

## Visionary Leadership and Organizational Change: Mediating Role of Trust in the Leader

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The purpose of this study is to empirically examine and explore the impact of visionary leadership on organizational change with the mediating role of trust in the leader. This study attempts to explicate and test the key role of visionary leadership in bringing and implementing change in organizations. An empirical test of the hypotheses was done using confirmatory factor analysis, process macro for mediation, and regression analysis. The data was collected from 230 managerial level employees of selected banks operating in Pakistan. Findings suggest that visionary leadership is positively related to organizational change and trust in leaders, and trust in the leader is positively related to organizational change. Employees who trust their leader positively perceive the change in the organization and they realize that their leader is well aware of their needs. So, the leader will bring change in the organization that will be beneficial for them. All the established relationships are empirically tested, theoretically explained, and supported by literature review. This study makes a significant original contribution toward the role of visionary leadership in bringing change in the organizations through developing trust. It has practical implications for managers and leaders confronting organizational change.

**Keywords:** Visionary leadership, organizational change, trust in the leader

### INTRODUCTION

The past decade of leadership theory and research has provided significant support for the effectiveness of visionary leadership in organizations. Research has shown that visionary leadership positively affects net profit margin (Waldman, Ramirez, House, & Puranam, 2001), stock value (Agle & Sonnenfeld, 1994), and follower perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2013). Given substantial empirical support for the impact of visionary leadership on positive organizational outcomes, many scholars have turned their attention to the interpersonal skills and capabilities that are necessary for representing visionary leadership behaviors. It has become a standard for organizations to engage in strategic change initiatives to remain competitive (Johansson & Heide, 2008). However, characterized by ambiguities and uncertainties (Corley & Gioia, 2004), approximately 40%–70% of change initiatives fail (Burns, 2002). Organizational change not only costs time and money but when done improperly, also weakens the employee commitment and morale, results in lower work efficacy and higher turnover rates (Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Organizational changes have increased pressure on organizational leaders, who play an important role in the implementation of organizational change (Pawar & Eastman, 1997). An American Management Association survey indicated that leadership was the top determining factor of successful change, followed by corporate values, and communication (Gill, 2002). Successful leadership not only develops vision, strategy, and culture for change but also motivates and empowers employees in change engagement (Gill, 2002). Visionary leaders, with their vision and strategy, can develop identification, trust, and confidence from the employees (Yue, Men, & Ferguson, 2019). Research has shown the positive impact of visionary leadership on organizational change (Groves, 2006), organizational performance and growth (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998), as well as staff and customer satisfaction (Kantabutra, 2006).

Visionary leadership is far beyond vision development and vision communication among followers. Visionary leadership has positive effects on their follower's outcomes; it develops trust in leaders, higher commitment to the leader, and higher employee performance that results in higher organizational performance (Kirkpatrick, 2011). A high concern of visionary leadership on followers increases the job satisfaction and OCB of employees in organizations (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2013).

Many leadership scholars argue that classic leaders are described by their followers as inspirational and visionary (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Conger, 1999; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004) while recent empirical studies and meta-analytic reviews validate the influential effects of visionary leadership at the individual, group, and organization-levels of analysis. Past research shows that visionary leadership positively affects net profit margin (Waldman et al., 2001), follower perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Dumdum et al., 2013), and stock value (Agle & Sonnenfeld, 1994). Visionary leadership results in positive consequences in organizations by creating and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that explains the current situation and persuades commitment to a better future (Conger, 1999). This results in high trust in the leader, high levels of performance among followers, high commitment to the leader, and high overall organizational performance (DuBrin, 1998).

Using the Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), to fully delineate how visionary leadership influences organizational change, the study proposes employee trust in the leader as a potential mediating factor. Trust has been suggested as the essence of organizational success, performance (Currall & Epstein, 2003), organization-public relationships (Hon & Grunig, 1999), and reputation (Yang, 2007). It has also been linked with numerous employee outcomes such as job satisfaction (Yang, 2014), and employee organizational citizenship behavior (Duffy & Lilly, 2013; Watt & Shaffer, 2005). The change puts employees in a weak position and creates varying degrees of uncertainty around them (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007; Bordia, Hunt, Paulsen, Tourish, & DiFonzo, 2004; DiFonzo & Bordia,

2002). However, employee's trust resulted from effective leadership, can diminish their uncertainty and psychological stress and leads to change acceptance (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). In other words, trust in a leader likely mediates the impact of leadership on organizational change (Yue et al., 2019). There is no empirical research on the relationship of visionary leadership and organizational change with the mediating role of trust in a leader (Hussain, 2013).

According to Organization Support Theory (OST), (Eisenberger et al., 1986), employees develop a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, if leaders and organizations support the employees and value them, then the employees are ready to follow their leaders, and in a situation of organizational change, they are ready to accept and implement change. This study is supported by Organizational Support Theory. Trust is an important component of organizational support theory. Based on OST, we built an argument that visionary leaders provide support to their employees to win their trust and commitment so the employees will follow them in a situation of organizational change as ultimately, the employees who trust in the leader, will accept the change in the organization. Therefore, this study examines how visionary leadership affects organizational change with the mediation of employee trust in a leader during an organizational change (Yue et al., 2019).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES**

### **Visionary leadership and Organizational Change**

Organizational change is defined as an effort or sequence of attempts to transform an organization's structure, goals, technology, or work task (Carnall, 1986). Certain aspects of job satisfaction have direct and indirect (via organizational commitment) effects on organizational change. Additionally, organizational commitment has direct effects on organizational change (Yousef, 2017). Nowadays, organizations are facing change and transformation from traditional ways of doing business towards modern and technical ways. Leaders face a dynamic business environment where change is an essential requirement. A type of leadership that has gained interest recently is visionary leadership. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007) vision is an "ideal and unique picture of the future for common good". Vision is an art to see the invisible. In organizations, knowing what to do and where to go in the future requires a clear vision. Vision provides inspiration, motivation, and a sense of responsibility in the individuals in an organization and they develop their decisions based on the results and outcomes which they already know because of the clear vision (Kotter, 1995). Visionary leadership has been defined as the "communication of an image of a future for a collective to persuade others to contribute to the realization of that future" (Stam, Lord, Knippenberg, & Wisse, 2014).

Visionary leadership has been studied with knowledge sharing (Svetlik, Stavrou-Costea, & Lin, 2007), and employee creativity (Zhou, Zhao, Tian, Zhang, & Chen, 2018). Visionary leadership is related to follower performance and perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 2004), collective self-confidence among followers (Paul, Costley, Howell, Dorfman, & Trafimow, 2001), and follower affective commitment (Dvir, Kass, & Shamir, 2004). Regarding organizational level outcomes, visionary leadership

has been associated with organizational change (Groves, 2006), organizational performance and growth (Baum et al., 1998), as well as staff and customer satisfaction (Kantabutra, 2006). Visionary leadership has been associated with creativity and innovation (Conger, 1995; D'Intino, Boyles, Neck, & Hall, 2008; Merritt & DeGraff, 1996; Morden, 1997; Taylor, Cornelius, & Colvin, 2014; Westley & Mintzberg, 1989), and some studies suggest that visionary leadership may play an important role in influencing the circumstances and boundary conditions required for successful creativity and innovation (Mascareño, Rietzschel, & Wisse, 2020). Visionary leadership has a direct and positive effect on learning organization, innovative behavior, and performance (Anshar, 2017).

Waldman et al. (2001), argue that effective communication is used by visionary leaders to change subordinates' attitudes and outputs which lead to organizational transformations and change. Dhammika (2016), found that the visionary leadership behavior of leaders advances the organizational citizenship of employees. Different studies endorse that leaders who emphasize organizational vision are more successful (Çınar & Kaban, 2012). Correspondingly, Breevaart et al. (2014), confirm that different studies suggest that visionary leaders play a great role in improving the profitability of their organizations. Hater and Bass (1988), claim that visionary leadership has a positive relationship with employee perceptions of leadership effectiveness, organizational effectiveness, and employee satisfaction. Researchers have investigated visionary leaders who have impacted positively the success and growth of their organizations (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Lührmann & Eberl, 2007). These studies confirm that leaders that communicative visions or mission, inspire and empower their followers, experience a change in organizational function and growth. Zhu, Chew, and Spangler (2005) emphasized that visionary leadership creates high levels of motivation, trust, cohesion, commitment, and enhanced performance in the organizations. Cheema, Akram, and Javed (2015), found that visionary leadership and employee engagement both have a positive relationship with performance measures of customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction. (Çınar & Kaban, 2012), studied that the main focus of visionary leaders is on the future mission and the ongoing process at its finest in the business. Customer satisfaction, Employee satisfaction, environmental performance, community, corporate social performance have a significant positive relationship with visionary leadership (Nwachukwu, Chladkova, Zufan, & Olatunji, 2017).

The change process always faces resistance from the employees, in such a situation, a leader plays an important role as he or she motivate and convince the employees to accepting change and achieving their common goals through communicating and generating new ideas (Rasool, 2016), a strong leader is required in the organization to solve the problems emerging from the change development (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Visionary leadership is a reliable way of preparing employees to tolerate an ambiguous situation and generate new ideas to develop achieving goals (Kadir, Adebayo, & Abayomi, 2020). If visionary leaders do not empower the followers to make day to day decisions that help in the implementation of a change initiative, there is a great chance of the change implementation failure (Tonaszuck, 2000), effective changes are always required from the effective leaders (Deal &

Kennedy, 2000). According to scholars and different researchers, leadership competencies are essential in successful organizational change and have an immense relationship with organizational success (Gruban, 2003).

According to Organizational Support Theory, the reason that employees who believe that they receive a higher level of support from the organization will perform better on extra-role behaviors is that they feel obligated to care about the organization and help meet its objectives through positive attitudes and behaviors towards the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Based on Organizational Support Theory, we build an argument that visionary leaders support their employees to gain their commitment and support to bring and implement change in the organization as leaders alone cannot bring change without the support of their subordinates. Therefore, in this study we argue that visionary leadership is positively associated with organizational change and thus, propose a hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive relationship between visionary leadership and organizational change.

#### **Mediating effect of Trust in Leader**

Trust has been defined as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Visionary leaders act in a way that they are being trusted by their followers and employees as they have been developed pride, confidence, and respect in their followers (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). Trust develops the confidence of followers in their leader’s fair intentions following the change in the organization (Harvey, Royal, & Stout, 2003). In research; trust is an important element in leadership that impacts organizational change (Smollan, 2013). Zhu et al. (2005), highlighted that visionary leadership produces high levels of trust, motivation, cohesion, commitment, and enhanced performance in the organizations.

According to Organization Support Theory (OST), (Eisenberger et al., 1986), employees develop a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, if leaders and organizations support the employees and value them, then the employees are ready to follow their leaders, and in a situation of organizational change, they are ready to accept and implement change. This study is supported by Organizational Support Theory. In the work setting, employees receive economic and socio-emotional benefits from the organization. OST describes that employees who expect support and benefit from organizational resources will feel responsible for the organization, which consequently causes a sense of obligation to repay the organization. On one hand, employees repay the organization by displaying positive attitudes and behaviors (Greenberg, 1980), such as engaging themselves in more work (Wayne & Green, 1993), higher organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, external support (Yue et al., 2019), and loyalty (Eisenberger et al., 2010); on the other hand, organizational support and care are important factors that develop employees’ mutual behaviors. Trust differentiates economic relationships from long-term social exchange relationships (Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006). Employees with high perceived organizational support should be more assured that the organization will not take advantage of their vulnerabilities

(Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Shore & Shore, 1995). Employees, who trust in their leader perform responsibly to get support from their leaders. We propose that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between visionary leadership and trust in the leader.

Organizational change is creating and accepting of the challenges and changes in the organizational environment. In such an environment employees trusting their leaders easily understand the adoption of innovative policies and happily accept the challenges and achieve them certainly (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004). When employees trust their leader they allow themselves to become vulnerable to the leader’s actions and take risks as per their leader’s goals and aspirations (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). During times of change, trust reveals the faith and psychological alignment of the employees to their leader’s mission and through their cooperative and supportive attitudes towards change (Howarth & Rafferty, 2009). According to research, leaders should develop trust in the organizations as trust helps in the challenging and complex times and when an organization needs changes to implement or new processes are required to implement (Bligh, 2017). Scholars and researchers admit the significance and importance of employees’ trust for developing change in the organization (Soparnot, 2011). Effectively achieving goals by the employees of the organizations during the change process depends on the trust they have in their leaders (Kotter, 1995). Trust is an influential force for organizational management (Savolainen & Häkkinen, 2011). In the organizational change process, leaders develop new ideas, goals, and visions. Leaders need the faith, acceptance, and trust of the followers before implementing their vision and ideas. Communication plays an important in developing trust in the leader. Trust also impacts the intentions of the employee to leave or stay in the organization (Bligh, 2017). Leaders develop trust through their behavior that enhances the follower’s perception of a leader’s integrity, benevolence, and ability (Gomibuchi, 2004). The employee who has trust in leader, they will be ready to accept change in the organization. We propose that:

H3: There is a positive relationship between trust in the leader and organizational change.

Leaders collaborate with their employees to affect the acceptance of change and reduce employee resistance to it so that they can create change together (Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007). Among the various significant factors influencing organizational success, trust has been empirically established as a mediator between transformational leadership and job satisfaction (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999), employee attitudes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), and team performance (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011). Furthermore, trust also results from effective internal communication and in turn affects employee behaviors and overall organizational consequences (Gillis, 2006). When employees trust in leaders’ abilities to implement the change, they believe that the change is beneficial and well-intentioned, and accept change. In this process, trust assists as a key mediator through which the power of visionary leadership is demonstrated (Yue et al., 2019).

The employee who trusts in leaders believes their interests are associated with their organizations, which is particularly

critical in the changing environment. Research shows that the trusting relationship between employees and leaders is the basis for successful change initiative; specifically, trust in leader encourages positive employee attitude toward the change (Devos, Buelens, & Bouckennooghe, 2007; Ertürk, 2008), while a lack of trust leads to a reduction in the perception of the validity of the change, less willingness for the change, and stronger behavioral resistance to the change (Oreg, 2006; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). According to the Organizational Support Theory, organizational support initiates a social exchange process wherein employees feel obligated to help the organization achieve its goals and objectives and expect that increased efforts on the organization's behalf will lead to greater rewards. Perceived organizational support also fulfills socio-emotional needs, resulting in greater identification and commitment to the organization, an increased desire to help the organization succeed (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Trust and commitment are the essential aspects of the organizational support theory. According to OST, perceived organizational support increases employees' positive orientation toward the organization through the social exchange by eliciting increased felt obligation, trust, and expectation that effort on behalf of the organization will be rewarded. Organizational support theory provides a comprehensive framework for explaining the effects of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). The literature explains its positive impact on outcomes that are beneficial for both employees and organizations. First, self-enhancement processes are at stake to the extent that perceived organizational support helps to fulfill employees' socio-emotional needs in the workplace (e.g. need for esteem, need for affiliation, etc.), (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Second, the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), posits that employees who feel supported by their organization will repay their debt and reciprocate the favorable treatment in a form of following their leaders and getting ready to work in the situation of change incurred in the organization.

Partners engaging in a relationship have their preferences, expectations, and priorities that need to be fulfilled. Trust begins to emerge in this relationship when each of them starts fulfilling what others need to achieve (Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006). Lack of trust in business relationships has hostile consequences for both parties (Beccerra & Gupta, 1999; Young & Wilkinson, 1989). Visionary leaders strive to bring change in the organizations to achieve various organizational benefits, they are unable to bring that change without the employee's trust in them. Visionary leaders effects positively organizational change and employees who trust their leaders, accept the change for their career benefits and job retention. Employees will promote trust in their leaders since they will have confidence in the ability of the leader to be proactive and to guide them closely to ensure the fulfillment of their needs. Therefore, trust becomes an important element in bringing change in the organizations (Cullen, Johnson, & Sakano, 2000). Employees trust and respect leaders as these leaders promote the personal growth of their followers and improve personal growth (Bass, 1990). According to Gillespie and Mann (2004), trust is an essential component of the relationship between leaders and their followers (Birasnav, Mittal, & Dalpati, 2019). We extend these findings by proposing that trust in a leader has

a mediating role between visionary leadership and organizational change:

H4: Trust in the leader has a mediating role between visionary leadership and the organizational change

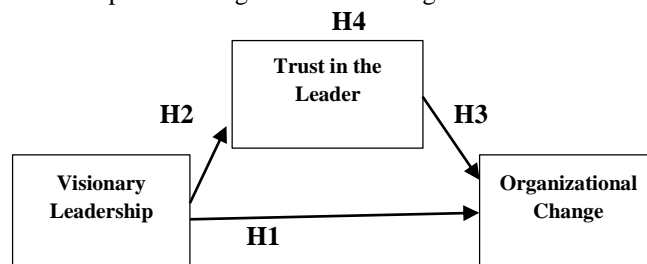


Figure 1: Research Framework

## METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in different branches of banking sector organizations in Pakistan and data was collected through a questionnaire survey method. The reason for selecting the banking sector is as they are providing the services and there are monthly monetary targets of the banks which one should meet, so the role of leadership or manager is obvious in this sector. The top seven scheduled banks based on a capital share in the market is the sample of the study including. These banks were approached through the personal and professional contacts of authors for formal permission of data collection. After getting approval, we sent an email invitation containing our survey to the contact persons who forwarded the surveys to their employees. Besides, the authors also visited some of these organizations where email invitations were not possible. The authors collected data by personally visiting the organizational sites during which surveys were distributed among respondents individually. A simple random sampling was used to get the information from the required respondents. Simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Olken & Rotem, 1986). The respondents are the employees of the banks who are at the managerial level (first-line manager) who directly oversee their department and its employees and who directly meet their clients in the banks. A sample refers to a smaller, manageable version of a larger group (Miaoulis & Michener, 1976).

To compute the sample size, we used the formula by Hair Jr., Sarstedt, Hopkins, and Kuppelwieser (2014), but we sent a questionnaire to more employees so we can get accurate data. 290 (sample) questionnaires were circulated among employees of selected branches of banks in Pakistan. 245 responses were received, out of the 230 were filled, and 15 were incomplete therefore they were not included in the study. So a total of 230 responses were used for data analysis. Thus calculated response rate against 230 filled responses was 79 %.

Of the 230 respondents, males accounted for 85 percent, females accounted for 15 percent, undergraduate degree holders accounted for 50 percent, and 22 percent with master's degree, 61 percent were aged below 30 years and 25 percent were above the age of 30 years, 38 percent accounted for below 15 years' experience and the 36 percent were accounted for above 15 years of experience.

## Measures

Visionary Leadership; Visionary leadership is assessed by using the 17 items Likert scale compiled/adapted from previous research. Sashkin (1995), developed a visionary leadership questionnaire named “Leadership Behavior Questionnaire”. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  test showed the construct had good reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=.881$ ).

Trust in Leader: Trust in leader was measured by using 6 items Likert scale developed by (Cook & Wall, 1980). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  test showed the construct had good reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=.849$ ).

Organizational Change: Organizational change was measured by using 13 items Likert scale “Organizational change questionnaire-Climate of change, processes, and Readiness” developed by (Bouckennooghe, Devos, & Van den Broeck, 2009). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  test showed the construct had good reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=.845$ ).

## RESULTS

### Measurement Model Evaluation

We validated the measurement model through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results of CFA along with the evidence of reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity are provided in Tables 1 and 2. Factor loadings for all the constructs averaged above 0.7 with average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5 providing the evidence for convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Alpha coefficients for all the constructs were above 0.7 indicating the suitable level of reliability of all the constructs

**Table I:** Measurement Model Validation: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Indicator ( $\alpha$ =Cronbach’s Alpha, AVE=Average variance extracted)	Loadings
<b>Visionary Leadership (<math>\alpha=.881</math>, AVE= 0.57)</b>	
My manager encourages people to support their views and positions with concrete evidence	0.81
My manager pays close attention to what others say when talking to them	0.78
My manager can see the effects of his or her actions	0.88
My manager acts to reach goals rather than trying to keep things the way they are	0.62
My manager has a clear set of priorities	0.75
My manager recognizes others’ strengths and contributions	0.6
My manager finds ways to get people fully committed to new ideas and projects	0.75
My manager shows that the real value of power is being able to accomplish things that benefit both the organization and its members	0.65
My manager grabs people’s attention to focus them on the important issues in a discussion	0.6
My manager learns from mistakes, treating errors as opportunities for learning rather than as disasters	0.65
My manager seeks power and influence to attain organizational goals that everyone agrees are important	0.7
My manager expresses and supports a set of basic values about how people should work together in this organization to solve common problems and reach shared goals	0.85
My manager can get complicated ideas across clearly	0.75
My manager believes that he or she can make a difference to this organization	0.88
My manager wants influence to create programs and attain organizational goals that will benefit everyone in the organization	0.8
My manager has plans for this organization that extend for several years or longer	0.9
My manager contributes to the organization’s effective operation in terms of adapting to changes, attaining objectives, and coordinating the work activities of individuals	0.85

### Trust in Leadership ( $\alpha=.849$ , AVE= 0.53)

I feel quite confident that my leader will always try to treat me fairly	0.73
My manager would never try to gain an advantage by deceiving workers	0.76
I have complete faith in the integrity of my manager/supervisor	0.81
I feel a strong loyalty to my leader	0.74
I would support my leader in almost any emergency	0.62
I have a strong sense of loyalty toward my leader	0.73
<b>Organizational Change (<math>\alpha=.845</math>, AVE= 0.50)</b>	
I am regularly informed on how the change is going	0.6
I experience the change as a positive process	0.84
Our department’s senior managers pay sufficient attention to the personal consequences that he changes could have for their staff members	0.79
The executive management team supports the change process unconditionally	0.56
The executive management team is actively involved with the changes	0.53
Our department’s executives are perfectly capable of fulfilling their new function	0.75
There is good communication between project leaders and staff members about the organization’s policy toward changes	0.62
Our department’s senior managers coach us very well about implementing change	0.70
I have a good feeling about the change project	0.88
I am willing to make a significant contribution to the change	0.82
Staff members were consulted about the reasons for the change	0.65
I am willing to put energy into the process of change	0.77
The executive management team has a positive vision of the future	0.62

**Table II:** Results of confirmatory factor analysis for the measurement model

CFA model	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	CF	TLI	RMSEA	Pclose
	695.768	209	3.329	0.821	0.723	0.07	0

**Table III:** Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and (Cronbach Alpha)

	$\beta$	Sig	LLCI	UCLI
<b>Direct Effects</b>				
Visionary leadership → Organizational change	0.27	0.0094	0.0489	0.3464
Visionary leadership → Trust in leader	0.367	0	0.2384	0.4946
Trust in leader → Organizational Change	0.262	0.007	0.0541	0.3381
<b>Indirect Effect</b>				
Visionary leadership → trust in leader → Organizational change	0.184	0.0094	0.015	0.1509

Note(s): n= 230; LLCI= lower limit confidence interval; UCLI=upper limit confidence interval,

We established discriminant validity through a comparison of the bivariate correlations with the square root of AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 3 shows that correlations between all pairs of constructs are lesser than associated AVEs suggesting a suitable adequate level of discriminant validity. Table 3 also provides means and standard deviations (SD) for the constructs in the study. CFA was carried out using AMOS 21 to evaluate the measurement model. CFA results yielded a very good fit ( $\chi^2/df=3.32$ ,  $p=0.000$ , TLI=.723, CFI=0.821, RMSEA=0.07), provided in Table 2.

### Hypotheses Testing

We used regression analysis to test the hypotheses of the study. The regression results are provided in Table 3. Results of

our tests show that visionary leadership is positively related to organizational change ( $\beta=0.270$ ,  $p<0.01$ )-hypothesis 1, and trust in the leader ( $\beta=0.367$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), hypothesis-2. Trust in the leader is positively related to organizational change ( $\beta=0.262$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), hypothesis-3.

Thus, Hypothesis 1-3 is supported.

**Table IV: Tests of Direct and Indirect Effects**

Variables	Mean	Std	1	2
Visionary Leadership	3.4916	0.55513	<i>-0.754</i>	
Trust	3.5159	0.58153	.350**	<i>-0.728</i>
Organizational Change	3.8973	.61947	.242**	<i>.246**</i>

Note(s): \*\* Correlation significant at 0.01 level, –Square root of AVE is provided on the diagonal in italics

To test the remaining hypotheses, we used sequential mediation analysis (Model 4 in PROCESS Macro) using 5000 bootstrapped samples (Hayes & Preacher, 2014) to test if trust in leaders mediates the relationship between visionary leadership and organizational change. Further, in line with Hypotheses, 4 indirect effects revealed that trust in the leader ( $\beta=0.184$ ) partially mediates the relationship between visionary leadership and organizational change.

## DISCUSSION

Organizations of all types are looking for ways to produce successful results. Visionary leadership is an often-researched concept, which has the potential to produce long-lasting positive outcomes that are desired (Taylor et al., 2014). While visionary leadership has been recognized as a key potential predictor of change (Van Knippenberg, 2014), this research is one of the first to focus on the relationship between visionary leadership and organizational change with the mediation of trust in the leader. It has become the new norm for organizations to adapt to constant changes in this highly competitive business environment. Both organizational scholars and practitioners seek different strategies to gain support from employees to increase the likelihood of change success. Under this context, the purpose of this study was to investigate how visionary leadership fosters employee trust during organizational change, and how these factors interplay to stimulate employee openness to organizational change.

The findings demonstrate that leader actions can result in trust development in them by their employees, which increase the likelihood that long-term successes might be met by the organization as the organization works as per the market requirements and change is also the demand of markets and industry (Taylor et al., 2014). Rowold and Rohmann (2009), found that transformational leadership styles were more strongly related to effectiveness than transactional leadership styles in German voluntary choirs, and those styles were studied with organizational change as well. Similarly, the current study results suggest that visionary leadership has a positive effect of organizational change and is consistent with previous research findings.

The findings of this study are consistent with research on organizational change, which suggests leaders with change plans must establish a high emotional commitment to the position they are advocating (Conger, 1998; Huy, 2002), and also develop trust in employees so they would not resist change. We argued that visionary leadership should stimulate change because visionary leadership promotes goal alignment amongst team members, which communication quality should strengthen this indirect path, and such leaders are trusted

because of their clear vision. Based on organizational support theory (OST), our study suggests that both the leaders and employees work for the benefits of organizations and themselves. The direct and indirect path analyses in our results show the relevance of visionary leadership and organizational change which is the premise of our first hypothesis. A strong positive correlation is evident in support of this claim which means the more that leaders are visionary, the higher the change in organizations will come.

The results of this study provide directions that organizations should have proper leadership selection and development channels when in pursuit, who can successfully lead and manage change. Furthermore, organizations would benefit from training their managers on how best to incorporate values into their daily communication with employees, and on the most effective ways to be confident, animated, and expressive when interacting with employees and how to develop trust in them so the employees will follow their directions. With organizations of today being faster, complex, and turbulent than ever before, managers who can foster employee support and wins their trust for change will be vital for organizational success. Trust in the leader as well as interpersonal trust among the employees is considered as a driving force to increase the efficiency of the organizations (Ali & Allam, 2016). This research sheds light on important ways managers can motivate employee support for organizational change especially through developing trust in them. Motivated employees always think positively about the organization (Shah & Asad, 2018). If the employees trust in the leader so they will accept the innovative schemes and give a far better performance which gives new directions to the organizations. In today's competitive organizational structures it is important to give the best always so the role of the leader is very peculiar resulting in the organizational change

## Theoretical and Practical Implications

As one of the first empirical efforts to examine the impact of visionary leadership on organizational change, with the mediation of trust in the leader, the findings offer important theoretical and practical implications. The findings provide theoretical understandings of how visionary leadership works to facilitate organizational change. Organizational leaders should communicate a clear and persuasive vision for the change which can help unite employees, guide them in the right direction, and describe a shared purpose that motivates employees to support change (Men & Bowen, 2016). Leaders at numerous levels should exhibit confidence and determination in their communications and actions, and act as role models to support and promote the change. They should also challenge employees to think out of the box and be innovative and creative, take advantage of the transformative opportunity that change brings about. Most importantly, leaders should identify employees' feelings such as stress and insecurity toward change and show honest consideration and care for employees' feelings, concerns, welfare, and needs.

Practically, this research suggests that supervisors should exercise visionary leadership to align and support members and to bring about change. Specifically, leaders should develop their abilities to create and communicate a persuasive vision of the future to bring change to the organizations. This study contributes to the academic literature by providing insights into the vital role of visionary leadership in bringing up

organizational change. It provides researchers new avenues to research or explore this research facet further. From a theoretical perspective, our study contributes to research on the effects of visionary leadership on organizational change, mediated by trust in the leader. This study further demonstrated that trust in the leader is the most critical in successful change implementation, and therefore urges companies to boost trust-building as a top business matter.

#### Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the above-mentioned contributions, the study has some limitations that should be acknowledged and addressed in future research. First, the study examined visionary leadership using self-reported data from single employees' perceptions. Second, this research is a cross-sectional study and, thus, the cross-sectional data may hamper the ability of the respondents to make causal relations. Third, the study applied a generalized approach to examine organizational change, which did not specify any change type. Future research could state the model in the study in specific change perspectives, such as structural, merger and acquisition, technological, strategic, people-oriented, or culture change. Other effective leadership styles (e.g., coaching leadership, affiliate leadership, authentic leadership, democratic leadership, ethical leadership, transactional leadership) with organizational change could be studied in future studies.

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