Mayer et al. (1995)) that trustees' attributes are trust antecedents. It is shown by the literature that the important attributes of trustees (also known as components of trustworthiness) includes ability (i.e. knowledge and skills in the domain of interest of trustor), benevolence (i.e. kindness, care and genuine concern for trustor) and integrity (i.e. adherence to a set of principles that are acceptable to trustor, including fair treatment and honesty, and avoiding hypocrisy). These attributes were initially proposed by Mayer et al. (1995) and widely considered to indicate trust in literature. However, Cunningham and McGregor (2000), Dietz and Hartog (2006) and Mishra (1996) considered predictability (i.e. consistency and regularity of behavior) as another attribute of trustworthiness. Whereas, Mayer et al. (1995) state that trust goes beyond predictability, as a person who consistently ignores needs of others and act selfishly cannot be trusted.

In an assessment of intra-organizational trust (i.e. trust between supervisor and subordinate or between coworkers), Dietz and Hartog (2006) debate that trust contain three components i.e. trust as a belief, as a decision or as an action. Trust as a belief is an assessment of another party's trustworthiness and is not the same as trusting the other party. Trust as a decision is a willingness to render oneself vulnerable to another party and implies an intent to act. While, trust as an action is to demonstrate trust in other party, engage in any trust-informed risk taking behaviors such as reliance related behaviors (e.g. giving away control over valued resources or decisions etc.) or disclosure (e.g. sharing potentially damaging or incriminating information). These constituent parts comply with three parts of trust proposed by McEvily et al. (2003, p. 93), i.e. trust as "an expectation, a willingness to be vulnerable and a risk-taking act", respectively. Dietz and Hartog (2006) placed these constituent parts in an integrated framework for demonstrating intraorganizational trust as a process by using open systems model (i.e. input-process-output model). In the model, input includestrustor's predisposition to trust, trustee's characteristics, quality of relationship with trustee, situational constraints or domainspecific concerns), and process includes trust as a belief and trust as a decision. Moreover, output includes trust as an action, leading to risk-taking behaviors and voluntary extra-role behaviors. According to Dietz and Hartog (2006), trust as an action will strongly predict actual trust.

Lewis and Weigert (1985) were the first to propose a muti-dimensionality of trust, i.e. distinct cognitive, emotional or affective and behavioral dimensions. The authors debate that trust is a social reality and a combination of cognition as well as affection. Moreover, two important types of trust can be distinguised based on dominance of either cognitive element (leading to cognitive trust) or emotional element (leading to emotional or affect based trust) (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Trust based on cognition is grounded in reliability and dependability of a trustee, whereas trust based on affect is embedded in reciprocated interpersonal concern and care (McAllister, 1995). However, trust based on affect is developed from some level of trust based on cognition, for relationships at work (McAllister, 1995). The behavioral dimension of trust is displays of actions that imply trust. When we see that others' actions indicate that they consider us trustworthy, we are more likely to respond by putting more trust in them. Moreover, the behavioral dimension of trust is reciprocally related to cognition and affect based trust. That is "trusting behavior may

be motivated primarily by a strong positive affect for the object of trust (emotional trust) or by good rational reasons why the object of trust merits trust (cognitive trust), or, more usually, some combination of both" (Lewis and Weigert, 1985, p. 972). In literature, cognition based trust is also known as character-based perspective and affect-based trust is also known as relationship-based perspective of trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). In character-based trust, trustee's character is viewed in terms of integrity, dependability, fairness, and ability (corresponding with trustee's characteristics proposed by Mayer et al. (1995)). For instance, in a hierarchical relationship the focus is on the character of the leader that affects the sense of vulnerability of the follower. In a trust based on relationship, focus is on nature of relationship between trustee and trustor and trust results from social exchange process, where leaders' consideration and care obligates the sub-ordinates to be vulnerable to their leaders (Brower et al., 2000, Dirks and Ferrin, 2002).

Williams (2001, p. 379) states that the "degree to which one trusts another varies along a continuum of intensity". In-line with this, Dietz and Hartog (2006, p.563) assert that the degree of intensity of trust increases in the following order: "deterrence-based trust, calculus based trust, knowledge-based trust, relational-based trust and identificationbased trust". Where deterrence-based trust demonstrates the lowest degree of trust and identification-based trust demonstrates the highest degree of trust. Also, these terms are utilized to represent different kinds of trust (Dietz and Hartog, 2006, Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). In deterrence-based trust, "there is no positive expectation of goodwill and only through the threat of external sanctions and force is the expectation of compliance guaranteed, there is effectively no risk and no probabilities to consider" (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 399). In calculus-based trust, trust is only regarded as a worthy approach based on a stringent cost-benefit analysis, yet a deep a-priori doubt on the trustee is still there. In knowledge-based trust, there are positive expectations about a trustee based on confident knowledge about his or her abilities, motives and reliability (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). In relational-based trust, trust is based on quality of relationship and shared affection with the trustee instead of his or her specific behaviors (Rousseau et al., 1998). In identification-based trust, trustor and trustee assume a common identity and they can represent each other's interests with their full confidence (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). Dietz and Hartog (2006) call calculus-based trust as low trust, knowledge-based trust as real or confident trust, relationship-based trust as high or strong trust and identification-based trust as complete trust. Relationship-based and identification-based trust also corresponds with Tyler (2003) term of "social" trust. Rousseau et al. (1998), Williams (2001) and Dietz and Hartog (2006) consider that the cognition-based trust covers trust based on calculus as well as on knowledge, whereas the affect-based trust covers trust based on relationship as well as identification.

Relationship among trust in leader and perceived psychological safety

Edmondson (1999, 2004) proposed that trust and psychological safety are conceptually related and trust is an antecedent of psychological safety. Adding to this, Wang et al. (2010) posit that trust is a necessary condition for taking interpersonal risks, which represents a psychologically safe environment. Moreover, according to Kessel, Kratzer and Schultz (2012) psychological safety involves trust and represents a climate in which interpersonal trust and protection prevails. Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton (2009) show that high-quality interpersonal relationships (consisting of emotional carrying capacity, tensility, connectivity, mutuality, and positive regard) contribute to psychological safety.

Hypothesis 6: Trust in a leader is positively related to perceived psychological safety.

If transformational leadership positively relates with trust in a leader, and trust in a leader positively relates with perceived psychological safety, and based on evidence (see Pillai et al., 1999, Podsakoff et al., 1990) that trust is a significant mediator in relationship of transformational leadership with followers' outcomes, the following hypothesis is proposed.

Hypothesis 7: Trust in a leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and perceived psychological safety.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is regarded as a set of perceptions that reflect a cognitive appraisal of a work environment (James et al., 1988). Edmondson and Nembhard (Edmondson 1999, 2004, Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006) developed this concept and described it as a shared belief that interpersonal risk can be taken in the work environment without any fear. According to Edmondson (1999, 2003) individuals consider their decisions prior to taking interpersonal risks (like seeking information, asking questions etc.) i.e. what will be the response of others at workplace to the risky action taken by individuals (Cannon and Edmondson 2001, Edmondson, 2004). Therefore, psychological safety incorporates a "sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career", (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). In a psychologically safe environment (i.e. non-threatening climate), employees feel comfortable about seeking feedback or help, learning, providing provocative ideas and taking risks, rather than worrying about being punished for speaking up, experiencing defensiveness and learning anxiety (Chen, 2013)). Psychological safety leads to numerous positive outcomes in workplace, such as job involvement and effort leading to productivity (Brown and Leigh, 1996), employee engagement (Kahn, 1990 and May et al., 2004), employee's admittance of errors and seeking help (Tynan, 2005), raising employee voice (Detert and Burris, 2007), learning from failures (Carmeli, 2007, Carmeli and Gittell, 2009), individual employee creativity and vitality (Kark and Carmeli, 2009), employee well-being (Sharifirad, 2013), team learning behavior (Carmeli, 2007, Edmondson, 1999), team creative performance (Kessel et al., 2012), and firm performance (Baer and Frese, 2003).

Methodology and Methods

The research methodology used in the present study is a survey strategy as the study intended to collect data that establish relationships between variables and produce models of these relationship, for which survey strategy is suitable (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2011).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Table 1 shows the link of the research questions with the hypotheses proposed in this study.

Table 1: The link of Research Questions with the Hypotheses

Primary Research Question: How is transformational leadership related to psychological safety?	
Research Sub-questions Sub-question 1) What is the relationship of transformational leadership with active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity, trust, and psychological safety?	Hypotheses H1a: Transformational leadership is positively related to active empathetic listening. H1b: Transformational leadership is positively related to behavioral integrity of leader. H1c: Transformational leadership is positively related to trust in the leader. H1d: Transformational leadership is positively related to perceived psychological safety.
Sub-question 2) What is the relationship of active empathetic listening with trust and perceived psychological safety?	H2a: Active empathetic listening by leader is positively related to trust in leader. H2b: Active empathetic listening by leader is positively related to perceived psychological safety.

Sub-question 3) What is the role of active empathetic listening in relationship of transformational leadership with trust and perceived psychological safety?	H3a: Active empathetic listening by leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and trust in leader. H3b: Active empathetic listening by leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and perceived psychological safety.
Sub-question 4) What is the relationship of behavioral integrity with trust and perceived psychological safety?	H4a: Behavioral integrity of leader is positively related to trust in leader. H4b. Behavioral integrity of leader is positively related to perceived psychological safety.
Sub-question 5) What is the role of behavioral integrity in relationship of transformational leadership with trust and perceived psychological safety?	H5a: Behavioral integrity of a leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and trust in leader. H5b: Behavioral integrity of a leader is a mediator between transformational leadership and perceived psychological safety.
Sub-question 6) What is the relationship of trust with perceived psychological safety?	H6: Trust in leader is positively related to perceived psychological safety.
Sub-question 7) What is the role of trust in relationship of transformational leadership with perceived psychological safety?	H7: Trust in a leader is a mediator between Transformational leadership and perceived psychological safety.

Context of the study

This study is conducted in health sector Peshawar district, KP, Pakistan as according to Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) psychological safety might be lacking in health care sector due to different status groups. However, Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) state that collaboration among staff is required in the health sector more than in other sectors because of increasing knowledge, specialization, and interdependence in health care sector. While health staff define collaboration as "working together, sharing responsibility for solving problems, and making decisions to formulate and carry out plans for patient care'' (Baggs et al., 1999, p. 1991). Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) further state that how a leader behaves influences how his[sic] staff acts and influence this collaboration. Therefore, this study investigated the phenomenon, i.e. the influence of transformational leader on psychological safety through active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity and trust.

Moreover, the articles reviewed illustrate that there is no or little empirical evidence in health sector with respect to variables of interest. That is, active empathetic listening is investigated in sales setting and with a sample of college students, one study investigated behavioral integrity in health sector, other studies are conducted in both private and public sector organizations, and hotel-management firm. In addition, trust is investigated with corporate employees from various industries in the public and private sectors. All these studies were carried out in developed countries while no article was accessible on such research in developing country, Pakistan. Also, no previous study has empirically investigated these variables together in creating psychological safety.

The population of the study constitutes head nurses (leaders) and nurses (followers) of four large hospitals of Peshawar district, KP, Pakistan (i.e. two public sector hospitals and two private hospitals). The respondents of the present study are head nurses and nurses as influence of head nurses' transformational leadership on their active empathetic listening and their behavioral integrity, and on trust of followers and psychological safety was investigated. Multiple sources of data, i.e. data obtained from both leaders and followers, were collected in order to avoid common source biasness, which was a major limitation in previous studies.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

In the present study the probability sampling is used as it is used commonly with the survey strategy (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2011). Moreover within probability sampling, stratified sampling is utilized in present study as population has strata and sampling frame is divided into strata (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2011), i.e. public and private hospitals (two public and two private hospitals were taken in present study).

The total number of nurses and head nurses in each hospital was obtained from the HR department and Matron Office, which is as follow: Private hospital1: 268 nurses and 17 head nurses, Private hospital2: 210 nurses and 17 head nurses, Public hospital1: 350 nurses and 31 head nurses, and Public hospital2: 238 nurses and 16 head nurses. Therefore total population size including nurses and head nurses is N= 1,147, the number of nurses in total population size is = 1066 (82% of total population), whereas the number of head nurses in total population size is = 81 (18% of population). The sample size is calculated at 95% confidence level and 5% error margin, with the help of the formula proposed by W. G. Cochron. The formula is as follow:

$$n = \frac{N\,(Z\alpha/2)^2\,\sigma^2}{(N-1)\varepsilon^2 + (Z\alpha/2)^2\,\sigma^2}$$

(N is total sample size, $(Z\alpha/2)^2$ is standard normal, σ^2 is variance of dependent variable, and ε^2 is error term.)

N =1,147, $(Z\alpha/2)$=1.96, σ^2=0.334, ε= 0.05.

Sample Size obtained, n = 354.

To find sample size for each hospital, following stratified proportionate sampling formula was utilized in the present study. Stratified proportionate sample size formula:

$$n_h = \left(N_h/N\right) \times n$$

(n_h is the sample size for stratum h, N_h is the population size for stratum h, N is total population size, and n is total sample size). Thus, sample size for each hospital is as follow: Private hospital1: $\left(285/1147\right) \times 354$ = 88, Public hospital 2: $\left(254/1147\right) \times 354$ = 78, Private hospital2: $\left(227/1147\right) \times 354$ = 70 and Public hospital1: $\left(381/1147\right) \times 354 = 118$

However, the response rate was 60% of total sample size (i.e. 211 respondents).

In the present study, transformational leadership is independent variable and psychological safety is dependent variable. Other variables, active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity and trust act as mediators.

Validity and Reliability

In present study, the issues of validity and reliability were addressed, see table 2.

Table 2: Tactics used for ensuring external validity and reliability

Tests	Tactics used for ensuring the test
External Validity	Statistical generalization was ensured by using stratified proportionate sampling within probability sampling.
Reliability	Reliability of the questionnaire has been checked by applying the test of Cronbach's Alpha.

Initially pilot testing was done with sample of 30 respondents from different hospitals. As in the article, "tips for developing and testing questionnaires/instruments" Radhakrishna (2007) used a pilot sample size of 20-30 respondents. Moreover, different authors have suggested a small pilot sample size, such as 10 participants (Nieswiadomy, 2008) or 10% of main sample (Lackey and Wingate, 1998). The questionnaire used in the present study required approximately 8-10 minutes to complete.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires as head nurses and nurses do not find time in their duty hours to coordinate with the researcher. Therefore, questionnaires were given to them and they were asked to return it according to their convenience. In order to determine linear relationship between variables, i.e. direct relationships, Pearson Correlation has been used as recommended by Mathieu and Taylor (2006), who state that presence of direct relationships satisfy preconditon for mediation. Further, to test mediations structural equation modelling has been used in the present study. As according to Schreiber et al. (2006) structural equation modelling is best technique for testing mediations.

Measures

Transformational Leadership

The most widely measure of transformational leadership is the one developed by Bass and Avolio (1992) multi-factor leadership questionnaire. As this study only investigated transformational leadership therefore 12 items that related to it were included in selfadministered questionnaire. Sample questions are: "Leader make sub-ordinates feel good to be around him/her", and "Leader help sub-ordinates to find importance in their work". These questions were modified according to respondent, i.e. for sub-ordinate rating questionnaire, it was "My leader makes me feel good to be around him/her" and for supervisor rating questionnaire, it was "I make sub-ordinates feel good to be around me". All the items are measured on five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Not at all"), 2 ("Once"), 3 ("Sometimes"), 4 ("Often") and 5 ("Frequently"). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .93.

Active Empathetic Listening

Drollinger et al. (2006) provide the well-developed and validated scale of active empathetic listening. Although this scale was developed for use in sales setting, yet its validity was checked in another setting, i.e. with college students by Bodie (2011). Also, Sharifirad (2013) used this scale in context of organizaiton

(i.e. leader and follower relationship). The scale consist of 11 items. Sample questions are: "Leader is sensitive to what sub-ordinates are not saying", and "Leader assure sub-ordinates that he/she is receptive to their ideas". These questions were modified according to respondent, as Bodie (2011) confirmed that this scale can be used as self-report or by others to report other individuals. All the items are measured on five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree"), 2 ("Disagree"), 3 ("Neither Agree Nor Disagree"), 4 ("Agree") and 5 ("Strongly Agree"). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .95.

Behavioral Integrity

Behavioral integrity is widely measured by scale developed by Simons et al. (2007). The scale consist of 8 items, such as "There is a match between (leader's) words and actions", and " (Leader) delivers on promises". These questions were modified according to respondent, as mentioned above. All the items are measured on five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree"), 2 ("Disagree"), 3 ("Neither Agree Nor Disagree"), 4 ("Agree") and 5 ("Strongly Agree"). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .94.

Psychological Safety

Edmondson (1999) developed a questionnaire for psychological safety, which is widely used by researcher since then. The questionnaire consist of five items with two negatively worded items. Sample questions are: "Members of this (organization) are able to bring up problems and tough issues", and "People in this (organization) sometimes reject others for being different". These questions were modified according to respondent, as mentioned above. All the items are measured on five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree"), 2 ("Disagree"), 3 ("Neither Agree Nor Disagree"), 4 ("Agree") and 5 ("Strongly Agree"). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .82.

Trust

Dirks and Ferrin (2002) provided a comprehensive measure of trust, including items for measuring affective trust, cognitive trust, willingness to be vulnerable, and overall trust. The measure consisted of 8 items, with two negatively worded item, such as: "Subordinates feel confident that leader will always try to treat them fairly", and "Leader is not always honest and truthful". These questions were modified according to respondent, as mentioned above. All the items are measured on five-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree"), 2 ("Disagree"), 3 ("Neither Agree Nor Disagree"), 4 ("Agree") and 5 ("Strongly Agree"). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .87.

Quantitative Analysis

Demographics

The demographic profile of the respondents is as follow. The majority of the respondents were females (89%), the designation of majority of the respondents was 'nurse' (76%) and age group of majority of respondent was '31-40' (43%). The qualification of most of the respondents was 'diploma' (39.5%), the number of years with the present hospital of the majority of respondents was 'more than 2 years' (50.5%) and pay range of majority of respondents was '21,000-30,000' (33%).

Preliminary Analyses

Table 3 illustrates the Pearson correlations among variables. Hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c and H1d were supported by empirical evidence as transformational leadership positively related with active empathetic listening by a leader ($r=.551$, $p<.01$), behavioral integrity of the leader ($r=.530$, $p<.01$), trust in the leader ($r=.541$, $p<.01$) and psychological safety ($r=.428$, $p<.01$). Positive relationship of active empathetic listening by a leader with trust in the leader ($r=.507$, $p<.01$) and psychological safety ($r=.388$, $p<.01$),

supporting hypotheses H2a and H2b. Empirical evidence also supported the relationship of behavioral integrity of a leader with trust in the leader (r=.585, p<.01) and psychological safety (r=.291, p<.01), providing support for hypotheses 4a and 4b, respectively. Also, hypothesis H6 was supported by the data, that is trust in a leader is positively related with perceived psychological safety (r=.429, p<0.01). As these direct relationships were highly significant, it satisfies the condition for mediational analysis (as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986)) indicating that it is likely to find significant paths between these variables in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Mathieu and Taylor, 2006).

Table 3: Intercorrelations for All the Study Variables

		nsformational Integrity	Behavioral Safety	Psychological	Leadership	Active Empathetic Listening	Trust
Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1		.530**	.428**	.551**	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.000	.000	.000
Behavioral Integrity	Pearson Correlation	.530**		1	.291**	.392**	.585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			.000	.000	.000
Psychological Safety	Pearson Correlation				1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428** .000		.000		.388** .000	.429** .000
Active Empathetic Listening	Pearson Correlation				.388**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.551** .000		.392** .000	.000		.507** .000
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.541**		.585**	.429**	.507**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	

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

Structural Equation Modeling

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is regarded as one of the best technique for testing mediations, whereas the mediation may be full or partial (Weston and Gore, 2006). Mediation takes place when the relationship between independent and dependent latent variable is mediated by one or more latent variables (Baron and Kenny, 1986). According to Fox (2002) SEM is a technique that specifies and estimates models of linear relationships among variables, and symbolizes contributory relations amongst the variables in the model.

In the current study, hypotheses H3a, H3b, H5a, H5b and H7 related to mediations were analyzed through SEM using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software. Constructs in the model were indicated through scale scores and maximum likelihood method was used to estimate parameters as it maximizes the possibility that the obtained values of criterion variable will be predicted correctly. Of the five latent variables (transformational leadership, active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity, trust and psychological safety), only transformational leadership is exogenous, that is, it is not predicted by any variable, while the rest of the variables are dependent on other variable(s). It is hypothesized that transformational leadership has an indirect effect on trust in a leader through active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity of the leader (H3a and H5a respectively). Moreover, transformational leadership has indirect effect on psychological safety through active empathetic listening of leader, behavioral integrity of leader and trust in leader (H3b, H5b and H7 respectively).

Model Comparisons

First, a hypothesized full mediation model (Model 1) was drawn. Model 1 incorporated paths specified from transformational leadership to active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity, from both active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity to trust and psychological safety, and from trust to psychological safety. All fit indices showed a good fit (see Table 4). However, one insignificant path in model 1, i.e. from behavioral integrity to psychological safety (p-value: 0.694 > 0.05) was removed, which slightly improved the model fit of model 1 (see Model 1a in Table 4).

Then, model 1 was compared with alternative model (Model 2) with one additional path from transformational leadership to trust. The results of the research model (Model 2) showed a good fit. However, model 2 is a better model than model 1, as AIC for model 2 is lower than model 1.

Lastly, model 3 was drawn, which was similar to model 2, yet with one additional path from transformational leadership to psychological safety. The results of the model 3 showed a good fit, and model 3 is a better model than model 1 and 2, as AIC for model 3 is lower than for model 1 and 2. Therefore, the theoretical model 3 was accepted (shown in figure 1) as the most parsimonious model. The comparison was done based on AIC value, where the model with lowest AIC value is comparatively a better model.

Table 4: The comparison of the final model and alternative models

Structured Model	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	RMR	NFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	AIC
Model 1	21.409	3	.000	7.136	0.032	0.937	0.945	0.944	.125	45.409
Model 1a	21.554	4	.000	5.389	0.033	0.936	0.948	0.947	.145	43.554
Model 2	12.435	3	.006	4.145	0.026	0.963	0.972	0.971	.122	36.435
Model 3	4.453	2	.108	2.226	0.020	0.987	0.993	0.993	.076	30.453

Evaluating Statistical Significance of Mediated Effect

For testing statistical significance of mediated models several methods are proposed, whereas the most widely used methods include Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal-steps approach, the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) for H0: ab = 0 and bootstrapping. The widely used method is Sobel's (1982) test, yet it is appropriate only for large sample sizes, and it is relatively conservative and have moderately good statistical power as compared to other methods. The Sobel's test can be calculated by an online calculator provided by Preacher and Hayes (2008), which computes z test statistic given either the unstandardized regression coefficients and their standard errors or the t ratios for the a and b path coefficients. A point to note here is that z tests for determining the significance of ab product assumes that the values of this ab are normally distributed across samples from the same population. Yet, empirically it is shown that this assumption is incorrect for many values of a and b. Therefore, now MacKinnon, Preacher, and their colleagues (authorities on mediation analysis) have recommended using bootstrapping methods to obtain confidence intervals for estimates of ab (Warner, 2013).

Bootstrapping

Shrout and Bolger's (2002) recommend to use bootstrap to evaluate mediational model as bootstrapping rigorously tests the statistical significance of mediated effects. Bootstrapping is use of resampling and distribution of the product strategy for determining the significance of the mediated effect (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams, 2004). Resampling is useful especially in case of small sample sizes, as it makes fewer distributional assumptions than Wald test, and involves repeatedly drawing *N* cases (with replacement), i.e. sample from the original *N* cases, i.e. population to form a sampling distribution of ($a \times b$).

Additionally, the values of a, b, and ab are calculate from this sample. Bootstrapping process is repeated many times as it allows users to request different samples from 1,000 up to 5,000. This provides an empirical sampling distribution that can be used to derive a value for the standard error of *ab*, as the value of *ab* is tabulated across these samples. The confidence interval is used to evaluate the estimate of mediated effect ab obtained from analysis of the entire data set. Research on this subject is promising yet in its infancy (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams, 2004).

Amos, structural equation modeling program, provides bootstrapped CIs.

The results of 1000 usable bootstrap samples that were obtained shows that none of the 1000 usable bootstrap samples had a value less than zero, indicating that mediated effects of active emphatic listening (Monte Carlo bootstrap p-value: 0.001 < 0.05) and behavioral integrity (Monte Carlo bootstrap p-value: 0.002 < 0.05) in relationship between transformational leadership and trust were significant. Moreover, mediated effects of active empathic listening (Monte Carlo bootstrap p-value: 0.001 < 0.05) and trust (Monte Carlo bootstrap p-value: 0.001 < 0.05) in relationship between transformational leadership and psychological safety were also significant. This means that active empathic listening and behavioral integrity acted as mediators (i.e. partial mediation) in relationship between transformational leadership and trust, and active empathic listening and trust acted as mediators (i.e. partial mediation) in relationship between transformational leadership and psychological safety.

Parameter Estimates

Table 5 demonstrates regression weights (i.e. parameter estimates which represent the strength of relationship between variables) and significance values of the relationship between variables (direct and indirect relationship). Table 5 shows that transformational leadership has significant effect on active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity of the leader, that is when transformational leadership goes up by 1 unit active empathetic listening goes up by .545 units and behavioral integrity does up by .531 units, respectively. These relationships are significant as indicated by their p-values (p-value < .001). Next, both active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity of leader have a significant effect on trust in leader, that is when active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity goes up by 1 unit trust in leader goes up by .179 units and .274 units, respectively. Also these relationships are significant as indicated by their p-values (pvalue < .001). Further the significant effect of transformational leadership on trust in leader was found, that is when transformational leadership goes up by 1 unit trust goes up by .147 units, whereas p-value (p-value < .005 indicated the significance of this relationship.

Table 5: Regression Weights (Paths of Structural Equation Modeling) for Model 3

Paths			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Active Empathetic Listening	ß	Transformational Leadership	.545	.057	9.575	***
Behavioral Integrity	ß	Transformational Leadership	.531	.059	9.058	***
Trust	ß	Active Empathetic Listening	.179	.044	4.036	***
Trust	ß	Behavioral Integrity	.274	.043	6.343	***
Trust	ß	Transformational Leadership	.147	.050	2.966	**
Psychological Safety	ß	Transformational Leadership	.130	.046	2.822	**
Psychological Safety	ß	Active Empathetic Listening	.089	.044	2.001	**
Psychological Safety	ß	Trust	.194	.061	3.173	**

Note: ***and ** denotes beta's are significant at p-value<.001 and p-value=.001, respectively. The path from behavioral integrity to psychological safety is insignificant.

Moreover, table 5 shows that trust in leader, active empathetic listening and transformational leadership have a significant effect on psychological safety, that is when trust in leader, active empathetic listening

and transformational leadership goes up by 1 unit, psychological safety goes up by .194 units, .089 units and .130 units, respectively. These relationships are significant at p-value < .001 and < .05, respectively. However, behavioral integrity had an insignificant effect on psychological safety as the p-value of the relationship was 0.65 (i.e. p-value is > 0.05), respectively. Thus, this path was removed from the model and not included in final model 3.

Mediated effect calculation

The mediated effect is tested by conducting two analyses: Firstly, calculation of mediating effect by multiplying the path 'a' from predictor (X) to mediator (M) with the path 'b' from the mediator (M) to the outcome variable (Y). That is, the strength of the mediated effect is calculated by the product of the 'a × b' (ab) standardized coefficients (Shrout and Bolger, 2002). The standardized coefficients are focused in research reports rather than unstandardized regression coefficients, as they may not be very informative.

Secondly, exploring the significance of the mediating effect i.e. conducting Sobel's test (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams, 2004) to explore the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through a mediator (Shrout and Bolger, 2002).

Therefore, the mediated effect of active empathetic listening in relationship of transformational leadership with trust was calculated as follow:

TLà AEL ('a') = 0.545, AELà trust ('b') = 0.179, therefore axb = 0.545 x 0.179 =
0.097. Thus, mediated effect of AEL is 0.097.

Similarly, the mediated effect of active empathetic listening in relationship of transformational leadership with psychological safety was calculated as follow:

TLà AEL ('a') = 0.545, AELà psychological safety ('b') = .089, therefore axb = 0.545 x .089 = 0.048. Thus, mediated effect of AEL is 0.048.

Next, the mediated effect of behavioral integrity in relationship of transformational leadership with trust was calculated as follow:

TLà BI ('a') = 0.531, BIà trust ('b') = 0.274, therefore axb = 0.531 x 0.274= 0.145.
Thus, mediated effect of BI is 0.145.

Lastly, in relationship of transformational leadership with psychological safety, the mediated effect of trust was calculated as follow:

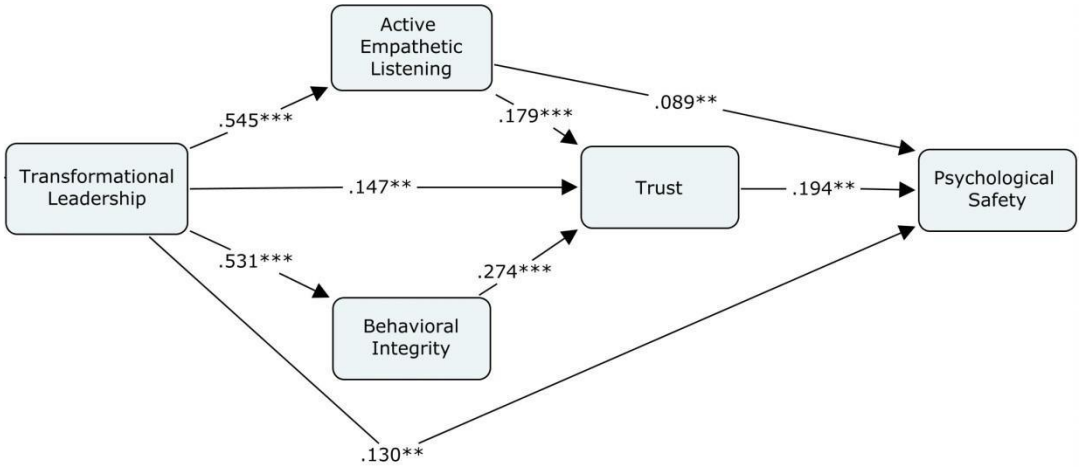
TLà trust ('a') = 0.147, trustà psychological safety ('b') = 0.194, therefore axb = 0.147 x 0.194 = 0.028. Thus, mediated effect of trust is 0.028.

Path Diagram

SEM provides a path diagram which pictorially represents the relationships (indicated by table 5) by using single-directional arrows (Lei and Wu, 2007). The standardized estimates of path coefficients allow the comparison of relationships between latent variables, shown by Figure 1. The Figure 1 shows that the transformational leadership is directly and indirectly related with trust in a leader. As transformational leadership influence trust in a leader directly and through active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity. This suggests that active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity partially mediates the relationship of transformational leadership with trust in the leader. Further, it is shown in the Figure 1 that transformational leadership also has direct and indirect relationship with psychological safety. As

transformational leadership influences active empathetic listening and trust in leader, which further influence psychological safety. This suggests that active empathetic listening and trust in leader partially mediate this relationship. However, behavioral integrity did not mediate the relationship of transformational leadership with psychological safety as it has insignificant relationship with psychological safety.

Thus, hypotheses H3a and H3b were supported, since the relationship of transformational leadership with trust in leader and perceived psychological safety was partially mediated by leader's active empathetic listening. Moreover, hypotheses H5a and H7 were also supported as the relationship of transformational leadership with trust in leader was partially mediated by leader's behavioral integrity, and the relationship of transformational leadership with perceived psychological safety was partially mediated by trust in leader. However, hypothesis H5b was not supported as behavioral integrity insignificantly related with perceived psychological safety.



Note: ***and ** denotes beta's are significant at p-value<0.001 and p-value<0.05, respectively. The path from behavioral integrity to psychological safety is non-significant (NS)and therefore removed.

Figure 1: Model with Pathways of Variables

Researchers have previously noted that acceptability of a model depends on the extent to which hypothesized parameters are in the anticipated directions, significant and parsimonious (Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). Thus, the model presented in this study is acceptable as most of the relationships between variables are found to be significant and their direction is consistent with previous studies. Moreover, the model's acceptability is further confirmed with help of model fit indices, discussed as follow.

Model Fit Indices

Model fitness shows that the model that best represents the data reflects the underlying theory (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008). However, the researchers such MacCallum and Austin (2000) have debated that in reality there is no true model and even in the population all the models are wrong to some extent yet many researcher do not realize this and strive to achieve model fit. According to Weston and Gore (2006), the best is to obtain a model that is substantively meaningful and parsimonious and that adequately fits the observed data well. Another point noted by Weston and Gore (2006) is that there are many indices available for assessing model fitness and different software programs provide different indices, which represents lack of standard format reporting the model fitness (Weston and Gore, 2006). Hoyle and Panter (1995) recommend to report several indices of overall model fit, which is followed by many researchers. As in structural equation modeling the most important step is to test whether a specified model

'fits' the data (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008). Therefore, in this study a range of fit indexes are utilized to test the model fitness, which are as follow: Chi-Square (CMIN), along with Degrees of Freedom (DF) and level of significance (P), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative-Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation (RMSEA) obtained by AMOS output, indicated by Table 6.

Table 6: Model Fit Indices

CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	NFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
4.453	2	.108	2.226	0.020	.992	0.987	0.993	0.993	.076

(CMIN= Chi-square, DF= degrees of freedom, P= level of significance, Root Mean Square Residual= RMR, GFI= Goodness of fit index, NFI= Normed Fit Index, IFI= Incremental Fit Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square of Approximation).

Before proceeding it is noteworthy that Hu and Bentler (1999) and Marsh et al. (2004) state that the appropriate cut-off values of the fit indices is affected by the model complexity, degree of misspecification and sample size of the study. It is considered inappropriate by large body of research to apply new and more stringent criteria for incorrectly rejecting the acceptable model when sample size is less than 500 (Weston and Gore, 2006). As in this study the sample size is 200, which is lesser than 500, the suggested appropriate cut-off values will be considered rather than new, more stringent criteria for rejecting or accepting the model when sample size is 500 or more.

The fit indices are discussed as follow: Chi-square is statistically significant statistic and therefore recommended to be reported (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008; Kline, 2011) along with associated p-value & degrees of freedom. Yet it is sensitive to sample size and often rejects the model (Kenny and McCoach, 2003). Table 6 shows that Chisquare is 4.453, degrees of freedom is 2 and p-value is .108. Therefore, the minimum condition of model fitness is met as p-value should be insignificant (>0.05) and chisquare should be either as low as 2.0 or greater than 2. However, in other cases, Chisquare may misinterpret by regarding model to be misfit whereas in actual model might be close fit to data (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008; Lei and Wu, 2007). Thus, alternative indices must be considered before rejecting the model (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008).

Root mean square residual (RMR) and RMSEA are other fit indices that indicates better model fit when their value are smaller (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008). In accordance with Weston and Gore (2006), RMR is immediately interpretable measure of the discrepancies. For RMR and RMSEA to indicate model acceptability, they should be less than .08 (Hu and Bentler, 1999, Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). Table 6 demonstrates that RMR and RMSEA for the model is .020 and 0.076 respectively.

The next index is Goodness of fit index (GFI) whose value should be equal to or greater than .90 for indicating model acceptability. Table 6 shows that GFI for the model is .992. Another criterion used by researchers as it is considered as a good index that is least effected by sample size is Comparative Fit index-CFI. CFI is revised form of NFI (Normed Fit Index). For indicating acceptable or good fit the value of both CFI and NFI should be either equal to or greater than .90 respectively (Hooper et al., 2008; Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). CFI is included in all SEM programs and most famous reported fit index, which suggests it's significance. Moreover, Boomsma (2000), MacCallum and

Austin (2000), and McDonald and Ho (2002) recommend to use CFI. Table 6 shows that NFI for the model is .987 and CFI for the model is .993, which shows model is acceptable. Thus, based on the above discussion it is clear that the model used in the present study is regarded as good fit to the empirical data (McDonald and Ho, 2002), indicating that this a-priori model possess model fitness of theory to the empirical data (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008). This also means that empirical data failed to reject the hypothesized model (Mathieu and Taylor, 2006). Thus, the model represents the following theory: transformational leadership directly as well as indirectly effects trust in leader (i.e.

transformational leadership has influence on active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity of leader, which further influence trust in leader). Also the direct and the indirect effect of transformational leadership is exerted on psychological safety through active empathetic listening and trust in leader.

Conclusion and Discussion

Discussion

This study aims to examine the influence of transformational leadership on psychological safety directly and indirectly. Literature shows that active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity of a leader and trust in a leader are significant positive outcomes of transformational leadership and are important constructs for building a psychologically safe environment. However, no previous study has empirically investigated these constructs together in creating psychological safety. Therefore, this study adds to the body of literature and extends the understanding of factors that contribute to psychological safety.

It is hypothesized that transformational leadership influences active empathetic listening of a leader, behavioral integrity of the leader and trust in the leader. In this study it was found that transformational leadership positively relates with active empathetic listening, which is consistent with the findings put forward by Sharifirad (2013). Another important construct associated with transformational leadership is consistency of words and actions i.e. behavioral integrity, since transformational leadership is criticized for lacking authenticity (i.e. ethical values and words and actions consistency). This study found that transformational leadership relates significantly with a leader's behavioral integrity, supporting the assertion of Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) and Simons (1999), and confirming the findings of the study by Tracey and Hinkin (1994), Simons and McLean Parks (2000), Simons and Hagen (2006) and Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence (2012). Numerous studies have found that transformational leadership builds trust of the followers in a leader see for example, Podsakoff et al. (1990), Connell et al. (2003), Casimir et al. (2006), Liu et al. (2010) and so on. and explained that this relationship is due to transformational leadership behaviors such as care, consideration and integrity (Liu et al., 2010). Yet no study empirically investigated how active empathic listening (which represents leader's care and consideration) and behavioral integrity (which influences general integrity perceptions of leader) of a transformational leader can build follower's trust of in a leader. This study found that transformational leaders create trust in follower directly as well as indirectly through active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity (active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity acted as partial mediators).

In this study, it is also hypothesized that transformational leadership influences psychological safety directly and indirectly through active empathetic listening by a leader, behavioral integrity of and trust in a leader and trust in leader. It is found that transformational leadership influences psychologically safe environment directly and indirectly through active empathetic listening and trust in a leader. The partial mediation of active empathetic listening found in the relationship of transformational leadership with psychological safety is consistent with the findings of Sharifirad (2013), who found partial mediation by acitve empathetic listening. Moreover, a study by Schaubroeck et al. (2011) found that affect-based trust developed by servant leader creates team psychological safety, yet this study found that trust (incorporating both affect and cognitive based trust items) developed by a transformational leader creates the perceptions of a psychologically safe environment. Thus, it strengthens the relationship of trust (which investigated in different types) and psychological safety (which investigaed in different forms). In this study, behavioral integrity of a leader did not mediate the relationship of transformational leadership with psychological safety, yet behavioral integrity was found to influence psychological safety through trust in a leader, which acted as partial mediator.

Moreover, it is found in the context of marketing that active empathetic listening by a seller leads to trust in the seller (Drollinger and Comer, 2012) and it is found in organizational setting that trust leads to psychological safety (Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton, 2009, Schaubroeck et al., 2011,Vogelgesang, 2008).

This study combines these two findings in an organizational setting, confirming that active empathetic listening by a leader creates trust in the leader, which further creates psychological safety as trust in a leader partially mediated the relationship of active empathetic listening with psychological safety.
Therefore, the present study is beneficial in several ways for both academicians and practitioners:

Contributions

1. It adds to the body of literature and extends the understanding of factors that contribute to psychological safety.
2. It extends the research on psychological safety by investigating the influence of transformational leadership of supervisor on sub-ordinates through multiple sources of evidence i.e. both supervisors and sub-ordinates.
3. The study theoretically contributes and extends the body of knowledge regarding transformational leadership, active empathetic listening, leader behavioral integrity and trust in leader, belonging to different disciplines such as leadership, workplace communication, ethics at work and psychology respectively. Thus, this research is multi-disciplinary.
4. The present study highlights the neglected aspect of leadership i.e. listening, specifically listening with empathy. Although active empathetic listening is a significant aspect of leadership, yet the empirical evidence that links it to transformational leadership is scarce and recognizes its contribution at the workplace and its influence on followers. This study has confirmed that transformational leaders are effective listeners and demonstrate empathy through individualized consideration in accordance with Bass's (1985, 1998, 1999) conceptualization. The concept of active empathetic listening is adopted from the context of marketing (i.e. seller-buyer relationship) and successfully investigated in this study, in an organizational context (i.e. leader-follower relationship) and provides validity for active empathetic listening scale in the new context. This is in line with Bodie's (2011) recommendation to use this scale and uncover outcomes of engaging in such listening.
5. In the present study, creation of trust (incorporating affective and cognitive based trust) is considered more comprehensively that is, through transformational leadership, leader behavioral integrity and active empathetic listening. The present study has replicated the relationship of active empathetic listening by a seller and trust in a seller in the health care sector, and successfully established the relationship of leader's active empathetic listening and leader's trust.
6. The present study further the understanding of the relationship of transformational leadership with leader behavioral integrity, confirming with empirical evidence that transformational leaders are authentic with respect to word-deed consistency as asserted by Bass and Steidlmeier (1999).
7. The empirical evidence is scarce regarding the influence of transformational leadership on psychological safety directly and through active empathetic listening along with trust in leader, with no such research conducted in health care sector of Peshawar district, KP, Pakistan, represents empirical contribution of this study.
8. This study has theoretically contributed by checking the mediation of active empathetic listening, leader behavioral integrity and trust in leader in relationships of transformational leadership with psychological safety. Moreover, by checking the mediation of trust in relationships of active empathetic listening with psychological safety, and of behavioral integrity with psychological safety.

Significance

1. The most common concern of employers is to have a positive image on employees and in outside environment. Whereas, employees assess their work environment through interpersonal risk they can take i.e. psychological safety as suggested by Kahn (1990) and Edmondson (1999). The findings of this study demonstrate that this psychologically safe environment is greatly influenced by leadership. Through exhibition of transformational leadership behaviors, active empathetic listening, and behavioral integrity, leaders can develop this psychological safety. Thus, employers and organization can use this knowledge to enhance psychological safety perceived by their employees.

2. The findings of this study elaborate the desirable outcomes of listening specifically active empathetic listening. That is, when leaders are active empathetic listener, they develop trust in their followers and consequently an environment where followers can express themselves.
3. In an organization, the trusting relationship between supervisors and their employees leads to a healthier workplace and desirable outcomes (such as psychological safety etc.). The findings of this study may help employers and organizations to understand the importance of transformational leadership, active empathetic listening and behavioral integrity of leader in development of trust in leader.

Limitations

1. The present study has utilized a frequently used measure of trust developed by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) that incorporates both affective and cognitive based trust. Yet affect and cognitive based trust were not separately checked in the present study. Future research may investigate it as suggested by Zhu et al. (2013).
2. The study is of cross-sectional nature and it is difficult to establish the true direction of causality between the variables of interest. Future research is recommended to utilize a longitudinal study design to confirm the direction of relationships.
3. Although multiple sources of data were used, the use of self-reports is likely to inflate the results.
4. A small sample size was obtained for the current study due to lack of research environment.

Recommendations

1. As this study is first of its kind, future research is suggested to test this framework in in large number of organizational and industrial contexts in order to generalize its findings.
2. Future research might further consider leader integrity in terms of ethicality and morality, along with behavioral integrity in order to have a comprehensive assessment of leader integrity on trust and psychological safety.
3. It is also recommended to find how each dimension of transformational leadership (individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence) and active empathetic listening (sensing, processing and responding) influence trust and its dimensions (affective and cognitive based trust), and psychological safety. This will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the relationship between variables and will be helpful for the purpose of training.
4. Future research is suggested to investigate transformational leadership with behavioral integrity and integrity in terms of ethicality/ morality in order to contribute to the understanding of authentic transformational leadership as according to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) authentic transformational leader exhibit consistency between words and deeds and possess strong ethical core values.

Practical Implication

1. Manager or supervisors should exhibit transformational leadership behaviors and pay attention to how these behaviors might contribute to active empathetic listening, behavioral integrity and development of trust of followers, consequently leading to numerous desirable work outcomes including psychological safety, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior etc.
2. It is most desirable for employees to express themselves without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career, which is not possible without psychological safety. It is recommended to develop psychologically safe environment for employees through programs that are specifically focused on development of attribute of trustworthiness (i.e. ability, benevolence and integrity). Also, leader training incorporating trustworthiness attributes can lead to high quality relationship with employees as leaders can be trained to act more fairly, ethically and consistently (Colquitt, Scott, and LePine, 2007).

3. Leaders should practice active empathetic listening with their employees so that they develop high quality relationships with employees, consequently develop healthier workplace and produce positive follower outcomes including trust in leader and psychological safety. Leaders can also be given training to improve their communication skills and active empathetic listening (Allen, 2010).
4. This study's results suggest that supervisors should be careful about misalignment of words anddeeds as behavioral integrity of supervisors fosters trust of followers. Thus, organizations that want to create followers trust, they should make sure that leaders
"walk the walk and talk the talk" as it develops trust.

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