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EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN LEADERSHIP PERCEPTION AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN MNCS

^{*1}Jemima N. A. A. Lomotey, ²Anthony K. Apekey

¹PhD, DBA, University of Phoenix, AZ, USA.

²PhD, University of Ghana, Legon, GH.

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*Corresponding Author: Jemima N. A. A. Lomotey

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction in multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Ghana. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 350 employees and 1,050 customers across seven MNCs in the banking, telecommunications, and hospitality sectors. Leadership perception was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) assessing transformational and transactional leadership. Employee organizational commitment was measured using Meyer and Allen's three-component commitment scale. Customer satisfaction was measured using the SERVQUAL multidimensional scale. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine relationships and mediating effects. Results revealed significant positive correlations between leadership perception and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.47$, $p < .001$), leadership perception and employee commitment ($r = 0.51$, $p < .001$), and employee commitment and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$). Hierarchical regression demonstrated that leadership perception significantly predicted customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$), accounting for 28% of the variance. Employee organizational commitment significantly mediated the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction (indirect effect = 0.21, 95% CI: 0.14 to 0.28). The findings highlight that committed employees, inspired by positive leadership, deliver superior service quality that enhances customer satisfaction. Implications for leadership development, employee engagement, and customer service strategies in Ghanaian MNCs are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Leadership Perception, Employee Organizational Commitment, Customer Satisfaction, Multinational Corporations, Ghana, Service Quality, Transformational Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a fundamental objective for multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in competitive service sectors, as it drives customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term profitability (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994). In Ghana's banking, telecommunications, and hospitality sectors, where MNCs face intense competition from both local and international players, achieving high levels of customer satisfaction is essential for market share and sustainability (Amoako & Asiedu, 2019). While organizations invest heavily in service quality initiatives, the role of internal organizational factors—particularly leadership and employee attitudes—in shaping customer satisfaction is increasingly recognized as critical (Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz, & Niles-Jolly, 2005).

Leadership perception refers to employees' subjective evaluations of their leaders' behaviors, effectiveness, and authenticity (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Employees who perceive their leaders positively—as transformational, supportive, and inspirational—are more likely to exhibit positive work attitudes and behaviors that benefit customer service delivery (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Conversely, negative leadership perceptions can undermine employee motivation, engagement, and service quality, ultimately diminishing customer satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002). Understanding how leadership perception translates into customer satisfaction is therefore essential for organizations seeking to optimize both employee and customer outcomes.

Employee organizational commitment, defined as employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their organization, is a key mechanism through which leadership influences customer satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Committed employees are more likely to go beyond formal job requirements, deliver high-quality service, and maintain positive interactions with customers (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). When employees perceive their leaders positively, they develop stronger organizational commitment, which in turn enhances their service behaviors and customer satisfaction (Wang, Hsieh, & Hsu, 2015). Thus, employee commitment may serve as a mediating mechanism linking leadership perception to customer satisfaction.

The service-profit chain theory (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding these relationships. According to this theory,

effective leadership creates a supportive organizational climate that enhances employee satisfaction and commitment. Committed and satisfied employees deliver superior service quality, which generates customer satisfaction and loyalty. This chain suggests that the impact of leadership on customer satisfaction is mediated by employee attitudes and behaviors, including organizational commitment. In the Ghanaian MNC context, where cultural values emphasize interpersonal relationships and collective identity (Gyekye, 1996), employee commitment may be particularly important in translating leadership into customer satisfaction.

Despite the theoretical and practical significance of these relationships, limited empirical research has examined the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the leadership perception-customer satisfaction relationship in Ghanaian MNCs. While studies have explored leadership and customer satisfaction in Western contexts (Schneider et al., 2005; Chen, Liu, & Portnoy, 2012) and employee commitment in Ghanaian organizations (Osei, 2018), few have specifically examined the mediating mechanism of commitment in the Ghanaian MNC context. This gap is significant given the growing presence of MNCs in Ghana and the increasing importance of customer satisfaction for competitive advantage. This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Customer satisfaction is critical for the success of multinational corporations operating in Ghana's competitive service sectors. Leadership perception significantly influences employee attitudes and behaviors that affect service quality and customer satisfaction (Schneider et al., 2005; Bass & Avolio, 1994). However, employees who perceive their leaders positively are more likely to develop organizational commitment, which enhances their service delivery and customer satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Harter et al., 2002). Despite the recognized importance of these relationships, limited empirical research has examined the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the leadership perception-customer satisfaction relationship in Ghanaian MNCs. This gap hinders the development of effective leadership and employee engagement strategies that can enhance customer satisfaction. This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction in multinational corporations operating in Ghana. Specifically, the study aims to assess the direct effects of leadership perception on employee commitment and customer satisfaction, and to determine the mediating role of employee commitment in the leadership perception-customer satisfaction relationship.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between leadership perception and employee organizational commitment in MNCs.
2. To assess the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.
3. To examine the relationship between employee organizational commitment and customer satisfaction.
4. To determine the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.
5. To provide recommendations for leadership development and employee engagement strategies in Ghanaian MNCs.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from multiple frameworks, including transformational leadership theory, social exchange theory, the service-profit chain theory, and organizational commitment theory. Transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994) emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Transformational leaders articulate compelling visions, demonstrate idealized influence, provide intellectual stimulation, and offer individualized consideration. Employees who perceive their leaders as transformational are more likely to develop positive work attitudes, including organizational commitment, because they feel inspired, valued, and supported. Transformational leadership has been shown to enhance employee commitment across cultural contexts (Meyer et al., 2002).

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) provides a framework for understanding how leadership perception influences employee commitment. According to this theory, employees engage in reciprocal relationships with their organizations, exchanging effort and loyalty for resources,

support, and recognition. When employees perceive positive leadership—characterized by trust, respect, and support—they feel obligated to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors, including organizational commitment. Conversely, negative leadership perceptions undermine the exchange relationship, reducing commitment. This theoretical perspective suggests that leadership perception is a key antecedent of employee commitment.

Organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) distinguishes between three components of commitment: affective commitment (emotional attachment to the organization), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (moral obligation to stay). Affective commitment, which reflects emotional attachment and identification with the organization, is most relevant to understanding employee service behaviors and customer satisfaction. Employees who are affectively committed are more likely to deliver high-quality service because they genuinely care about the organization's success and reputation. Leadership perception, particularly transformational leadership, is a strong predictor of affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002).

The service-profit chain theory (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997) integrates these perspectives by linking leadership, employee attitudes, service quality, and customer satisfaction. According to this theory, effective leadership creates a supportive organizational climate that enhances employee satisfaction and commitment. Satisfied and committed employees deliver superior service quality, which generates customer satisfaction and loyalty. This chain suggests that the impact of leadership perception on customer satisfaction is mediated by employee attitudes, including organizational commitment. Employees who perceive their leaders positively are more committed, and committed employees deliver service that satisfies customers.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) further explains how leadership perception influences employee commitment and customer satisfaction. Employees derive part of their self-concept from organizational membership. Positive leadership perception enhances organizational identification, as leaders symbolize organizational values and identity. Employees who identify strongly with their organizations are more committed and more likely to deliver service that reflects organizational values, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction. This theoretical integration provides a robust foundation for hypothesizing the mediating role of employee organizational commitment.

Empirical Literature

Empirical research has established positive relationships between leadership perception and employee organizational commitment. In a meta-analytic review, Meyer and colleagues (2002) found that transformational leadership significantly predicted affective commitment across studies. Similarly, Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia (2004) reported that perceived authentic leadership significantly predicted employee commitment. In the Ghanaian context, Asare and Nsiah (2019) found that employees who perceived their leaders as supportive and inspirational exhibited greater organizational commitment. These studies consistently demonstrate that positive leadership perception enhances employee commitment.

Research has also established positive relationships between leadership perception and customer satisfaction. Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz, and Niles-Jolly (2005) found that organizational climate, shaped by leadership, significantly predicted customer satisfaction in service organizations. Chen, Liu, and Portnoy (2012) reported that culturally intelligent leadership enhanced customer satisfaction through improved employee service behaviors. In Ghana, Amoako and Asiedu (2019) found that leadership quality in banks significantly predicted customer satisfaction, as leaders who modeled service excellence inspired employees to deliver superior service. These findings suggest that leadership perception directly influences customer satisfaction.

The relationship between employee organizational commitment and customer satisfaction has also received empirical support. Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) conducted a meta-analysis demonstrating that employee satisfaction and commitment were positively related to customer satisfaction and business outcomes. Wang, Hsieh, and Hsu (2015) found that employee commitment mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and customer satisfaction in service organizations. In the Ghanaian context, Osei (2018) reported that employee commitment enhanced service quality, which in turn increased customer satisfaction. These studies suggest that committed employees deliver service that satisfies customers.

Research specifically examining the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the leadership-customer satisfaction relationship is growing. Testa and Sipe (2012) found that employee commitment mediated the relationship between service leadership and customer satisfaction in international hotels. Similarly, Wang, Hsieh, and Hsu (2015) demonstrated that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and customer satisfaction. In Ghana, Adom (2016) reported that employee engagement, a related construct, mediated the relationship between leadership and

customer satisfaction in the hospitality sector. However, comprehensive studies specifically examining employee commitment as a mediator in the Ghanaian MNC context remain limited. This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction. The cross-sectional design was appropriate for collecting data at a single point in time to assess relationships among variables and test the hypothesized mediation model (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sampling

The target population comprised employees working in multinational corporations in Ghana and their customers. Seven MNCs were purposively selected: three banks (Stanbic Bank Ghana, Ecobank Ghana, Standard Chartered Bank), three telecommunications companies (MTN Ghana, Vodafone Ghana, AirtelTigo), and one hospitality organization (Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City). These organizations were selected based on their multinational status, significant customer base, and representation of service sectors.

For employees, stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across sectors, job levels, and functional areas. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, a total of 350 employees were selected, accounting for potential non-responses. Inclusion criteria required that employees had been with their organization for at least one year and had direct customer contact or supervisory responsibilities. Stratification variables included organization sector, job level, and functional area.

For customers, systematic random sampling was employed. A total of 1,050 customers (three per employee) were selected to provide customer satisfaction data. Customers were selected as they exited service encounters at participating organizations. Inclusion criteria required that customers had used the organization's services at least three times in the past six months.

Data Collection Instruments

Three primary instruments were used in this study:

- 1. Leadership Perception Scale:** The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (2000) was used to assess employees' perceptions of their immediate supervisors. The transformational leadership subscale was used, consisting of 20 items measuring idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (frequently, if not always). Sample items include "My supervisor articulates a compelling vision" and "My supervisor treats each employee as an individual."
- 2. Employee Organizational Commitment Scale:** The organizational commitment scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) was used to measure employee commitment. The scale consists of three subscales: affective commitment (6 items), continuance commitment (6 items), and normative commitment (6 items), totaling 18 items. For this study, affective commitment, which is most relevant to service behaviors, was used as the primary measure, with the full scale used for comprehensive analysis. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization."
- 3. Customer Satisfaction Scale:** Customer satisfaction was measured using a 10-item scale adapted from SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) and customer satisfaction literature (Anderson et al., 1994). Items assessed overall satisfaction, service quality perceptions, and likelihood of recommendation. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include "I am satisfied with the service I receive at this organization" and "This organization meets my expectations."

Demographic information for employees (age, gender, education, tenure, job level, sector) and customers (age, gender, income, frequency of use, customer type) was also collected.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, all instruments were reviewed by three experts in organizational behavior, human resource management, and marketing. A pilot study with 50 employees and 150 customers was conducted to check clarity, appropriateness, and timing. Reliability analysis showed Cronbach's alpha values of 0.93 for leadership perception, 0.90 for employee organizational commitment, and 0.92 for customer satisfaction. All values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), confirming instrument reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Permission to access employees and customers was obtained from the management of participating organizations. Employee participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided written informed consent. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed during working hours. Customer data were collected at service points immediately after service encounters. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Data collection occurred over a ten-week period to accommodate organizational schedules and customer availability.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 and PROCESS macro for mediation analysis (Hayes, 2018). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were used to summarize demographic characteristics and study variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to examine bivariate relationships between leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction. Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test the direct effects of leadership perception on employee commitment and customer satisfaction. Mediation analysis was conducted to test the mediating role of employee commitment in the leadership perception-customer satisfaction relationship. Control variables (age, gender, education, tenure, job level, sector, and customer demographics) were included in analyses. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Mediation was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to estimate indirect effects and confidence intervals.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning identification codes. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any point without penalty. Data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. Organizational permission and institutional review board approval were obtained prior to data collection.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The study sample consisted of 350 employees and 1,050 customers across seven MNCs in Ghana. Employee demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. The employee sample comprised 54% male and 46% female participants. Employee ages ranged from 22 to

60 years, with a mean age of 33.8 years ($SD = 7.8$). Educational levels included 45% bachelor's degrees, 31% master's degrees, 15% diplomas, and 9% other qualifications. Organizational tenure averaged 5.4 years ($SD = 4.3$). Job level distribution included 43% junior staff, 37% middle-level staff, and 20% senior staff. Sector representation included 34% banking, 41% telecommunications, and 25% hospitality.

Customer demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2. The customer sample comprised 51% male and 49% female participants. Customer ages ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean age of 32.2 years ($SD = 10.5$). Customer types included 67% local customers and 33% expatriate/international customers. Frequency of service use averaged 4.0 times per month ($SD = 2.9$).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Employees.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	189	54.0
	Female	161	46.0
Age Group	22-29 years	108	30.9
	30-39 years	142	40.6
	40-49 years	65	18.6
	50 years and above	35	10.0
Education	Diploma	53	15.1
	Bachelor's Degree	158	45.1
	Master's Degree	108	30.9
	Other	31	8.9
Job Level	Junior Staff	151	43.1
	Middle Management	130	37.1
	Senior Management	69	19.7
Sector	Banking	119	34.0
	Telecommunications	144	41.1
	Hospitality	87	24.9

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Customers.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	536	51.0
	Female	514	49.0
Customer Type	Local	704	67.0
	Expatriate/International	346	33.0

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 3. Leadership perception scores ranged from 1.60 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.58 ($SD = 0.69$). Employee organizational commitment scores ranged from 1.72 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.55 ($SD = 0.67$). Customer satisfaction scores ranged from 1.70 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.62 ($SD = 0.66$). These statistics

indicate moderate-to-high levels of leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction, with sufficient variability for correlation and regression analyses.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership Perception	350	1.60	5.00	3.58	0.69
Employee Organizational Commitment	350	1.72	5.00	3.55	0.67
Customer Satisfaction	350*	1.70	5.00	3.62	0.66

*Note: Customer satisfaction scores represent average ratings from three customers per employee (N = 1,050 customers aggregated to employee level for analysis).

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the bivariate relationships between leadership perception, employee organizational commitment, and customer satisfaction. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix.

Variable	1	2	3
1. Leadership Perception	1.00		
2. Employee Organizational Commitment	0.51**	1.00	
3. Customer Satisfaction	0.47**	0.49**	1.00

**p < .001 (2-tailed)

The results revealed significant positive correlations between all study variables. Leadership perception was significantly correlated with employee organizational commitment ($r = 0.51$, $p < .001$), indicating that employees who perceive their leaders positively exhibit greater organizational commitment. Leadership perception was significantly correlated with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.47$, $p < .001$), suggesting that positive leadership perception is associated with higher customer satisfaction. Employee organizational commitment was significantly correlated with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$), indicating that committed employees deliver service that satisfies customers. These correlations provide preliminary support for the hypothesized relationships and mediation model.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine the direct effects of leadership perception on employee organizational commitment and customer satisfaction. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Hierarchical Regression of Leadership Perception on Employee Commitment and Customer Satisfaction.

Dependent Variable	Model	Predictors	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
Employee Commitment	1	Controls	-	-	-	-	-
		$R^2 = 0.05$, $F(6, 343) = 3.01$, $p < .01$					
	2	Leadership Perception	0.52	0.05	0.51	11.05	.000
		$R^2 = 0.30$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.25$, $F(7, 342) = 20.87$, $p < .001$					
Customer Satisfaction	1	Controls	-	-	-	-	-
		$R^2 = 0.06$, $F(9, 340) = 2.42$, $p < .05$					
	2	Leadership Perception	0.35	0.05	0.36	7.12	.000
		$R^2 = 0.28$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.22$, $F(10, 339) = 13.45$, $p < .001$					

*Note: Control variables included employee age, gender, education, tenure, job level, sector, and customer demographics.

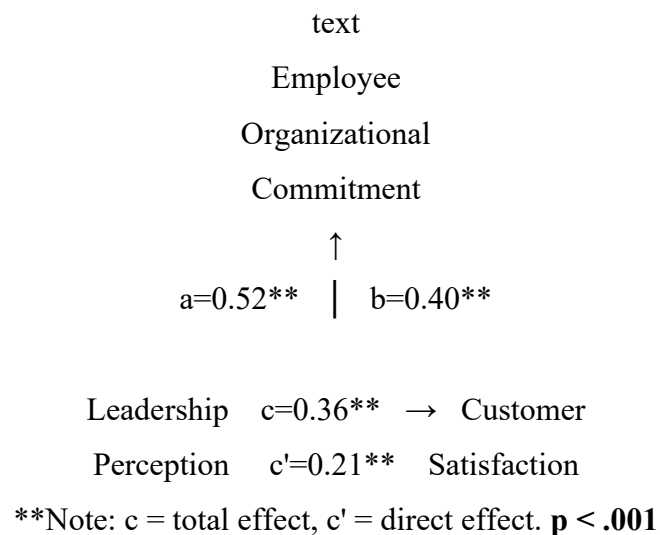
The results demonstrated that leadership perception significantly predicted employee organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < .001$), explaining 30% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.30$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.25$, $p < .001$). This indicates that employees who perceive their leaders positively exhibit stronger organizational commitment. Leadership perception also significantly predicted customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$), explaining 28% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.28$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.22$, $p < .001$). This suggests that positive leadership perception directly enhances customer satisfaction.

Mediation Analysis

To test the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction, mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. Results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Mediation Analysis Results.

Path	Effect	SE	t	p	95% CI
a (LP → EC)	0.52	0.05	11.05	.000	[0.43, 0.61]
b (EC → CS)	0.40	0.05	8.45	.000	[0.31, 0.49]
c (LP → CS)	0.36	0.05	7.12	.000	[0.26, 0.46]
c' (LP → CS, with EC)	0.21	0.05	4.12	.000	[0.11, 0.31]
Indirect Effect	0.21	0.04	-	-	[0.14, 0.28]

**Figure 1: Mediation Model.**

The mediation analysis revealed significant paths. Leadership perception significantly predicted employee organizational commitment (a path: $\beta = 0.52$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$), confirming that positive leadership perception enhances employee commitment. Employee organizational commitment significantly predicted customer satisfaction (b path: $\beta = 0.40$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$), indicating that committed employees deliver service that satisfies customers. The total effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction was significant (c path: $\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$).

The indirect effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction through employee organizational commitment was significant ($\beta = 0.21$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI: 0.14 to 0.28). The bootstrap confidence interval did not include zero, confirming that employee organizational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction. The direct effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction remained significant after accounting for employee commitment (c' path: $\beta = 0.21$, $p < .001$), indicating partial mediation. This suggests that leadership perception influences customer

satisfaction both directly and indirectly through its effect on employee organizational commitment.

The results indicate that approximately 58% of the total effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction is mediated through employee organizational commitment (indirect effect/total effect = $0.21/0.36 = 0.583$). The proportion of mediation (PM) is 58.3%, indicating a substantial mediating effect.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study provide robust support for the hypothesized relationships among leadership perception, employee organizational commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all study variables, confirming that positive leadership perception enhances employee commitment and customer satisfaction. These findings align with transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), and the service-profit chain theory (Heskett et al., 1997), suggesting that leadership is a critical driver of employee attitudes and customer outcomes.

The significant positive relationship between leadership perception and employee organizational commitment ($r = 0.51, p < .001$; $\beta = 0.51, p < .001$) confirms that employees who perceive their leaders positively develop stronger organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with prior research (Meyer et al., 2002; Avolio et al., 2004; Asare & Nsiah, 2019). Transformational leaders who articulate compelling visions, demonstrate idealized influence, provide intellectual stimulation, and offer individualized consideration inspire employees to develop emotional attachment to their organizations. In the Ghanaian MNC context, where cultural values emphasize respect for authority and interpersonal relationships (Gyekye, 1996), positive leadership perception may be particularly important for fostering commitment.

The significant positive relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.47, p < .001$; $\beta = 0.36, p < .001$) underscores the direct impact of leadership on customer outcomes. Leaders who model service excellence, communicate customer-focused visions, and support employees in delivering exceptional service directly influence customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Schneider et al. (2005), Chen, Liu, and Portnoy (2012), and Amoako and Asiedu (2019). In MNCs, where service standards must meet both

global and local expectations, leaders play a critical role in ensuring that service delivery satisfies diverse customers.

The significant positive relationship between employee organizational commitment and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.40$, $p < .001$) highlights the importance of committed employees in delivering customer satisfaction. Committed employees are more likely to go beyond formal job requirements, deliver high-quality service, and maintain positive interactions with customers (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Wang, Hsieh, & Hsu, 2015). In the Ghanaian context, where interpersonal relationships and trust are highly valued (Adom, 2016), committed employees who genuinely care about their organization are more likely to build rapport with customers, enhancing satisfaction.

The most significant finding of this study is the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the leadership perception-customer satisfaction relationship. The significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.21$, 95% CI: 0.14 to 0.28) confirms that employee commitment mediates this relationship, with approximately 58% of the total effect mediated. This finding provides strong support for the service-profit chain theory (Heskett et al., 1997), which posits that leadership influences customer satisfaction through employee attitudes and behaviors. Leaders who are perceived positively inspire commitment, and committed employees deliver service that satisfies customers.

The partial mediation (58.3% of total effect mediated) suggests that leadership perception influences customer satisfaction through multiple pathways. The direct effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction (c' path: $\beta = 0.21$, $p < .001$) indicates that leaders directly influence customer satisfaction through their own interactions with customers, their design of service protocols, and their visible commitment to customer satisfaction. The indirect effect through employee commitment demonstrates that leaders also influence customer satisfaction by shaping employee attitudes. This dual pathway underscores the importance of leadership at multiple levels—leaders must not only directly engage with customers but also create enabling environments that foster employee commitment.

The findings have significant practical implications for MNCs operating in Ghana. First, organizations should invest in leadership development programs that enhance transformational leadership behaviors, including vision articulation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Second, organizations should recognize that

employee commitment is a critical mechanism through which leadership translates into customer satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of employee engagement initiatives. Third, organizations should develop integrated strategies that simultaneously enhance leadership quality, employee commitment, and service quality. Fourth, organizations should monitor both employee commitment and customer satisfaction as key performance indicators, recognizing their interconnectedness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined the mediating role of employee organizational commitment in the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction in multinational corporations operating in Ghana. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between leadership perception and employee commitment, leadership perception and customer satisfaction, and employee commitment and customer satisfaction. Most importantly, employee organizational commitment was found to partially mediate the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction, indicating that positive leadership perception enhances customer satisfaction through its effect on employee commitment.

The study confirms theoretical frameworks, including transformational leadership theory, social exchange theory, service-profit chain theory, and organizational commitment theory, in the Ghanaian MNC context. The findings demonstrate that leadership perception is a critical driver of employee commitment, which in turn enhances customer satisfaction. Organizations that invest in positive leadership and employee commitment are better positioned to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction and sustainable competitive advantage.

Recommendations

- 1. Transformational Leadership Development:** MNCs should invest in leadership development programs that build transformational leadership competencies, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Training should emphasize vision articulation, employee empowerment, and service excellence.
- 2. Employee Engagement and Commitment Initiatives:** Organizations should implement initiatives that enhance employee organizational commitment, including recognition and reward programs, career development opportunities, work-life balance policies, and

supportive organizational cultures. Committed employees deliver superior service that satisfies customers.

3. Leadership Support for Service Climate: Leaders should actively support the development of service climates by modeling customer-focused behaviors, communicating commitment to customer satisfaction, providing resources for service excellence, and recognizing employees who deliver exceptional service.

4. Integrated Performance Management: Organizations should develop integrated performance management systems that link leadership quality, employee commitment, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Key performance indicators should include employee commitment and customer satisfaction metrics.

5. Employee Voice and Participation: Organizations should establish mechanisms for employee input into decision-making, consistent with cultural values of consultation and consensus-building. Participative climates enhance employee commitment and service quality.

6. Customer Feedback Integration: Organizations should implement robust customer feedback mechanisms and use feedback to inform leadership development, employee training, and service improvement initiatives. Customer satisfaction data should be shared with employees to reinforce the importance of service excellence.

7. Cross-Cultural Leadership Competence: Given the multinational context, leaders should develop cross-cultural competence to navigate the tension between global corporate standards and local cultural expectations. Cultural intelligence training is recommended for all leaders.

8. Further Research: Future research should examine the moderating role of individual differences, such as cultural values and generational differences, on the relationships studied. Longitudinal research could examine how leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction evolve over time. Comparative studies across sectors and countries would enhance generalizability.

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