

Empowering leadership for contextual performance: serial mediation of organizational support and commitment

Abstract

Purpose – This study analyzes, from the perspective of social exchange theory, the influence of empowering leadership on contextual performance mediated by perceived organizational support (POS) and affective organizational commitment (AOC).

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was carried out with 182 employees of the Best Companies to Work in Brazil. Data analysis was performed by structural equation modeling and by fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis.

Findings – Results demonstrate that empowering leadership directly influences higher contextual performance and indirectly through the mediation of AOC, but not through POS. Serial mediation confirms that the model's variables self-promote each other to ultimately foster higher performance. Furthermore, empowering leadership, in the dimension of trust in the high performance of employees, is present in all solutions to obtain high contextual performance.

Research limitations/implications – The statistical support for the serial mediation indicates that empowering leadership promotes POS, which influences AOC that finally promotes the employee's contextual performance. However, our model does not include employees' task performance, our results add to contextual performance literature.

Practical implications – The study highlights the role of the empowering leadership style in the organizational context, an aspect that deserves attention from the managers and organizations due to its effect on employee performance.

Originality/value – The study adds a new framework to the literature, which can be used by organizations to promote contextual performance. The variables, which include contextual and individual factors, foster the employee's contextual performance in a joint and self-promoting way. Contextual performance exceeds the manager's technical attributions, it covers psychological and discretionary behaviors.

Keywords empowering leadership, contextual performance, perceived organizational support, affective organizational commitment.

1. Introduction

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) defines the relationship between employees and their leaders as an exchange relationship (Lee *et al.*, 2022). When perceiving managerial actions as empowering, its employees tend to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors that are valuable to organizations (Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005). An increasing stream of literature has examined the performance outcomes of empowering leadership (e.g., Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Kim *et al.*, 2018; Quian *et al.*, 2018; Singh and Rangnekar, 2020; Sharma and Kirkman, 2015; Xu and Zhang, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2020). The underline assumption is that empowering initiatives can stimulate the creativity and development of employees (Liu *et al.*, 2020) and lead them to exhibit higher levels of in-role and extra-role performance.

Seeing that empowering leadership has many prosocial effects (Shehawny, 2022), this study analyzes the contextual performance of employees, which exceeds the technical attributions of work and involves psychological and discretionary behaviors, such as: proactivity, interpersonal cooperation, persistence and organizational citizenship behaviors (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Pradhan *et al.*, 2018). Consistent with SET and its norms of reciprocity (Blau, 1964), these behaviors represent voluntary actions of the employees as a manner of supporting organizational goals (Shore *et al.*, 2006), in exchange of feeling empowered by their leaders (Rai and Kim, 2021).

Previous studies (e.g., Dash and Vohra, 2019; Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Singh and Rangnekar, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2020) have mostly examined specific features of contextual performance, disregarding its global aspects, in other words, a micro-level analysis. According to meta-analyses and systematic reviews, such as Hoang *et al.* (2021), Lee *et al.* (2018), and Sharma and Kirkman (2015), this fragmented literature brought conflicting and inconclusive results around contextual performance. These inconsistencies result from the lack of a solid theoretical basis that elucidates the underline mechanisms that helps explain the effectiveness of empowering leadership on employee performance (Xu and Zhang, 2022). Therefore, it is postulated that the relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance may also be indirect, through contextual, cognitive and/or motivational factors.

According to theoretical precepts (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Shore *et al.*, 2006) and empirical evidences (Bhatti *et al.*, 2022; Gaudet and Tremblay, 2017; Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005; Lee *et al.*, 2022) from SET, we predicted that POS and AOC can be complementary and interdependent in explaining the relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance. Rooted in SET precepts, both POS and AOC are socioemotional features embedded in the social exchange of the employment relationship: POS corresponds to the leader's exchange and AOC corresponds to the employee exchange (Shore *et al.*, 2006). Thus, we postulate that high levels of POS and AOC reflect positively on pro-organizational behaviors and individual performance (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1997; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986).

Although the mediating role of POS and AOC has been recognized, the previously mentioned studies highlighted several research gaps. First, Lee *et al.* (2022) called out for future studies to use the theoretical lenses of SET to examine how contextual (e.g., POS) and individual (e.g., AOC) factors can jointly explain the effects of empowering leadership (Lee *et al.*, 2022). Second, research in the context of empowering leadership, such as Hassan and Ul Hassan (2015) and Kim *et al.* (2018), does not allow overall conclusions, as they analyze POS and AOS separately. Third, there is a lack of studies that apply a sequential analysis to approach these consecutive effects of POS and AOC; to comprehensively explain how both mechanisms play a serial-mediation role to enhance contextual performance (Bhatti *et al.*, 2022).

Taken into account the research gaps outlined above, the purpose of the study is to analyze the influence of empowering leadership on contextual performance, serially mediated by POS and AOC. In line with this purpose, the study seeks to answer the following research questions (RQ):

- RQ₁. Does empowering leadership positively affect contextual performance through POS and AOC?
- RQ₂. Does empowering leadership positively affect contextual performance via serial mediation of POS and AOC?
- RQ₃. Are there combinations of empowering leadership dimensions, POS, and AOC that promotes high contextual performance?

Empowering leadership is expected to foster the POS and increase the AOC of employees to ultimately promote discretionary behaviors in their organization. Discussions are broadened by applying serial mediation (Hayes, 2012), contributing to the understanding of the direct and indirect effects of empowering leadership. In a manner that by promoting POS (contextual factor), greater AOC is stimulated (individual factor), which in turn, enhance the contextual performance of employees. The analyses are deepened and complemented by qualitative analysis that provides uncovering solutions that proved to be sufficient (Frare and Beuren, 2021) in promoting high contextual performance of those employees.

The relevance of the study lies in highlighting the consequences that the leadership style can have in the organizational context (Liu *et al.*, 2020), seeing that empowering leadership

have been proved to promote competitive advantages (Sharma and Kirkman, 2015) and to be essential for the success and longevity of organizations (Lee *et al.*, 2018). This study contributes to the SET literature, while adding its precepts to examine the jointly effect of contextual and individual variables that might explain the outcomes of empowering leadership, as an attempt to contribute to the gap outlined by Lee *et al.* (2022). To do so, the model proposed and tested provides a broaden framework for the literature that also could be applied in organizations which want to promote the contextual performance of its employees, whereas the serial mediation offers a path to be followed by organization's management.

This study aims to broader the contextual performance literature whereas there are a wider body of knowledge regarding operational rather than contextual performance, which encompasses extra-role attributions. It also contributes to managerial practice by identifying psychological aspects that influence individuals in their behavior and attitudes at work. Empirical evidence can alert organizations that they could benefit if they adopt an empowering management strategy (e.g., adopt empowering leadership practices whereas the manager shows that they trust in the high performance of employees) could enhance contextual and individual factors for employees to exhibit higher levels of contextual performance.

2 Theoretical background and hypotheses development

2.1 Effects of empowering leadership on contextual performance

The SET posits that high quality social exchanges can be develop through a variety of socioemotional reasons (Shore *et al.*, 2006), such as empowering initiatives (Shehawy, 2022). Whereas empowerment is proven to be essential for organizational efficiency (Zhang *et al.*, 2020), empowering leadership can reflect on a feeling of greater control over work (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Zhang and Bartol, 2010) and reinforce responsibility towards individual and organizational results (Lee *et al.*, 2018). In this study, empowering leadership is analyzed from a multidimensional perspective, which involves: highlighting the importance of work, encouraging participation in the decision-making process, expressing confidence in the high performance of employees, and providing autonomy while facing bureaucratic limitations (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Dash and Vohra, 2019; Rai and Kim, 2021; Singh and Rangnekar, 2020; Zhang and Bartol, 2010). Altogether these characteristics indicate how leaders empower their employees, as empowering leadership acts as a source of individual motivation and encourages autonomy and participation in decision-making (Sharma and Kirkman, 2015).

Individuals under a higher empowering leadership have more opportunities, information, and feedback (Beuren *et al.*, 2022; Qian *et al.*, 2018), engages more and masters their tasks, thus, exhibiting higher levels of organizational citizenship and performance (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Ahearne *et al.* (2005) found a positive effect of empowering leadership on the adaptability and self-efficacy of sales representatives and concluded that leadership reflects on positive behaviors of individuals. Hassan and Ul Hassan (2015), when analyzing social exchanges between leaders and their subordinates, found a positive influence of empowering leadership on organizational citizenship behaviors. Positive effects of empowering leadership on individual performance were also found in the previously literature (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Zhang *et al.*, 2020). Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) point out that organizational performance is affected by both task performance and contextual performance, the former is more related to experience while the latter to the individual's personality. This leads to the formulation of the first hypothesis:

H1. Empowering leadership positively affects employees' contextual performance.

2.2 Effects of empowering leadership on contextual performance mediated by perceived organizational support

The SET postulates that when employees have a feeling that they receive support from their organization, they will build a stronger exchange connection (Blau, 1964), a practice that assures that they are being respected and encourages reciprocity (Bhatti *et al.*, 2022). This underscores the importance of perceived organizational support, a term idealized in the SET by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986), to define individuals' beliefs about how their participation is valued by the organization and how they are engaged in contributing to their well-being. Social exchanges between organization and individuals, through the perception of organizational support, can be presented as an intervening factor in different leadership styles and employee behaviors (Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015), such as between empowering leadership and contextual performance. This is due to the interface between the impacts that leaders and organizational support cause on work attributes and performance, to the extent that employees reciprocate to their organizations the treatment they receive from their leaders (Gaudet and Tremblay, 2017).

Hassan and Ul Hassan (2015) found that the effects of empowering leadership on performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and absenteeism reduction are mediated by perceived organizational support. Kim *et al.* (2018, p. 845) highlights that this mediation occurs because those employees “who benefit from empowering leadership behaviors experience well-being and perform better because of the feeling of being supported”. Organizational support is stimulated by empowering leadership (Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015), which reflects in higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and individual performance (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1997; Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2018) and helps explain the effects of empowering leadership on these variables (Hassan and Hassan, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the second hypothesis is formulated:

H2. Empowering leadership positively affects contextual performance through organizational support.

2.3 Effects of empowering leadership on contextual performance mediated by affective organizational commitment

The SET has been widely used to examine organization's role in encouraging pro-organizational behavior, such as commitment (Hassan and Hassan, 2015). Committing affectively to the organization implies creating bonds and sharing the organization's goals as their own (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Highly committed employees are motivated to perform higher; this influence is explained by the commitment as an intrinsic motivator for employees to act in favor of the organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Empowering leadership provides greater authority and a sense of responsibility is crucial to employees' commitment and self-efficacy (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005). Previous stream of research has shown that empowering leadership has a significant positive impact on employee performance (Xu and Zhang, 2022).

Dash and Vohra (2019) found that empowering leadership from school principals influenced teachers' commitment and performance. They observed that empowering leadership precedes affective commitment, and this relationship is mediated by teacher's behavior. Leaders that empowers favors the alignment between individuals and the organization and can foster organizational commitment, as articulate organizational goals with their employees, express trust and encourage their participation in the decision-making process (Dash and Vohra, 2019). In an experimental study Chen *et al.* (2011) found that empowering leadership directly and positively impacts the psychological empowerment and affective commitment of employees.

Previous research has provided evidence that affective commitment is positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviors (Gaudet and Tremblay, 2017), promotes task performance, and to a greater extent the contextual performance of employees (Yousaf *et al.*, 2015). Franco and Franco (2017) confirmed that the influence of organizational commitment

on contextual performance occurs as employees establish an emotional connection with their organization. Commitment explains why employees have different levels of motivation that lead to task and contextual performance (Motowidlo *et al.*, 1997; Yousaf *et al.*, 2015). Arguments that lead to the proposition of the following hypothesis:

H3. Empowering leadership positively affects contextual performance through employees' affective organizational commitment.

2.4 Serial mediation of organizational support and commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance

Previous studies suggest an indirect relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance through intervening variables (Lee *et al.*, 2018). Such a relationship may occur via perceived organizational support (Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2018), as employees can thrive with empowering leadership and perform better when they perceive that they have organizational support (Kim *et al.*, 2018). It was outlined that the influence of empowering leadership on performance can be explained by affective organizational commitment creating bonds that permeate the formal exchanges links and lead them to superior performance (Dash and Vohra, 2019; Franco and Franco, 2017; Yousaf *et al.*, 2015).

The literature also provides evidence on the relationship between perceived support and commitment (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986, 1997; Gaudet and Tremblay, 2017). For example, Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) found a strong association of perceived organizational support with employee commitment, which intensifies their affective connections with the organization. Thus, in line with the foundations of SET, it is postulated that employees who feel empowered by their leaders (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Dash and Vohra, 2018), with perceived organizational support (Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2018), strengthen affective organizational commitment (Dash and Vohra, 2019; Yousaf *et al.*, 2015) and, thus, enhance their contextual performance (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Pradhan *et al.*, 2018). Arguments that lead to the proposition of a serial mediation equation, whereas the first mediating variable triggers the second (perceived organizational support→affective organizational commitment), which provides a path through the leadership influence on performance can occur, as outlined in the following hypothesis:

H4. Empowering leadership positively affects perceived organizational support, which in turn promotes affective commitment, that positively influences employees' contextual performance.

Serial mediation analysis allows understanding how the interactions of these mediating variables sequentially provide theoretical insights into their impact consecutively (Bhatti *et al.*, 2022; Zhao *et al.*, 2020). Based on the hypotheses outlined, Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical model of the research.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The theoretical model illustrates the relationships proposed in the four hypotheses of the study. Relationships are expected to be positive, to promote contextual performance (model dependent variable). Also, the following control variables were inserted in the model: hierarchical position, experience in the position and time in the company.

3 Methodological Procedures

3.1 Data collection and sample

A survey was carried out with employees of companies classified as “The 150 Best Companies to Work”, in the 2018 ranking by Você S.A. This ranking is released annually by

this magazine, based on the voluntary provision of information by Brazilian companies, and measured by: (i) employees' happiness at work index (65% weight), which is based on the employee's perception of the organization who employs them, to work itself, to their bosses and colleagues; and (ii) human resources policies and practices (35% weight). The sample selection focused is justified by the assumption that these companies provide an organizational climate that aims to promote its employee's well-being, characterized by high levels of happiness at work and policies of valuing its people. The preference was to select the "best companies to work" in order to investigate aspects as employee leadership and prosocial behaviors, seeing that they were public awarded and have a great reputation in Brazil amongst others. The companies of the sample are known for cultivate employees happiness and well-being and that make them to be prioritized in the Brazilian's job market, which arises the importance of this study that measured if those employees are effectively being supported, empowered, affectively commitment an exerting prosocial behaviors there.

The data collection was made in the professional network LinkedIn. The research started accessing the LinkedIn profile of each of the 150 ranked companies, inside the company's profile there is a list of all the LinkedIn profile of their employees (this list also informs their position). This list made possible to contact directly these companies' employees, those that occupied intermediate hierarchical levels were contacted, such as analysts, technicians, coordinators, supervisors, and managers, in order to better assess empowering leadership and perceived organizational support. This search resulted in 3,010 employees, which received an invitation to join the LinkedIn network of one of the authors, of which 1,794 invitations were accepted, and for these potential respondents that habilitated a connection with the author, the questionnaire link was sent by LinkedIn chat, the survey was attached to QuestionPro platform. Procedures that resulted in a final sample of 182 employees, whose characteristics are detailed in Table 1.

[INSERT_TABLE_1_ABOUT_HERE]

In summary, participants are from different areas of activity, mostly male 133 (73%), aged between 24 and 61 years old, with an average age of 37 years old. Approximately 70% have a *lato sensu* graduate course. As for the time they have been in the organization, a high sample variation was found, from 3 months to 33 years, with an average of 9 years. The time in the position ranged from 3 months to 15 years, approximately 5 years, on average.

3.2 Measures and latent variables

Constructs were measured using multiple items on a seven-point Likert scale (Appendix A). Exploratory analyzes preceded the insertion of the variables in the structural model given the multidimensionality of the variables. An exploratory factor analysis was performed with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization, in addition to observing the commonality of the indicators, the adequacy was based on KMO (>0.5), internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.7$) and accumulated variance of the multidimensional constructs were observed.

Empowering leadership reflects a management focused on sharing the power of superiors to promote the autonomy of their employees, mainly to encourage motivation in the execution of tasks. The instrument to access the perception of empowering leadership is by Ahearne *et al.* (2005) and Zhang and Bartol (2010), which asks: "Please, indicate your perception of your superiors' attitude towards you, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree". The 12 statements reflect the four dimensions that assess whether the superior: Emphasizes the importance of work ($\alpha=0.948$); encourages participation in the decision-making process ($\alpha=0.913$); expresses confidence in the high performance of employees ($\alpha=0.889$); provides autonomy while facing bureaucratic limitations ($\alpha=0.900$). Exploratory factor analysis

showed adequacy and the possibility of treating them as one construct with four second-order variables, whose set showed adequacy (KMO=0.915) and total explained variance of 86.14% (>50%).

The organizational support perceived by employees reflects how much they consider that receiving support from the company as a form of support. Based on the instrument by Eisenberger *et al.* (1997), with 8 assertions, it was asked: "Please, indicate your perception about the organizational support you receive from your company, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree." Items 6 and 7 were excluded from the questionnaire because they had a low level of commonality with the others assertions, afterwards the adequacy of the variable was attested (KMO=0.887; α =0.902).

Affective organizational commitment refers to the extent to which employees are affectively committed to the organization, which involves creating bonds with the company and sharing its goals. Based on the instrument by Mowday *et al.* (1979), with 15 statements, asked: "Regarding your feelings about the organization you work for, please indicate your degree of agreement, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree". Factor analysis implied the exclusion of items 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, and 15, after which the validity of the affective construct was attested (KMO=0.908; α =0.922).

The contextual performance exercised goes beyond technical performance at work, it reflects attitudes and behaviors based on psychological and discretionary aspects, aiming to help others, being proactive and assuming their responsibilities. Elements of prosocial behavior and organizational citizenship were captured (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994). The instrument was extracted from Pradhan *et al.* (2018), originally adapted from Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994), with 15 statements, in which they were asked: "In relation to your performance of activities in the company, please inform your degree of agreement, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree". Exploratory factor analysis led to the exclusion of items with low commonality, with statements 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15 of the original instrument remaining, which showed adequacy (KMO=0.860, α =0.843).

3.3 Measures and control variables

It is assumed that some individual's variables may be associated with different levels of contextual performance, to test that some control variables were inserted in the model. The variables were classified into two groups, on a binary scale, which for operationalization makes it possible to be included as an independent variable in the structural model (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Thus, to assess whether the hierarchical position is related to the performance exerted, the positions were grouped as low (technicians and analysts) and medium (supervisors, managers and coordinators), and the analysis parameter is the group of medium positions (medium =1; low=0), which covers 134 employees (73.22%). Medium-level position in this study could be related as the group that has some managerial experience (supervisors, managers and coordinators). Befort and Hattrupt (2003) states the importance of considering this variable, because to have a managerial experience encompasses a unique sets of skills, behaviors, attitudes and values that are acquired depending on the role employees are assigned.

Regarding the variables that can influence performance because they are associated with technical skills, experience and mastery of tasks and attributions in the company, time in the role and time in the company were controlled. To fit the time inat the company ininto the model, the time working in the company was measured (How many years have you worked in this company?), and it was decided to attribute the reference to the group of those that have been in the company for five years or more (≥ 5 years=1; < 5 years=0), 106 employees (57.92%). For experience in the position, the question was "How many years have you been in this position/function in the company?", and a cut-off point of 5 years was established (≥ 5

years=1; <5 years=0), and managers with more time in the position are the analysis parameter and represent 63 employees (34.42%). These both measures are related to the experience of the employee, Motowildo and Van Scotter (1994) highlighted that experience measures is substantially correlated with job knowledge and work performance due to the mastering of its ability, experience was positively correlated with performance measures in their study (mostly with task, followed by contextual).

3.4 Data analysis procedures

When dependent and independent variables are accessed from the same source and at the same time, method bias may be influenced (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). To assess its representativeness, it was estimated how much the factors are grouped in exploratory factor analysis. The formation of six components was verified; the main one explained 42.75% of the total variance, a coefficient below the 50%, the threshold established by Podsakoff *et al.* (2012). Therefore, based on Harman's single factor test, the results do not present limitations of common method bias. Subsequently, descriptive statistics of the variables were carried out, followed by the evaluation of the theoretical groupings formed by the multiple scale variables based on exploratory factor analysis.

The analysis of the structural model that encompasses all hypothesis was carried by structural equations modeling, estimated by partial least squares (PLS-SEM), whose significance was calculated by bootstrapping with 5.000 resamples (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The empirical investigation of the theoretical model proposed in this study implies a multidimensional analysis of the constructs of a research instrument accessed by a multiple-items survey. Whose items were constructed and based in previous studies and on well-known instruments in the management literature. The causal relationships of the theoretical model justifies the quantitative analysis estimated by a structural equation modeling, with regressions between constructs that express the perception of the 182 respondents. To integrate in the research model, empowering leadership is treated as a second-order variable, which encompasses four dimensions, as in Zhang and Bartol (2010), in which the two-stage estimation methodology was adopted, using the scores of latent variables in the second phase of the analysis. Models with hierarchical components occur when complex constructs are examined due to their high order of abstraction (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

In addition to the direct relationships (path analysis), three hypotheses of this study assume an indirect effect through mediation. The mediating effect is created when a third variable intervenes in the relationship between two other variables that are already related, which create indirect effects, which involve a sequence of relationships within the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The mediating variable is inserted to explain why the relationship between the independent variables with the dependent exists (Hair *et al.*, 2017). While in serial mediation, according to Hayes (2012), multiple mediators can be linked serially in a causal chain, if the first mediator variable of the model causally influences the other (others), that is, establishes a causal relationship between the mediators. variables (Hayes, 2012).

The asymmetric analysis technique, the fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA), was used to complementary analyze the interface between variables in non-linear interactions of fuzzy character, in order to present equifinality in relation to the success of the dependent variable in the model (Ragin, 2008). It seeks to provide solutions to high contextual performance exercised by employees. When discovering which combinations of variables have the potential to lead to the situation of superior efficiency of the dependent variable (Ragin, 2008), the dimensions of empowering leadership are considered in a segregated way, to identify their individual role in relation to performance. This analysis is justified by providing asymmetric evidence in addition to the symmetrical findings identified by the PLS-SEM technique. It follows an approach recently inserted in the management

literature (e.g., Bedford *et al.*, 2016), when both techniques complement the analysis of results.

4 Analysis and Results

4.1 Symmetric analysis by PLS-SEM

4.1.1 Reliability and validity of variables

The evaluation of the measurement model is performed through the validity and reliability of the study variables (Hair *et al.*, 2017). In addition to the measurement model, Table 2 provides descriptive statistics and the model's fit indicator.

[INSERT_TABLE_2_ABOUT_HERE]

Single constructs, formed by only one indicator, do not require convergent validation and reliability, since the construct is identical to its measure (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The latent variables of the study denote the relevance of internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$) and by the composite reliability ($CR > 0.70$). As for convergent validity, the extracted average variance indicators are adequate ($AVE > 0.50$). Compliance with the discriminant validity of the model variables is also evident by the analysis performed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, given that the square root of the AVE is higher than the correlations with the other variables (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The SRMR is an indicator of structural model fit, the 0.034 coefficient attests to its adequacy ($model\ fit = SRMR < 0.8$) (Henseler *et al.*, 2016).

Correlation coefficients (diagonally) show that contextual performance is significantly associated with other latent variables ($corr. \geq |0.221|$), which indicates that the higher the leadership, commitment and support indices, the greater the contextual performance tends to be. The correlation between the control and dependent variables did not present significant coefficients, and high and positive coefficients are found between leadership, commitment and support. Descriptive statistics show that the sample has high rates of variables on the seven-point Likert scale, the higher was model's dependent variable: contextual performance (mean 6.22; mode 7); indicating that, on average, most respondents collaborate and help with the team to achieve the organization's goals. On average, most respondents also show high levels of empowering leadership, support, commitment and contextual performance, whose panorama matches the sample, limited to companies recognized for promoting the well-being of their employees.

4.1.2 Test of hypotheses

The analysis of the paths of the structural model can be found in Table 3, with the paths in bold indicating the equation for each hypothesis.

[INSERT_TABLE_3_ABOUT_HERE]

The structural model presents acceptable multicollinearity indices ($VIF < 5$), as well as the general redundancy indices of the dependent variables ($Q^2 > 0$) (Hair *et al.*, 2017). H1 is accepted, as it presents statistical significance of the positive influence of empowering leadership on contextual performance ($p < 0.01$; small effect). It is confirmed that employees whose leader empowers them, attributing importance to their work, encouraging their participation in the decision-making process, trusts in high levels of performance, and attributes autonomy, leadership dimensions defined by Ahearne *et al.* (2005), encourages them to exert greater contextual performance.

H2 proposed a mediation relationship, which requires attesting the statistical significance

of the relationships established between: (i) the antecedent and mediating variable, and (ii) the mediator and dependent (Hair *et al.*, 2017). A positive influence of empowering leadership on organizational support is confirmed ($p < 0.01$; large effect), but the influence of support on performance was not supported ($p > 0.05$), non-significance was also observed in the result of the mediation equation, which implies rejecting H2. Therefore, the influence of leadership on performance is not explained by perceived organizational support.

H3 is accepted, statistical significance was found between leadership and commitment ($p < 0.01$; small effect), commitment and performance ($p < 0.01$; small effect), and of the mediation ($p < 0.05$). We found a partial mediation, which occurs when the mediator partially explains the influence of the independent on the dependent variable (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Leadership influence on performance has already been denoted, therefore, this relationship does not need to occur via affective commitment, but it mediates it.

H4 proposes serial mediation, which, according to Hayes (2012), assumes a causal chain that links the mediating variables in a series of relationships. H4 was accepted, as there was statistical significance of: leadership on support ($p < 0.01$); support on commitment ($p < 0.01$); commitment on performance ($p < 0.01$); and on the indirect relationship by serial mediation ($p < 0.01$). Partial mediation is attested. Although it has already been confirmed that leadership influences performance, it was found that leadership promotes perceived organizational support, which, in turn, influences affective commitment, and implies greater contextual performance. This suggests a path that can be followed to promote contextual performance.

Regarding the determination coefficient, high explained variance of organizational support was found ($R^2 = 0.45$), explained exclusively by empowering leadership, high explained variance of affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.44$), which had leadership and the support as antecedents, and average explained the variance of the model variables in the contextual performance ($R^2 = 0.22$).

The control variables showed a significant influence of the position on performance ($p < 0.05$; small effect). Respondents who occupy mid-level positions (managers, coordinators and supervisors), compared to more operational positions (technicians and analysts), had greater contextual performance, and this group represents more than 70% of the sample. The experience variables did not indicate significant influence, that is, having more than 5 years in the function or in the company, compared to those with less time, does not have significant influence on their performance. It is inferred that the experience by mastering their role does not trigger contextual performance, which encompasses prosocial and citizenship behaviors, to help colleagues, be proactive and assume their responsibilities and those of their team.

4.2 Asymmetric analysis by fsQCA

The fsQCA demonstrates which combinations of variables have the potential to drive the efficiency of the dependent variable (Ragin, 2008), in this case, contextual performance. It starts with data calibration, transforming the data into fuzzy sets calibrated in the percentiles of the averages of the constructs (Ragin, 2008). Anchors were set at full membership (95%), crossover point (50%) and full non-membership (5%) (Ragin, 2008). As all variables were measured using a seven-point Likert scale; for calibration of these sets, the anchors consist of 6, 4, and 2 (Ordanini *et al.*, 2014).

The second step considers necessary and sufficient conditions, considering a variable as "always necessary" when its consistency is greater than 0.90, and "almost always necessary" between 0.80 and 0.90 (Ragin, 2008). Results showed that leadership in which the superior trusts high performance of employees (0.925) and affective organizational commitment (0.912) are almost always necessary conditions for high performance. On the other hand, leadership in which the supervisor provides autonomy to employees (0.864), perceived organizational support (0.808), and leadership in which the superior emphasizes the

importance of the employees' work (0.805), are conditions almost always necessary to promote high performance.

Next, the sufficiency analysis is carried out, which, with the construction of a truth table, shows which combinations of conditions are sufficient for a high contextual performance, in the form of solutions. The frequency cutoff and the consistency of the solutions met the threshold of 0.80, and we chose to use intermediate solutions, as shown in Table 4.

[INSERT_TABLE_4_ABOUT_HERE]

Adequacy of the general consistency of the solution (>0.983) and broad general coverage (0.886) was found, which suggests that the three solutions explain a large proportion of the sample. Empowering leadership focused on trust in the high performance of employees, in addition to being an always necessary condition to exert high performance, is the single but sufficient condition in a solution for contextual high performance (solution 3), and is present in all three solutions. Commitment, on the other hand, forms a solution (solution 1) only if combined with the two dimensions of empowering leadership, indicating that affective commitment, although always a necessary condition for high performance, by itself does not prove to be a solution. It is observed that affective commitment is intrinsic to employees and leads them to a high contextual performance only if combined with management practices adopted by the organization, reflected by an empowering leadership. Findings that denote the complementarity of these variables and highlight the importance of adopting multiple dimensions of leadership in organizations. The lack of organizational support perceived in the solutions stands out, a result in line with the rejection of this relationship in the structural model.

In this context, three solutions proved to be sufficient to promote high contextual performance. Solution 1 denotes the presence of the manager's leadership who trusts in high performance and who provides autonomy to employees, along with the presence of affective organizational commitment (higher exclusive coverage: 9.4%). Solution 2 demonstrates that the presence of the four forms of empowering leadership (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Zhang and Bartol, 2010), if combined, promote high contextual employee performance. Solution 3 demonstrates that leadership in which confidence in high performance, together with the absence of other variables and the indifference of commitment, is a solution for high contextual performance. Inferences result from the fact that this dimension is based on performance itself, amongst the various ways to auto-empower; having a manager who trusts the high performance of his/her employees is enough for them to help their colleagues and assume extra-role responsibilities.

4.3 Discussion

This study analyzed the influence of empowering leadership on contextual performance, mediated by perceived organizational support and affective organizational commitment of employees from the 150 Best Companies to Work, in the 2018 ranking by *Você S.A.* Magazine. Figure 2 illustrates the test results of the first three hypotheses.

[INSERT_FIGURE_2_ABOUT_HERE]

H1 confirmed a direct relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance, which encompasses prosocial behaviors, the intention to help their team, assume greater responsibilities and demonstrate organizational citizenship (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994). This is in line with theoretical arguments (Sharma and Kirkman, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2018) and empirical evidence (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Zhang

et al., 2005; Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015; Zhang *et al.*, 2020), that states the positive role of empowering leadership in organizational citizenship behaviors and individual performance. These findings contribute to the understanding that organizations benefit when having a management composed by leaders who empowers its employees. Aligned with the argumentation of Gould-Williams and Davies (2005), when individuals perceive managerial actions as empowering, they tend to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors that are valuable to the organization. The reciprocation in a two-way relationship (e.g. employment relationship) is also one of the core features of the SET. The SET postulates that empowering initiatives can stimulate the development of employees (Liu *et al.*, 2020); that in this study proposes to be the consequences of a higher contextual performance exerted.

H2 did not confirm the mediating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance. Although the direct relationship between leadership and support was confirmed (Hassan and Ul Hassan, 2015), there is no statistical significance of perceived support on performance. Which indicates that leadership focused on employee's empowerment strongly promotes perceived organizational support but it does not reflect in higher organizational citizenship behaviors nor in individual's performance, as postulated and proved in the seminal study of Eisenberger *et al.* (1997). The perception of organizational support did not lead employees to exert higher levels of contextual performance to its team and colleagues, that could have been their response from feeling supported, neither explained (mediated) the relationship that leadership has on performance. These findings shows contrasting results than our theoretical base, such as Hassan and Ul Hassan (2015) that have stated that the social exchanges between organization and individuals through organizational support can be a intervening factor of the relationship of different leadership styles and employee behaviors; the mediation was not find in this sample regarding to them contributing the support perceived in higher contextual performance. Besides the SET postulating that when employees feel a strong organizational support from their organization, they will build a stronger exchange, connection (Blau, 1964) it did not encouraged reciprocity (Bhatti *et al.*, 2022) of the employee of this sample, in the form of contextual performance. Seeing that the contextual performance exceeds the technical attribution of the job and involves behaviors such as: proactivity, interpersonal cooperation, persistence and organizational citizenship behaviors (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Pradhan *et al.*, 2018), we infer that the organizational support could affect task-related performance, not psychological and discretionary behaviors.

H3 confirms the mediation of affective commitment in the relationship between empowering leadership and contextual performance is aligned with Lee *et al.* (2018) and demonstrate that the relationship between leadership and performance can be indirectly explained (mediated) by other variables. More specifically, the mediation of the affective commitment between leadership and performance corroborates the precepts of SET that posits that high quality social exchanges can be develop through several socioemotional reasons (Shore *et al.*, 2006), such as the affective commitment in this study's sample. The analysis showed a positive influence of all the paths of this hypothesis, these results aggregates this indirect effect to the body of literature that had already found the direct influence of empowering leadership on commitment (Chen *et al.*, 2011; Dash and Vohra, 2019), and on performance (Franco and Franco, 2017; Motowidlo *et al.*, 1997; Yousaf *et al.*, 2015). Committing affectively to the organization leded to the creation of bonds and sharing the organization's goals (Mowday *et al.*, 1979); which is one characteristic of the contextual performance.

Figure 3 shows the results of the H4 serial mediation relationship, which associates the mediating variables in a serial causal chain (Hayes, 2012).

[INSERT_FIGURE_3_ABOUT_HERE]

H4 is confirmed, as statistical significance was obtained in the three direct relationships (*paths a, b, c*) and in the serial mediation relationship (*path d'*), but as the direct relationship between leadership and performance already occurs (*path d*), it is a partial mediation. The influence of support on commitment appears to be a way through which the influence of leadership on performance can occur, not as a necessary condition, but a mechanism that partially explains the effects of empowering leadership as an antecedent of characteristic behaviors of employees who exert high contextual performance, which comprises a large part of the sample (performance, mode=7).

The influence of perceived support on affective commitment brings a complementary role to support in the model, which does not directly trigger contextual performance, but by influencing commitment, forms a path for its promotion. It is inferred that the main role of organizational support is to intensify the affective connections of employees with the organization, as highlighted by Eisenberger *et al.* (1986). Although the constructs represent contextual and individual factors, together, these variables are self-promoting, to encourage greater contextual performance. In this way, an environment that fosters autonomy (through leadership), provides organizational support, and encourages affective commitment, promotes prosocial behaviors, such as collaboration and proactivity (contextual performance indicators), by providing wellness to employees and autonomy and shared responsibilities.

It was also observed that employees in mid-level hierarchical positions are associated with higher contextual performance when compared to those at the operational level, highlighting the different and higher level of contextual performance exerted in higher hierarchical position according to Befort and Hattrupt (2003) that focused on managerial experience outputs. Results indicates that medium-level employees (those who has managerial experience) can exert more to contextual performance, demonstrating behaviors such as taking responsibility for the results of the team and the organization, enlisting to volunteer for additional work, etc. In contrast to Motowildo and Van Scotter (1994), higher experience variables were not associated with greater contextual performance; which could indicate that this performance is not due to skills and mastery of techniques, but to proactive attitudes and personality. The model showed an explanatory power of 22% of the variation in contextual performance indices, an average coefficient, but substantial in analysis of social phenomena.

In a complementary analysis by the fsQCA technique revealed that: (i) empowering leadership, in the dimension of trust in the high performance of employees, is present in all solutions to obtain high contextual performance, which indicates greater relevance of this practice to be exercised by the leaders; (ii) the four dimensions of leadership complement each other for high contextual performance; (iii) affective commitment is necessary for high performance, but it is a solution only if it is integrated with leadership, which indicates an interrelationship between personal aspects and management style as drivers of extra-role behaviors in organizations; and (iv) perceived organizational support does not integrate any solution for contextual high performance, which adds to the results of the symmetric analysis.

5 Conclusion

The results of the symmetric analysis by SEM-PLS showed that empowering leadership precedes contextual performance exercised directly, while perceived organizational support does not explain (mediate) this relationship, affective commitment has been shown to mediate the relationship between leadership and performance. The proposed serial mediation was supported, seeing that leadership influenced perceived organizational support, which implied greater affective organizational commitment, which in turn, triggered greater contextual performance of employees. The results of the asymmetric analysis by fsQCA revealed that

empowering leadership, in the dimension of trust in high employee performance, is present in all solutions to obtain high contextual employee performance.

The rejection of the effect of perceived organizational support between empowering leadership and contextual performance contrasts theoretical expectations while leads to some alternative inferences and conclusions. The results shows that contextual performance have an intrinsic factor as antecedent (affective commitment) and is also affected by people's feeling more empowered by their leader, which give them a sense of autonomy and make they feel more self-sufficient. Employees that have that autonomy and feels highly empowered by their leader could also be the reason that organizational support don't have that much impact in this sample, they already feel empowered by their leader is a sufficient condition for them to exert prosocial behaviors. In this context, external factors such as organizational support is not a mean for employees to reciprocate the support felt, seeing that they are already empowered. Which is aligned with the arguments of Mowday et al. (1979) that highly committed employees are motivated to have higher perform, whereas affective dimensions are an intrinsic motivator for employees to act in favor of the organization, and is positive related with organizational citizenship behaviors (Gaudet and Tremblay, 2017), and that affective commitment promotes task performance and to a greater extent the contextual performance, found in Yousaf et al. (2015), might be the case of this study results regarding support.

It is concluded that the influence of leadership on performance does not only occur directly, but also indirectly through simple and serial mediation. This effect can be explained by affective commitment, in which employees establish affective bonds with the organization, and manifest prosocial behaviors with their colleagues. Serial mediation confirms that the variables analyzed are self-promoting to imply higher performance. Self-promotion denotes the relevance of organizational support in the model, which strongly influences affective commitment, which precedes contextual performance. The study's variables, which includes different contextual and individual factors, jointly foster managers' contextual performance in a self-promoting manner, adding to the managerial literature a serial-mediation framework and a path that companies' could follow in attempt to enhance middle-level manager's contextual performance. Asymmetric analysis corroborates the role of empowering leadership in contextual performance, with emphasis on trust in high performance employees.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to previous literature that considers contextual performance as an essential construct for organizational success (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Pradhan *et al.*, 2018). By analyzing the relationship of empowering leadership and contextual performance via perceived organizational support and affective organizational commitment, we contribute to the research gap highlighted by Gaudet and Tremblay (2017) and Sharma and Kirkman (2015). Furthermore, by rejecting the mediation of organizational support hypothesis, an important theoretical contribution is outlined, since this result diverges from the previous literature and indicates that individuals present discretionary behaviors and organizational citizenship (contextual performance) regardless of the perceived organizational support, which encourages further research.

The results suggest that exerting prosocial behaviors as their contextual performance is an intrinsic characteristic of employees (proactive performance, assisting and taking responsibility for their group, acting and having the intention of prosocial behaviors) is affected by its leader, but is not preceded by organizational characteristics, such as organizational support, a variable from a macro-organizational lens which is the opposite of the affective commitment, an intrinsic feeling. Despite that SET postulated that the strong organizational support felt by employees regarding to their organization they would build – as a positive response of those exchanges - a stronger exchange and connection, as the

arguments stated by SET seminal author, Blau (1964). This response did not occur regarding a stronger exchange from the part of the employee with their team and colleagues (which it is accessed in contextual performance), but that could have been seen and explain this contrasting results in regarding the employee's response to the organization itself. In other words, the perception of support was not reciprocated by higher contextual performance, as was expected from the social exchange perspective, but this response could be expressed regarding employee's their task performance, as it represents a response to their organization (the one they felt supported from). These contrasting results deepens the discussion and broadens the evidence of the studies that were build based on the SET theory.

The qualitative analysis showed that the empowering leadership who empowers its employees by trusting in their high performance, when they are confident that they will perform well their assignments was the needed condition to them to exert high levels of contextual performance. Which should be emphasized in organizations, this study aggregates to the existing literature this finding which disentangle the dimensions of empowering leadership and clearly shows that dimension strongly linked to high contextual performance behaviors. That made possible to conclude that leaders who empowers its employees through trusting, believing, that they will perform well they reciprocate to the organization improving their contextual performance, a finding that adds to the previous literature and consistent with SET that mention the socioemotional support received by the employees. The norms of reciprocity of voluntary actions in supporting organizational goals, whereas the organization provide socioemotional support from the leader trusting in employee's performance, and in turn they support organizational goals, exchange their feeling of empowerment to more contextual performance (Blau, 1964; Shore *et al.*, 2006; Rai and Kim, 2021).

5.2 Managerial implications

Contextual performance behaviors, as they are intrinsic to individuals, do not seem to require a direction from the organization to occur, as is the case with organizational support. However, a leadership that empowers them figures as an antecedent. Empowering leadership presented a significant and positive relationship with the other variables, which signals the importance of companies encouraging managers to adopt this leadership style. Affective organizational commitment should also be encouraged by managers, as it has been shown to mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and employees' contextual performance, which can be especially relevant to securing and gaining a competitive advantage by the organization. SET postulates that social exchanges of high quality can be developed through socioemotional reasons (Shore *et al.*, 2006), we postulated and confirmed the positive effects of empowering initiatives (Shehawy, 2022) over all the other variables of the model analyzed, which comprised positive organizational and individual aspects. Managers could focus in initiatives to promote these results such as to create empowering initiatives such as focusing in self-monitoring controls. Seeing that individuals under a higher empowering leadership are provided with more opportunities, information, and feedback (Beuren *et al.*, 2022; Qian *et al.*, 2018). The proposed serial mediation was supported, suggesting that the contextual and individual aspects researched are involved, whose consideration is important in favor of the manifestation of prosocial behaviors of employees with their colleagues and the organization.

5.3 Limitations and avenues for future research

The sample itself represents a limitation, results refer to employees' of The 150 Best Companies to Work in the 2018 ranking by Você S.A. Magazine. This sample have been selected based on the assumption that these companies were publicly rewarded and recognized to highly promote employee's development and well-being, which could not be

that evident in/nor generalized to other samples. Although the sample had adequate size to run all the equations proposed in the research framework, yet it represents a small ratio of participation that could be a limitation for the results' analysis. Other studies could try to get in contact with the respondents by another manner rather than by LinkedIn network, that might not be actively used by those participants. The methodological choices outline limitations that demand caution in the interpretation of the study results and instigate further investigations. Future studies may benefit from using alternative research methods (e.g., experiment, case study) or other variables, they can examine: (i) individual and contextual factors that act as predictors of empowering leadership, such as narcissism (negative influence) or collectivism (positive influence); (ii) potential moderating variables for the relationship between leadership and performance, such as role ambiguity (negative moderation) or personal integrity (positive moderation); (iii) other mediating variables, such as emotional exhaustion (negative mediation) and intrinsic motivation (positive mediation); and (iv) influence of the model on the performance of tasks, which together with the context configures the total performance exercised by the organization's employees.

Appendix A. Questionnaire

Empowering Leadership (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Zhang and Bartol, 2010)

1. My manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company.
2. My manager helps me understand the importance of my work to the overall effectiveness of the company.
3. My manager helps me understand how my job fits into the bigger picture.
4. My manager makes many decision together with me.
5. My manager often consults me on strategic decisions.
6. My manager solicits my opinion on decisions that may affect me.
7. My manager believes that I can handle demanding tasks.
8. My manager believes in my ability to improve even when I make mistakes.
9. My manager expresses confidence in my ability to perform at a high level.
10. My manager allows me to do my job my way.
11. My manager makes it more efficient for me to do my job by keeping the rules and regulations simple.
12. My manager allows me to make important decisions quickly to satisfy customer needs.

Perceived organizational support (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1997)

1. My organization cares about my opinions.
2. My organization really cares about my well-being.
3. My organization strongly considers my goals and values.
4. Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.
5. My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.
6. If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me.(R)
7. My organization shows very little concern for me.(R)
8. My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.

Affective organizational commitment (Mowday *et al.*, 1979)

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work.
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.(R)

4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.(R)
8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.(R)
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work over others I was considering at the time I joined.
11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.(R)
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.(R)
13. I really care about the fate of this organization.
14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.(R)

Contextual performance (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994; Pradhan *et al.*, 2018)

1. I comply with instructions even when the leader or other group members are absent.
2. I cooperate with others on our team.
3. I persist in overcoming obstacles to complete a task.
4. I volunteer for additional work or responsibilities.
5. I follow the rules and avoid shortcuts.
6. I take on more challenging tasks.
7. I offer to help group members with their work.
8. I pay close attention to details.
9. I defend the leader's decisions.
10. I am courteous to other group members.
11. I support and encourage group members when there is a problem.
12. I take the initiative to solve a problem.
13. I exercise personal discipline and self-control.
14. I tackle difficult assignment enthusiastically.
15. I volunteer to do more than one should for the benefit of the group.

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Table 1. Sample descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
Level of education	n.	%		Age	years
High school / undergraduate	61	33.52%		Mean	37
Specialization / MBA	12	61.54%		S.D.	9.5
Master / Ph.D. degree	9	4.95%		Mode	50
Company's activities	n.	%		Experience in the position	years
Local / regional market	25	13.74%		Mean	4.83
National (Brazilian) market	76	41.76%		S.D.	2.83
International market	81	44.51%		Mode	1
Genre	n.	%		Time in the company	years
Male	133	73.08%		Mean	9.08
Female	49	26.92%		S.D.	5.61
				Mode	2

Note: $n=182$.

Table 2. Measurement model and variable descriptive statistics

Panel A: Results of the measurement model: Validity and reliability coefficients										
	Discriminant validity							AVE	α	CR
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
1. Empowering leadership	.792							0.627	0.946	0.953
2. Organizational support perceived	.673	.822						0.676	0.903	0.926
3. Affective commitment	.573	.640	.815					0.665	0.927	0.940
4. Contextual performance	.421	.341	.405	.762				0.580	0.854	0.892
5. Mid-level_position	.075	.138	.046	.193	-			-	-	-
6. Company_time ≥ 5 years	.080	.146	.123	.061	.176	-		-	-	-
7. Position_experience ≥ 5 years	.055	.116	.086	.069	.069	.569	-	-	-	-
Panel B: Descriptive statistics of variables and model fit indicator										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Model fit		
Average	5.45	5.21	5.82	6.22	-	9.08	4.83	SRMR		
Mode	7	6	7	7	-	2	1	0.034		
% of variation (SD/average)	23%	24%	19%	13%	-	62%	59%			

Caption: AVE = average variance extracted; α = Cronbach's alpha ; CR = composite reliability; diagonal values are the square root of the AVE; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

Note: $n=182$. Control variables are qualitative on a binary scale, representing the sample group that = are in mid-level positions (73.22%); time in the company ≥ 5 years (57.92%); experience in the position ≥ 5 years (34.42%); descriptive statistics are calculated with the continuous scale.

Table 3. Structural model of paths

Panel A: Results of Structural Equation Modeling Paths					
	<i>Path</i> →	β	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	f^2 (result)
H1	Empowering leadership → performance	0.290	2.602	0.009	0.057 (small)
	Empowering leadership → perceived support	0.673	11.855	0.000	0.828 (large)
H2	Perceived support → performance	-0.042	0.385	0.700	0.001
	Leadership → support → performance	-0.028	0.378	0.705	without mediation
	Empowering leadership → commitment	0.261	2.659	0.008	0.067 (small)
H3	Commitment → performance	0.259	3.398	0.001	0.049 (small)
	Leadership → commitment → performance	0.068	2.183	0.029	partial mediation
	Perceived support → commitment	0.464	5.515	0.000	0.213 (average)
H4	Leadership → support → commit. → performance	0.081	2.659	0.008	partial mediation
	Control: Mid-level_position → performance	0.169	2.342	0.019	0.036 (small)
	Control: Company_time ≥5 years → performance	-0.046	0.573	0.566	0.002
	Control: Position experience ≥5 years → performance	0.051	0.684	0.494	0.002
Panel B: Model determination and adjustment coefficients					
	Perceived support	Commitment	Performance		
	Adjusted R ²	0.450	0.440	0.220	
	Q ²	0.442	0.433	0.172	

Caption: β = structural coefficient; f^2 = effect size, according to Cohen's parameters (1988): small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35); effect; results by bootstrapping with 5,000 resamplings.

Note: $n=182$. *Maximum Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF) = 2.851.

Table 4. Sufficient solutions for high contextual performance

Conditions for high contextual performance	Solution 1	Solution 2	Solution 3
Leadership_highlights the importance of work		●	○
Leadership_encourages participation in the decision-making process		●	○
Leadership_trusts high performance	●	●	●
Leadership_provides autonomy	●	●	○
Perceived organizational support			○
Affective organizational commitment	●		
Gross coverage	0.822	0.685	0.091
Single coverage	0.094	0.016	0.014
Consistency	0.990	0.994	1
Overall solution coverage		0.886	
Overall consistency of the solution		0.983	

Note: Black circles (●) indicate the presence of the condition within the proposed solution; white circles (○) indicate absence of the condition; no circles indicate that the condition is indifferent to the proposed solution.