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## Article

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## **Leaders' Core Self-Evaluation and Team Performance via Serial Mediation of Relational Identification and Team Potency**

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### **Abstract**

Team performance has been the theme of scientific inquiry for a long time. However, researchers have recently diverted their attention to relational approaches to understanding highly congruent teams better. Unfolding the antecedents of team performance requires a nuanced display of leaders' traits like core self-evaluations (CSE), relational dynamics, and team beliefs in terms of potency to achieve performance excellence. The essence of congruence lies in how much the leader-follower relationship array complements each other in terms of leaders' trait-display as per expectations of the team members. So, the current study aims to substantiate the direction and magnitude of leaders' CSE influencing team performance via relational identification and team potency beliefs. A time-lagged data is collected from 400 employees' members and 80 immediate leaders working in a multinational bank from Pakistan. The obtained data is analyzed using SPSS and MPlus. Findings validated the indirect effects of leaders' CSE on team performance via relational identification and team potency path. The study endorsed the realization of team performance precisely through leaders' CSE, and leader-members relationship analogy that establishes relationship congruence elicits team potency and consequently augments team performance. Implications of the study and limitations and future directions are summarized for a thoughtful solicitation.

**Keywords:** leaders' core self-evaluation, relational identification, team potency, team performance, banking Sectors.

## 1. Introduction

Leaders' core self-evaluation is a central premise that a leader holds about himself. Their functioning can offer a comprehensive mechanism to regulate followers' work-related behaviors, including in-role job performance. Leadership is considered crucial in shaping the members' attitude, interaction, actions, and sense of direction for a team (Siangokyo & Klinger, 2021). Personality literature so far has linked core self-evaluation (CSE) with various essential work outcomes, including performance (Kacmar et al., 2009), satisfaction (Judge et al., 2008), and citizenship behavior (Avey et al., 2010), to name a few. Conversely, the leadership literature calls for more empirical evidence to support the role of leaders' CSE in predicting any significant shift in followers' workplace attitudes (Flynn et al., 2016; Dóci et al., 2020). Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2011) hint at the possibility by positing that "it is also possible that individuals with higher levels of core self-evaluations will undertake different leadership behaviors than those with lower levels of core self-evaluations" (p. 336). The evidence endorses that the inconsistency in team performance might relate to the variation of leaders' CSE.

Dominance complementarity theory presents a notable milieu for explaining the variance in performance outcomes via interplay between leader-followers characteristics. Studies on the premises explicate the significance of compliance in facilitating the leader-follower linkage and the resultant substantial impact on performance (Saeed et al., 2020). To craft a complementary linkage, the leader exhibiting dominance requires his team's reciprocal submissive behavioral pattern (Ren et al., 2021). Moreover, the potency of leaders' traits to impact the performance outcomes of the team is restricted to the match between the role adopted by the leader and functional expectations of the followers (Zaccaro et al., 2018). The meaningful positive impact of the leaders' CSE explained by self-verification theory substantiated the fundamental desire for self-approval (Swann et al., 2003). Conceptualizing the desire concerning leaders' CSE, the leaders with higher CSE put more effort into team tasks to validate their positive self-concept reciprocated by the followers. This type of validation from the team potentially necessitates a leader to work more closely with the team hence improving performance by establishing congruence in relational identification (Zhang et al., 2021). More simply, the team members are more likely to share relational identity with the leader working more closely, boosting confidence and potency beliefs of the teams to reach team targets.

Team performance achieved through relational identification is like capturing the members' hearts and minds that trigger strong potency convictions for remarkable output (Slater et al., 2018). Relationship harmony, continuance, and team progress largely depend upon the balanced use of inter-personal circumflex. Every behavior carries the necessary information concerning how the other one is to respond, and thus interpersonal relations are arranged in a circular manner (Tracey & Ray, 1984). Accordingly, leader-followers' complementarity and relational perspectives essentially drive the team's effectiveness. Such that leader's role corresponding to the followers' expectations of power and control brings out more relational identification and strong potency convictions (Huang et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2018), sequentially bringing more effective team performance. So far, the leadership literature is brimming with evidence of complementary interpersonal

relationships in the leader-follower dyad and its positive consequences for team effectiveness. Dominance-submissive complementarity in the team settings ensures effective team performance through communication fit in the leader-follower dyad (Bao et al., 2019). Complementarity connections are proposed to summon more positive effects and advance more prominent relationship fulfilment. Studies discuss the climax of how displaying best-fitted dominance in team-leader relationships signals the enhanced capacity of team functioning in general (Wiltermuth et al., 2018).

The relational approach to leader-follower demography has meritoriously contributed to understanding the complex team mechanism and team dynamics (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Dissimilarities in team members or leader-member relationships are detrimental and critically influence team behaviors and functionality (Harrison et al., 2002). Besides, the incongruence in leader-follower association undesirably affects deep level interaction, causing significant damage to the team context that is essentially required for the team's long-term effectiveness (Marks et al., 2001). The quality of inter-personal association defines the team's performance capacity and is deep-rooted in the dominance-submissiveness array (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Supplementary to the fact, a reciprocal relationship on the dominance-submissiveness axis is more favorable to sustain the leader-follower relationship in which submissive teams are more successful exclusively under dominant leadership and vice versa. The leader-follower complementary relationship is characterized by the phenomenon of one is leading as per followers' expectation, and the other is accepting to follow (Gurtman, 2001), which is one of the basic tenets of inter-personal psychology in a team perspective.

Articulation of the facts related to Leaders' CSE and dominance complementary theory effectively respond to one of the most fundamental questions of establishing and maintaining the leader-follower congruence to achieve team by well-fitted relationship array (Hu et al., 2018; Hu & Judge, 2017). Literature validates the performance-related implications of leaders' CSE and leader-follower complementarity in terms of roles, behavior, and relationship (Dóci et al., 2020; Wang & Xu, 2019). However, it raises the most intuitively appealing yet unanswered question about when and how this relationship congruence occurs (Ehrhardt & Ragins, 2019). Despite the evidence offered, a critical and theoretically valid omission here is to explore the underlying mechanism that translates the leaders' CSE in team performance. When and how does the congruence occur in relational identification, and whether this congruence universally amplifies the team performance via potency beliefs or the leaders' CSE can impede team performance in certain incongruent settings? Therefore, the current study is focused on substantiating the impact of leaders' CSE on team performance via serial mediation of relational identification and team potency. Multi-level, time-lagged data is collected from 400 employees comprising over 80 teams to substantiate the process.

The study explores the influence of leaders' CSE and its positive implications for the teams. More specifically, followers' performance variation is explained via leaders' self-evaluation concepts and the mechanism of how the schemata of interpretation in the leader-

follower dyad ensure higher performance through positive mobility of followers' action. Current work is an effort to unfold the complex team dynamics using the relational approach in explaining inter-personal circumflex for leader-follower association and the positive effects of leader' CSE via the trickle-down mechanism.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### *2.1 Leaders' CSE and Team Performance*

Leaders' CSE is positively related to work outcomes, and the reflection of positive self-evaluation ranges from personal preferences to the teams and organizations they lead (Lin et al., 2018). According to Hogan and Kaiser (2005), 'who we determine how we lead' leaders' assessment of who he is fundamentally defining how to influence the team. Hence, the leaders who evaluate themselves more positively influence the work environment and followers' performance more positively. The particular concept is similar to the 'bright side' of the personality that reflects a positive impression on the people they lead, and the impression is managed purposefully at best (Resick et al., 2009). CSE is part of three taxonomies (Positive affect/Negative affect, Big five & CSE) identified to predict job attitudes and performance at personal, team, and organizational or strategic level (Heller et al. 2002; Judge et al. 2002; Resick et al., 2009). Likewise, Qadeer and Arshad (2014) noted the positive effect of CSE on the job performance of the employees' working in a local bank in Pakistan. The leaders' additional effort is to verify their self-image as an integral part of the self-verification theory (Brooks et al., 2011). In reciprocation, they receive better performance through social exchange mechanisms (Ahn et al., 2018).

Guided by the input-process-output (IPO) model, the leaders' CSE figures the team performance as early as part of the input stage-mainly comprised of personal characteristics of the members, team-level, and contextual factors (Mathieu et al., 2008). The influence of leaders' CSE theoretically falls under the domain of team-level factors (leader influence & task structure) that can enhance or restrict the team interaction and effectiveness. As a dynamic and complex system, team inputs and processes (mediators) are coevolving and further comprehended overlapping (Mathieu et al., 2017). Consequently, the leaders' traits credibly determine the team performance throughout the progressing facets. Literature offers adequate evidence entailing that the in-role job performance of the team largely depends upon the leaders' personality (Hu & Judge, 2017). By reference, leaders CSE controls team performance as part of personality taxonomy. Hence, it is hypothesized as:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant positive relationship between leaders' CSE and team performance.

### *2.2 Mediation of Relational Identification*

Leaders' CSE and Leader-followers relationship complementarity are particularly significant in explaining team performance. The noteworthy fact is that most of the interaction, either in dyads or team-followers linkage, essentially portrays an informal dimension of the exchange relationship. Formal policies are less likely to capture total variance in performance outcomes at the individual or the team level (Chang et al., 2020). So, the total performance variation is significantly influenced by the leaders' demographics

and their self-assessment. Frame alignment is an essential part of self-concept theory posits that the complementary linkage in schemata of interpretation in leader-follower dyad ensures higher performance through relational identification that compels positive mobility of followers' action (Shamir et al., 1993; Helm et al., 2016). Therefore, the leaders' CSE belief and ideology in congruence with followers amplify the consistent identity in their mutual relationship, thus triggering the potency to perform well (Jung & Sosik, 2003) via a commitment loop (Zaccaro et al., 2018).

Relational identification is employees' perception of their relationship with the leader (Walumbwa & Hartnell., 2011). It deals uniquely to understand oneself in the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Relation identification significantly influences performance roles and reflects a person's ability to solve problems by improving safe team culture, psychological health, and team performance (Haslam & Ellemers, 2011). The reciprocal efforts are usually offered to fulfill the roles in the leader-followers dyad. Individuals with persuasive relational identifications are highly motivated to fill their partner role and encourage and improve their partners' prosperity to have a satisfactory bond. The specific leader-follower interaction effectiveness improves potency and performance (Zhang et al., 2021). The team potency and strong relational identities are contingent on the quality, consistency, and fairness of interpersonal treatment they receive from the leader (Lira et al., 2007). It is the constant encounter of a leader with its team which gives a measurable impact on performance by improving potency and achieving team targets via improving citizenship behaviors mainly (Slater, 2021).

Earlier studies indicated relational identification as an underlying mechanism of how a leader's trait representation has a shared social identity, which allows the team to be fully potent for performance excellence (Slater et al., 2018). The social identity approach of leadership asserts the range of social context including relational identification in which individual represents themselves as characteristics of a group and expect to share ideas and viewpoints to achieve team goals, i.e., Considering themselves just not as "I" but as one of "us" (Haslam & Ellemers, 2011; Hu & Liden, 2011). This value-added identification further improves members' willingness and readiness to source and share knowledge, building up a mindset that the team possesses the required potency to achieve the target (Engelsberger et al., 2021). In addition, the process promotes the followers' collective perception and psychological attachment that is reflected via positive performance outcomes. The relational climax in terms of leader-follower identity congruence enhances team capacity through relational reciprocity, group gain, rationality, and status (Brattström & Faems, 2020) to reach and maintain performance excellence.

Furthermore, dominance complementarity theory stresses the leader-follower congruence in roles and relationships to enhance performance by inculcating complementary rational identification (Einola & Alvesson, 2019). The realization of clarity, concern, and mutual responsibility of achieving team fosters the team performance. Articulation of facts indicates the positive linkage between leaders' CSE, relational identification, and team performance consequently (Liu et al., 2021). Hence, it can be hypothesized that:

H<sub>2</sub>: Relational identification mediates the relationship between leaders' CSE and team performance.

### 2.3 *Mediation of Team Potency*

High value on leaders' CSE is being placed due to its significantly positive results for intuitive thinking and team potency to reach balance by avoiding overconfidence necessary to bring best team performance (Cristofaro et al., 2020). Team literature so far indicates the chain beginning with leaders' CSE successfully ending at performance excellence via team efficacy that subsequently triggers teams' confidence of being fully potential to meet team targets (Quigley, 2003). Leaders' CSE augmenting the team's collective potency beliefs acts as a buffer of stressor-strain relationship, improving the capacity to deal with the complex challenges and remain focused on achieving team targets (Jex & Bliese, 1999). The effective social interaction in terms of relational identification triggers the positive collective team belief, and the synergic effects are observed in the performance outcomes of the teams.

Furthermore, previous studies suggested that the concept of team potency is the crucial determinant of team performance. The core mechanism is positive observations of team capabilities that can be extended to many tasks and situations to ensure the team can perform in various contexts (Kennedy et al., 2009). The fundamental principle that teams and their capabilities are intimately linked with confidence and shared beliefs of team members to perform successfully can be studied as team performance and team potency (Mathieu et al., 2008). Team potency beliefs impart team performance via team effectiveness, learning behaviors, and strong identity beliefs, which are hard to imitate (Hu & Liden, 2011). Potency beliefs are best placed on mobilizing followers to reach team goals when they share beliefs about what it means to be a group member (Zhang et al., 2021). The teams exhibiting potency beliefs elevate performance via mutual aid and readiness to exchange information, considering the other members equally capable.

Studies broadly argue that the leadership process can be seen to hinge on a leaders' capacity to appeal and build on this sense of shared identity content and inculcate potency beliefs to meet or exceed team targets in general (Castellano et al., 2021; Howell, 2006; Slater et al., 2021). Also, the literature shows that teams with high potency are more likely to be organized and work better in interdependence that further assists the team to accomplish team goals or targets (Le Blanc et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Potency expectations are commonly held by the team that develops a sense of shared responsibility. Therefore, the same team led by a leader with higher CSE can be anticipated to achieve better performance outcomes. Leaders' CSE has frequently been positively related to member satisfaction and team overall performance via augmented potency beliefs (Gully et al., 2002; Lester et al., 2002). Hence, the study hypothesized that:

H<sub>3</sub>: Team potency mediates the relationship between leaders' CSE and team performance.

#### 2.4 *Serial Mediation of Relational Identification and Team Potency*

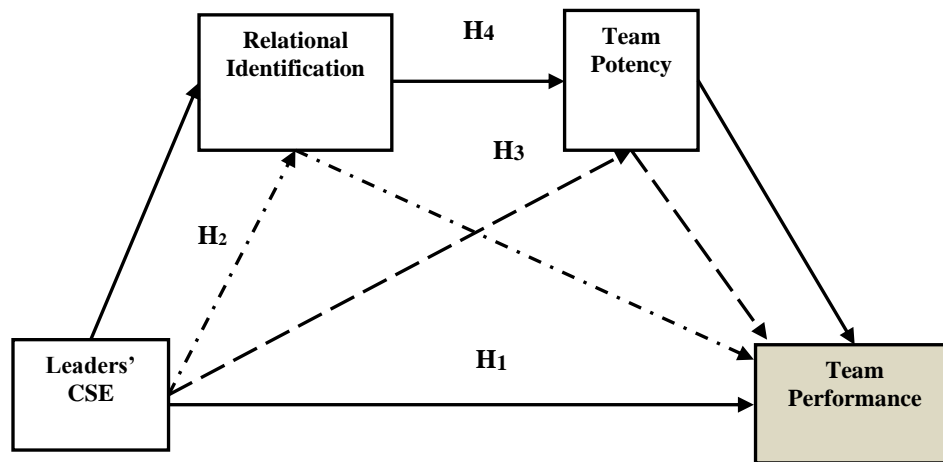
Zaccaro et al. (1995) pens that a disparate person is fused into a capable team. Perceptions of collective and combined abilities are ingrained only when leadership functions gracefully with the relationship in focus. Therefore, the author's stress on the causal effect of leader's traits with team potency is dependent upon the credibility and relationship with the follower hence validating the fact of effective leadership additionally high on relational identification as an essential antecedent to higher efficacy perceptions in teams (Chen & Bliese, 2002; Sosik et al., 1997). However, there lies a thin line between potency and efficacy where the former is a generalized sense of confidence about accomplishing group goals. Whereas the latter is distinctly related to a specific task at hand (Guzzo et al., 1993), the findings of either concept can be applied to both contexts (Quigley, 2003). In addition, Sivasubramaniam et al.'s (2002) argument stated as "influential leadership traits can foster team potency by building personal identification with the group by making participants effort more meaningful and generating a sense of confidence within themselves." These facts validate the factuality of the relation for team effectiveness.

Theorists of leadership are accrediting leader's traits as a relevant source of group's shared abilities, shape the relational identification with the leader, and boosts the confidence in cumulative capabilities (potency), which resultantly conclude in the attainment of targets by effectively executing the courses of actions (Yoshida et al., 2014). Leaders controlling their behaviors and motivation becomes a sequel to a strong command on their verbal persuasion ability (Pescosolido, 2001). Resultantly, followers in high relationships with their leaders are inculcated with confidence (Eden, 1990; House & Howell, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991) and higher team potency that can define team performance.

H<sub>4</sub>: Relational identification and team potency sequentially mediate the relationship between leaders' CSE and team performance.

The following figure displays all study variables and the above hypotheses. The following sections will detail the methodology, data analysis, and discussion.





**Figure 1: Hypothesized Model**

### 3. Methodology

The formal purpose of the study entails description, correlation, and causal explanation of the phenomenon. The study implements descripto-explanatory design, an extensively recommended technique to facilitate detailed description that is a precursor to explaining study variables (Saunders et al., 2009). Considering the deductive assumption that the true premises generate valid conclusions, the hypotheses were developed using complementarity theory.

A survey questionnaire is devised using a predetermined item scale corresponding to each study variable. Close-ended, self-administered survey questionnaires are used to collect data during both time zones of the research. The survey fitted the study objectives since the instrument is standardized that aided the collection of unbiased responses from a sizeable population (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). Besides economical, rapid and greater response rate is also one of the primary considerations behind selecting survey methodology for data collection. Furthermore, a structured survey ensured objectivity, empiricism, and generalization of the results. Multi-source data source covers team members, team leaders, and upper management responses.

A cross-sectional study is carried out during both time 1 and time 2 of the study. Time-lagged data is collected with a gap of 2 weeks, and the information is taken at one point of time for each survey administered at that time. This particular study seeks to establish relationships and verify theory at a certain point in time, so the information once recorded requires no longitudinal time horizon.

The present research employs Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the indirect effects. SEM has been extensively employed in behavioral and social sciences. And the most frequently utilized method for testing and estimation in SEM is the normal theory-

based maximum likelihood. Accordingly, in the present research, SEM path analysis is conducted with the maximum likelihood effect to ensure robustness as the data normality was established before conducting the path analysis.

### *3.1 Sample and Data Collection*

The teams of a multinational bank from Pakistan are considered working populations for the current study. The average team size is 8-10 members, each with clearly defined targets that they achieve under the guidance of the corresponding team leader. Five members from each team are part of the final sample for the current work. These members were randomly selected based on the quality and completion of the responses submitted during both study phases.

All members who filled one survey at time 1 and did not submit responses for the survey conducted at time 2 or vice versa are excluded. Similar treatment is done with the teams who submitted their complete responses, but their immediate supervisor or manager couldn't rate their individual and team performance. Hence, the final sample comprises 400 employees and 80 teams in total.

### *3.2 Measurements*

The relational identification of the follower with the leader is measured using a 5-item scale adopted from Becker et al. (1996) at time 1, and this scale is widely used and validated in the existing literature (Hu & Judge, 2017; Jackson & Johnson, 2012; Jacobs, 2006).

Leaders' CSE is measured at time 2 using the 12-item scale developed by Judge et al. (2003). This scale is widely used and validated by other studies (Extremera & Rey, 2018; Soane et al., 2018).

Team potency is measured using an 8-item scale adopted from Guzzo et al. (1993) at time 2. This is also a widely used scale in team literature (Gevers et al., 2020; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Troster et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2021).

Team performance is rated at time 2 by the supervisor and managers, and a 3-item scale is adopted from Schaubroeck, Lam & Cha (2007). The scale is widely used and validated to estimate the team performance (Li et al., 2018; Mao et al., 2019) and is anchored at 1= definitely No and 6= definitely Yes.

## **4. Data Analysis and Results**

This research collected data from multiple sources, including employees and their immediate team leaders. Accordingly, their characteristics are specified in Table 1. For instance, out of 400 employees, 77% were males concerning employees' characteristics. Regarding their age, 18% were up to 25 years, 71% were between 26-35 years, and 11% were above 35 years. In terms of education, 50% have 14 years, 38% have 16 years, and 12% have above 16 years of education. As far as employee tenure with team leader is concerned, 17.5% were 12 months, 35% were between 13-24 months, 22.3% were between 26-36 months, and 25.2% were between 37-60 months of tenure with the team leader.

Leaders' Core Self-Evaluation and Team Performance

Out of 80 team leaders, 88% were male, 8% were aged between 26-35 years, 77% were between 36-45 years, and 15% were above 45 years. In terms of education, 36% have 14 years, 39% have 16 years, and 25% have above 16 years of education. Finally, as far as leaders' tenure in the organization is concerned, 27% were between 48-60 months, 43% were between 61-84 months, and 30% were above 84 months tenure with the organization.

**Table 1: Respondents Characteristics**

<b>Team Leader Characteristics</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Male	70	88.0
	Female	10	12.0
Age (Years)	26-35	7	8.0
	36-45	61	77.0
	Above 45	12	15.0
Education (Years)	14	29	36.0
	16	31	39.0
	Above 16	20	25.0
Organizational Tenure (Months)	48-60	22	27.0
	61-84	34	43.0
	Above 84	24	30.0
Total		80	100.0
<b>Employees' Characteristics</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Male	307	77.0
	Female	93	23.0
Age (Years)	Up to 25	73	18.0
	26 -35	285	71.0
	Above 35	42	11.0
Education (Years)	14	201	50.0
	16	150	38.0
	Above 16	49	12.0
Organizational Tenure (Months)	Up to 12	70	17.5
	13-24	140	35.0
	25-36	89	22.3
	37-60	101	25.2
Total		400	100.0

Table 2 explains the reliability, validity, and descriptive analysis of the study variables, and our results did not specify any reliability or validity issues. For instance, the reliability of the constructs is assessed by using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The Cronbach's alpha values for all the variables are above the accepted values suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1978). Concerning the composite reliability of the constructs, it is above the threshold level of 0.70 for all the variables. Further, the constructs' validity is assessed using average variance extracted and maximum shared variance. The results

specified that the value of the average variance extracted for all the variables is above the threshold level of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010), and the maximum shared variance is less than the average variance extracted value. Thus, our results established the validity of all underlying constructs.

Further, the descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation among the studied variables are specified in Table 3. The mean value represents the central tendency of the data, and the standard deviation explicates the dispersion. Finally, data normality is tested by the skewness and kurtosis values. Overall, the mean and standard deviation values are not too high or low, and the normality of the data is also established.

**Table 2: Reliability and Validity Analysis**

Variable	Items	Alpha	CR	AVE	MSV
Leader CSE	12	0.85	0.79	0.60	0.33
Relational Identification	5	0.70	0.90	0.69	0.29
Team Potency	8	0.85	0.86	0.86	0.41
Team Performance	3	0.73	0.77	0.62	0.27

Note: CR= Composite Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted;  
MSV= Maximum Shared Variance

In addition, Table 3 reports the bivariate correlation analysis among the studied variables. The results indicate no exact or strong correlation among the variables. Thus, our research is free of multi-collinearity problems, and the coefficient is also in the supposed direction. For instance, we found statistically significant positive association of Leaders' CSE and team performance (0.38,  $p < 0.01$ ), Leaders' CSE and relational identification (0.49,  $p < 0.01$ ); Leaders' CSE and team potency (0.42,  $p < 0.01$ ); relational identification and team performance (0.43,  $p < 0.01$ ), team potency and team performance (0.51,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, a significant positive association is found between relational identification and team potency (0.24,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	SD	Ske	Kur	1	2	3
1. Leader CSE	3.65	0.65	-0.78	-0.09	1		
2. Relational Identification	3.81	0.33	-0.23	-0.80	0.49**	1	
3. Team Potency	3.64	0.27	0.26	-0.75	0.42**	0.24**	
4. Team Performance	3.78	0.28	-0.58	-0.08	0.38**	0.43**	0.51**

Notes: SD = Standard Deviation, Ske = Skewness, Kur = Kurtosis \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

#### 4.1 Measurement Model

The model fitness is assessed by conducting confirmatory factor analysis in AMOS by employing frequently employed five indices, including Root Mean Square Error

Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom. The acceptable limit for these indices is < 0.08 for RMSEA and SRMR, > 0.90 for TLI and CFI, and < 2 for Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom as defined by Hair et al. (2010). Accordingly, we found these values in the acceptable range for instance, RMSEA = 0.005, SRMR = 0.002, TLI = 0.980, CFI = 0.991, and  $\chi^2/df = 1.211$ .

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

After prudentially testing the data for validity, reliability, normality, summary, and inferential statistics and establishing the suitability of data for further analysis, hypotheses testing is performed through MPlus software. This research is interested in examining the effect of Leaders' CSE on team performance and with the mediation mechanism of relational identification and team potency. Hence, we aggregated the individual-level responses to team-level for the variable including relational identification, team potency, and team performance by following direct Conesus model typology of Chan's (1998), and the existing research also validates such aggregation (Mahmood et al., 2020; Mahmood et al., 2021; Saleem et al., 2021). Further, to statistically justify this aggregation, intraclass correlations (ICC) and Rwg (j) values were calculated by following Muthén (1994) and Preacher et al. (2011). These values were found to be in acceptable ranges (i.e., ICC and Rwg (j) for relational identification = 0.29 and 0.72; for team potency = 0.19 and 0.68, and for team performance = 0.26 and 0.77 respectively) as specified by James (1982) and James et al. (1993), and thus supported our aggregation of individual-level responses to team-level.

**Table 4: Summary of Direct Effects**

Path	Coefficient	Sig.	BC 95% CI		Remarks
			Lower	Upper	
Leader CSE → TP ( $H_1$ )	0.009	0.778	-0.059	1.453	Not Supported
Leader CSE → RI	0.246*	0.000	0.147	0.344	
Leader CSE → Team Potency	0.008	0.774	-0.052	0.070	
RI → TP	0.320*	0.005	0.098	0.542	
Team Potency → TP	0.442*	0.001	0.184	0.700	
RI → Team Potency	0.673*	0.000	0.551	0.794	

Note: Sig. = Significance, CI = Confidence Interval, RI = Relational Identification, TP= Team Performance, \*p < 0.01

In Hypothesis 1, we stated a positive relationship between leaders' CSE and team performance, and the results are reported in Table 4. We found that leader CSE has a statistically insignificant positive impact on team performance (0.009, p = 0.778). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is not supported. In addition, positive and statistically significant effect of leaders' CSE on relational identification (0.246, p = 0.000); positive and statistically insignificant effect of leaders' CSE on team potency (0.008, p = 0.774) is noted. While the positive and statistically significant effect of relational identification on team performance

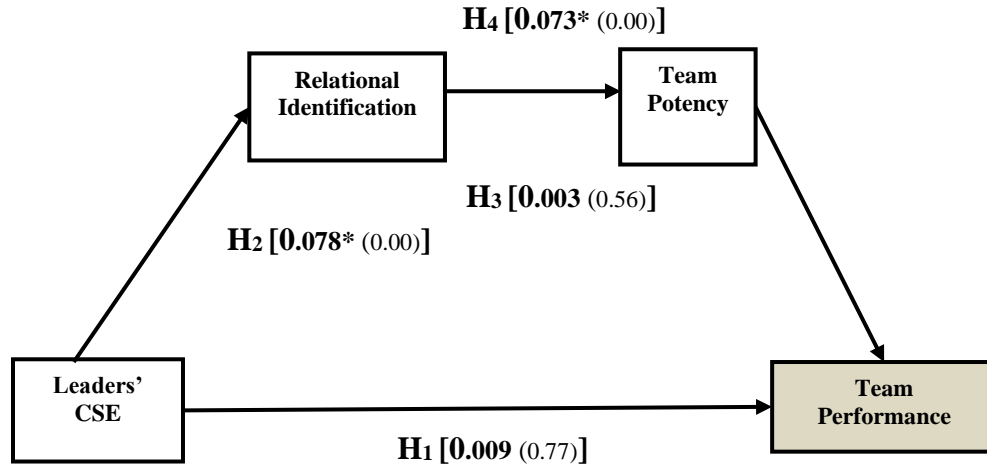
(0.320,  $p = 0.005$ ), relational identification on team potency (0.673,  $p = 0.000$ ), and team potency on team performance (0.442,  $p = 0.001$ ) are noticed.

**Table 5: Summary of Indirect Effects**

Path	Coefficient	Sig.	BC 95% CI		Remarks
			Lower	Upper	
LCSE $\rightarrow$ RI $\rightarrow$ TP ( $H_2$ )	0.078*	0.000	0.013	0.163	Supported
LCSE $\rightarrow$ TPO $\rightarrow$ TP ( $H_3$ )	0.003	0.561	-0.017	0.031	Not Supported
LCSE $\rightarrow$ RI $\rightarrow$ TPO $\rightarrow$ TP ( $H_4$ )	0.073*	0.001	0.019	0.132	Supported

Notes: Sig. = Significance, CI = Confidence Interval, LCSE = Leaders CSE, RI = Relational Identification, TP = Team Performance, TPO = Team Potency, \* $p < 0.01$

Further, the indirect effects are illustrated in Table 5. In Hypothesis 2, it was hypothesized that relational identification mediates the relationship between leaders' CSE and team performance. Accordingly, we found the significant and full mediation of relational identification between leaders' CSE and team performance 0.078 (95% CI [0.013, 0.163]). The direct effect of leaders' CSE on team potency was positive but statistically insignificant (0.008,  $p = 0.774$ ), as specified in Table 4. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported. Likewise, in Hypothesis 3, it was explicated that team potency mediates the relationship between leaders' CSE and team Performance. However, we noted this mediation relationship to be statistically insignificant. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is not supported. Finally, Hypothesis 4 specified the serial mediation of relational identification and team potency on the indirect effect of leaders' CSE on team performance. Accordingly, statically significant full serial mediation of relational identification and team potency is established 0.073 (95% CI [0.019, 0.132]). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported. In addition, the direct and indirect effects are also specified in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Direct and Indirect Effects**

### 5. Discussion

This research study was conducted in order to provide intensive knowledge and understanding to the organizational management and practitioners through explaining the mechanism as how EO of the budget hotels acts for making improvement in EP of these hotels through the mediation by EI where the contribution of CI strengthens the association between EI and EP.

Hence, this study interlinks the EO with EI, CI and EP. In addition to this, the indirect relationship between EO on EP through EI has also been investigated. The present research endeavor was carried out to answer as how EO influences EP, and also to explain the role of EI in establishing the said relationship. This study was carried out with three main motivations i.e. (i) to address the need to remove discrepancies in the empirical results, in theoretical consideration of the association between EO and EP and (ii) to fulfil the requirement as how EI plays the role of bridge between EO and EP (iii) to confirm if the link between EI and EP could be strengthened through the moderating role of CI. Five different hypotheses were formulated in the present study in order to investigate the relationship between EO, EI, CI and EP. Findings of the study substantiated all the hypotheses. As per results shown by data analysis, H1 substantiated the direct impact of EO on EP, which is consistent with the findings of Yasir, Majid & Qudratullah, (2020). Accordingly, it is suggested that EO is one of the most effective variables which augments EP of the hotel. As far as H2 is concerned, the results confirmed that EO positively influences EI. In fact, it is the EO which signals for introduction of innovative ways, processes, procedures, structures etc. and hence EO supports EI. Similar results were reported by Aboelmaged, (2018). In case of H3, it was hypothesized that EI has a positive direct relationship with EP. The data analysis confirms that a direct, positive and visible relationship exists between EO and EI. It was proved through data analysis that the budget

hotel EP is enhanced when they go for EI with a view to preserve resources like water (e.g. The study approves Leaders' CSE when channeled through relational identification, and team potency fosters team performance. Consistent with prior research, this study verified relational network as a resource, aiding to explain team performance (Sparrowe et al., 2001) by certifying continuous team learning that escalates potency beliefs (Van-Veelen & Ufkes, 2019). Most recent studies grounded upon interpersonal attraction and relational identification theory ascertain higher team performance remarkably dependent upon relational identification with the leader (Nowlin et al., 2019) that triggers potency beliefs (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). As performance may not stand as a typical job for all set teams, this research suggests that the influential effect of a cognitive construct as relational identification serves as a prime foundation for teams to get potent for attaining team's overall performance. Substantiating upon Dominance Complementarity theory, the study addressed the role of the relational array as an underlying mechanism to influence team potency and team performance. Similar positive results are observed by the earlier studies signifying the relationship between potency and team performance to be higher for the team led by high CSE leaders vice versa (Cole et al., 2013; Hu & Judge, 2017; Zaccaro et al. 2018). This is because leaders with high CSE fulfill the role of leader to be dominant, and their orders are accepted fully. The team strongly believes its potency is expected to direct all energies towards performance to reciprocate the strong relational identification with the leader. Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006).

## 5.1 Research Implications

### 5.1.1 Theoretical

The current study contributes to the team literature in several ways. Firstly, this study responds to the call for conducting a comprehensive assessment of the leader-team compatibility (Huang et al., 2019) in terms of relational identification and an unresolved issue regarding the conditions under which leaders' CSE significantly impact the team performance. In this regard, the study identifies the cognitive path linking relational identification to team performance through team potency dimensions modeling team performance based upon leader-follower relational complementarity. The findings reinforce the idea of positive team-level outcomes of establishing and maintaining a complementarity leader-team relationship on a dominance-submissive array. These findings reinforce the implications of the dominance-complementarity model and social capital theory which argues that the team level resource can be maximized using an optimal configuration of relationship ties (Siangchokyoo & Klinger, 2021). The same optimization level in the leader-follower dyad is achieved using the dominance-complementarity model.

Moreover, the leaders with positive CSE achieving greater performance via relational and potency mechanisms indicate the norm of reciprocity that reinforces the finding of social exchange theory. The concepts of social exchange theory deeply rooted in the norms of reciprocity indicate that favor extended to a follower compels him to reciprocate the favor or feel obliged to do so (Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocation varies from the positive work outcomes to the initiation and strengthening of interpersonal relationships with the leader



to the team performance (Lynch et al., 1999). The positive relational identification gained via social exchange ideology, i.e., the leader-member exchange, can improve generalized team potency among the team members, resultantly enhancing performance regardless of the task assigned.

### 5.1.1 Practical

Team potency as mediating mechanism sanctions that the aggregate team conviction of achieving the task acts as an underlying mechanism in achieving greater team performance. However, this summed up faith and self-sustained potency is subjective to the effective management of the harmonious relationship in leader-team linkage. So, the organizations need to work efficiently on fostering a well-adjusted leader-follower linkage. Relational identification and team potency variations are more under the followers' control in terms of effort mobilization, so the team leader needs to understand the intricacy of balanced, well-fitted connections that can sum up the team potency to outperform. Team leaders in this regard are critical in setting realistic standards and defining success through team involvement that can improve team potency via process efficacy mechanism across domains. Furthermore, their own CSE has a significant trickle-down effect on team performance, so the leaders need to be hired and trained on their positive self-assessment. At the organizational end, teams need to be treated more like profound asset with versatile capacity to add value and endure upsetting circumstances rather than objective performance centers only.

### 5.2 Limitations and Directions

Interpersonal compatibility or the relational congruence in the leader-follower dyad is a dynamic and complex process contingent upon time and situational factors (Graham & Dust, 2018; Jehn & Mannix, 2001). First, convenience sampling from the banking industry only imposes challenges to the generalizability of the data obtained. While comparing the exhibition of the various predictor, process, or criterion variables across cultures, a random and large representative sample is recommended (Taras et al., 2009). Second, current work defines dominance complementarity and team performance via a leader's CSE and relational array. However, the tendency to be dominant or submissive might not be exclusively due to high CSE but can vary with the position and designation in the formal hierarchies (Krikman et al., 2009). The employees generally prefer dominant figures as leaders who can take the challenge of decision-making (Earley, 1997; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000), but whether this congruence is due to the leader's high CSE is not be established.

Third, the sample under consideration for the current study mainly comprised of gender similar leader-followers' teams (male supervisor with dominating male teams). Team member interaction with the leader is reflexive (Kiesler, 1983), where individuals develop certain implicit expectations out of the relationship (Burger & Zelditch, 1998), and the gender dissimilarity considerably disrupts the level of expectations (Tepper et al., 2011). Gender considerations lead to a thoughtful cognitive process of leadership traits and compatibility (Loyd et al., 2013). Gender similar leader-follower association is predisposed to expectation bias (Rink & Ellemers, 2010). So, validating the leaders' CSE influencing

the team performance while achieving relationship harmony calls for further empirical evidence from the teams with equal representation of both genders.

Future studies may consider samples from various industries to address the generalizability challenge up to some possible extent (Farh et al., 2007). The sample from one organizational setting does not reflect the relationship variation in entirety (Spector et al., 2015). The specific discrepancy is more sizable in third-world countries like Pakistan (Schwartz, 1994; Taras et al., 2009). Future studies may also consider other factors such as HR implementations (Mahmood et al., 2017) to explain the team performance and leaders' CSE. Future avenues are open to conceiving and implementing a longitudinal study that can track the changing relational climax more appropriately. Future research should consider a compilation of team-level outcomes of leaders' traits like CSE and discuss organizational-level implementation. Team-level outcomes are more prolific when applied to organizational performance and strategic outcomes (Chan, 2019). Generating a hypothesis for positive team-level outcome predicting a positive firm-level impact is needed in the future.

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