RESONANT LEADERSHIP AT WORKPLACE: HOW EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IMPACTS EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES - A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

Committed and satisfied employees significantly contribute to the success of an organization but how the required level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment can be achieved has been the subject of interest for the research community for decades. Employees' moods and emotion are subject to continuous variation and managing and directing them to organizational success have always been a challenge. Resonant leaders, practicing emotional intelligence, are claimed to deal with this challenge. However, there is a paucity of literature to verify this claim. This research aims to address this issue by investigating how resonant leadership influences employees' attitude at workplace. Drawing on Affective Events Theory and Social Exchange Theory, this research performs CFA to test the proposed hypotheses. Results indicate a good model-fit and support all proposed hypotheses suggesting that resonant leadership increases employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment while job satisfaction partially mediates between resonant leadership and organizational commitment. Resonant leadership predicts continuance commitment more than any other component of organizational commitment. This finding provides the direction of future research for examining the possible role of the high cost of leaving the organization.

Keywords: Resonant Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction.

JEL Classification: Z000,O150,M120

Introduction

Job satisfaction (JS) and organizational commitment (OC) have been the important topics in business research for over many years (Qureshi & Khan, 2016; Lu, While, & Barriball, 2005; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Committed and satisfied employees significantly contribute to the success

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of an organization (Shahhosseini, Silong, Ismaill, & Uli, 2012). The success of an organization is very much associated with these factors. If employees are satisfied with their job and committed to the organization, they can result in beneficial consequences for the organization such as increased effectiveness, performance, and productivity, and decreased turnover and absenteeism at both the individual and organizational levels (Fiorita, Bozeman, Young, & Meurs, 2007).

Employees satisfied with their job are committed and perform their job in an effective manner which leads to increased organizational performance as well (Awang, Ahmad, & Zin, 2010). However, employees' commitment and satisfaction are much dependent on the treatment they receive from their superiors. The destiny of an organization is determined through the relationship-quality between the employee and employer (Yin, 2015). Specifically, if leadership is equipped with emotional intelligence (EI), the relationship between a leader and followers can drive an organization to produce much better results (Whereas, Ramos-Villarreal, & Holland, 2011). Organizations can earn a competitive advantage through their committed employees who feel proud to be identified with their organization which is only possible when employees are committed and enjoy what they do at their workplace (Steinhaus & Perry, 1996). On the contrary, uncommitted employees with low job satisfaction are prone to be related to several negative outcomes which cost an organization in terms of absenteeism and reduced productivity (Ismail, 2012).

Resonant leaders, using their EI create an environment that inspires employees' commitment toward the organization (Squires, Tourangeau, Laschinger, & Doran, 2010). Similarly, Wagner, Warren, Cummings, Smith, and Olson (2013) found positive association between resonant leadership and organizational commitment. Furthermore, there are various factors which are related to job, affecting job satisfaction including individual's experience at workplace, interpersonal relations with peers as well as their leaders are some of the factors that determine employees' level of JS (Lu, Barriball, Zhang, & While, 2012). There is a dearth of research addressing resonant leadership in the subcontinent. Most of the research addressing resonant leadership is related to only the nursing profession while these researches have been conducted mostly in the Western context. Therefore, what role resonant leadership plays in increasing employees' OC and JS in the Pakistani context with a diversified sample is yet to be examined. Further, moods and emotions of employees continuously vary and managing them is a challenging task. There is a paucity of literature addressing how resonant leaders manage the moods and emotions of their employees to produce desirable outcomes. This gap is filled by this research.

Literature Review

Leadership, a process whereby a group of individuals is influenced to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013), plays an important role in predicting positive outcomes in organizations. EI has been found to be significantly associated with good leadership skills (George, 2000). Specifically, resonant leadership which is rooted in emotional intelligence (EI) can be a better predictor of such

outcomes as resonant leaders demonstrate positive emotions for motivating their followers as well as manage emotions of their own and others around them to bring about very best in every situation (Squires et al., 2010).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has grasped the attention of both professionals and academicians over the past three decades. The idea of EI was originated by Salovey and Mayer (1990) which was further extended by Goleman (1995). There are five main components of EI namely self-awareness, self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social Skills (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Self-awareness refers to the ability to have a deeper understanding of one's own self and using this ability to guide action rather than impulses. Self-regulation refers to controlling and directing emotions which are disruptive, while motivation and empathy refer to drive to achieve and putting yourself in someone's own shoe respectively. Finally, social skills refer to the ability to manage relations and lead to the desired destination (Goleman, 2004). People who are driven by emotional intelligence foster a supportive organizational culture that nurtures job satisfaction among employees (Ali & Hamza, 2018). EI leads to increased organizational commitment, job satisfaction and resulting in employees retention (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2012).

According to McKee and Massimilian (2006), resonant leaders are equipped with a high level of emotional intelligence. Resonant leaders bring out the best of their employees when they use their emotional, social, environmental, cultural and financial intelligence (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Their relationships with others are strong and based on trust. Knowing the contagious nature of emotions, they manage their emotions to create an environment of hope and optimism around them. They demonstrate empathy when they read people as well as produce results using social and intellectual resources. The results, which exceed their personal advancement and impact the entire organization. Therefore, it can be contended that resonant leaders predict better individual and organizational outcomes.

Job satisfaction is one of the concepts that has widely been the subject of interest for the research community for decades and still attracts their attention (Boamah, Laschinger, Wong, & Clarke, 2018). Job satisfaction is referred to a pleasurable emotional state which an employee attains when he or she finds his job facilitating to achieve value (Schwepker, 2001, p. 41). According to Lok and Crawford (2001), the job satisfaction is the idea which is closest to organizational commitment while leadership role cannot be avoided in predicting job satisfaction (Marques-Quinteiro, Vargas, Eifler, & Curral, 2019). Organizational commitment, on the other hand, has also been acknowledged as an important variable in management literature (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006) and characterized as willingness of employees to contribute to the goals of organization and when employees are sure that they will grow and learn with their current employers, their level of commitment becomes higher (Opkara, 2004). The measure of organizational commitment is an assessment of the congruence between one's own values and beliefs of an individual with the values of the organization (Swailes, 2002). Ayeni and Phopoola (2007) found a strong relationship between organizational commitment

and job satisfaction and suggested JS as the most determining factor that explains how well the organization meets expectations of employees.

Organizational commitment is a broader construct comprising of three sub-constructs namely i) Affective commitment, ii) Normative commitment and iii) Continuance commitment. Affective commitment refers to the desire to be part of an organization because of the emotional attachment of an employee with the organization. The feelings due to which an employee does not want to be disassociated with the organization is referred to normative commitment. While continuance commitment refers to employees' attachment with the organization because the associated cost is high if they leave the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Theoretical background

How resonant leadership predicts OC and JS is rooted in *Social Exchange Theory* (Blau, 1964) and *Affective Events Theory* (Russell & Marie, 2015) respectively. Social exchange theory postulates that individuals tend to reciprocate how they are given certain treatment in order to maintain social exchange equilibrium. Therefore, it can be contended that when resonant leaders exercise emotional intelligence and treat their employees in accordance with their moods and emotions to get best out of them, employees reciprocate such treatment by showing commitment towards organization.

Affective Events theory proposes that employees' moods and emotions explain their work behavior or in other words, emotional experiences (either positive or negative) at work have significant impact on work behaviors, therefore, it can be contended that resonant leaders can better predict job satisfaction when they provide better emotional experiences to employees when demonstrating emotional intelligence.

Conceptual Framework

Extensive literature review and theoretical background support the development of the following conceptual framework and the statements of hypotheses.
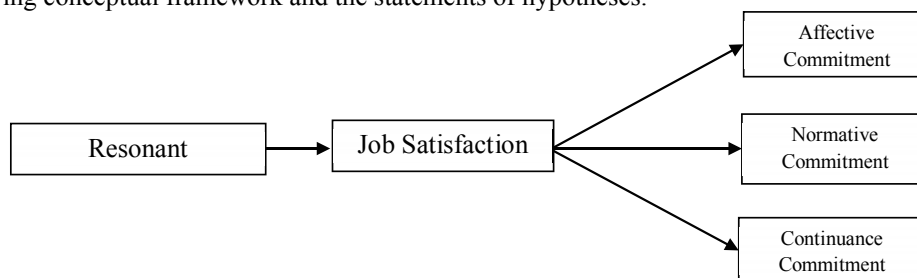

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Statements of Hypotheses

> *H1: Resonant leadership (RL) positively influences job satisfaction (JS).*
> *H2: Resonant Leadership (RL) positively influences affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC) and continuance commitment (CC).*
> *H3: Job satisfaction (JS) mediates the influence of resonant leadership (RL) on affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC) and continuance commitment (CC).*

Research Methodology

Research Paradigm & Research Design

The paradigm this research follows is positivism which bases its foundation on the argument that observation and experimentation are the tools to attain reality (Henn et al., 2009). Further, this study follows the quantitative research design (Creswell, 2013) which is the most appropriate research design to examine the cause-effect relationship. Positivism also argues in support of quantitative method to test the proposed hypotheses.

Population & Sample

The target population for this research is people working in different business sectors in Karachi. The data has been collected from the respondent of Karachi city is considered to be an economic hub and metropolitan city of Pakistan (Qureshi & Lu, 2007) in order to increase the heterogeneity of the population. The sample of 200 respondents which is treated as the minimum appropriate sample for business research (Thompson, 2004) has been drawn from a diverse group of individuals belonging to different business segment in Karachi. The convenient sampling technique has been employed for this research which is a common technique for sampling in academia where research is subject to resource-related constraints (Sekaran, 2000).

Administration of Survey Questionnaire

A survey questionnaire based on 5-point Likert-scale was developed and administered personally to respondents. The scale ranged between *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The measurement of resonant leadership was made through the 10-item scale proposed by Cummings et al. (2010). Exemplary item includes *My leader acts on values even if it is at a personal cost.* The 4-item scale of Taylors and Bowers (1972) was used to measure JS. Exemplary item includes *All in all, I am satisfied with my job now*. Finally, all three components of OC have been measured by the scale proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990). Exemplary item includes *I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own*.

Methods of Data Analysis

Initial screening of the data was made through descriptive statistics including Skewness & Kurtosis which assess normality of the data (Hair, 2010). After normality of data is ascertained, construct validity of the data was ascertained through the method recommended by Cline (2010) and Hair Jr. (2008). Further, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted (Hair, 2010) in addition to using SPSS AMOS 23 for the fitness of the model and to test the proposed relationship among variables (hypotheses). The criteria for Fit indices used include $\chi 2$ (non-significant), $\chi 2/d.f. \leq$ 3, SRMR < 0.05 RMSEA <0.05 for absolute fit indices. For incremental fit indices, CFI > 0.95 and TFI > 0.95 were used while NNFI > 0.50 and PCFI >0.50 were used for parsimony fit indices.

Results

Respondents' Profile

The profile of respondents of this study is given below which highlights the demographical statisitcs of the respondents.

Table 1
Respondents'.Profile

Variable		Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	125	62.5
	Female	75	37.5
Age	Less than 21	23	11.5
	21 to 30 Years	25	12.5
	31 to 40 Years	38	19
	41 to 51 Years	64	32
	51 and above	50	25
Income	Up to 20,000	42	21
	21,000 to 30,000	48	24
	31,000 to 40,000	45	22.5
	41,000 to 50,000	65	32.5
	51,000 and above	0	0
Marital Status	Single	138	69
	Married	62	31
Education	Up to Intermediate	75	37.5
	Graduation	75	37.5
	Masters	50	25
	M.S/M/.Phil	0	0
	Doctoral	0	0
	Total	200	100

There are 125 62.5%) male and 75 (37.5%) female respondent whose age ranges from 21 years to 51. 138 (69%) of the respondets were unmarried and 62 (31%) were married. The income of 65 (32.5%) respodents was in between Rs.41K to Rs.50K followed by 48 (24%) between 21K to 30K, 42 (21%) upto Rs.20, 000 and 45 (22.5%) between Rs.31K to Rs.40K. 75 (37.5%) of the repondent were Intermediate, 75 (37.5%) up to Graduation and 50 (25%) had master's degree.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are presented to assess if data is normally distributed and that there is no significant standard deviation. Table 1 shows results of descriptive statistics below.

Table 2
Descriptive Analysis

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Resonant Leadership	3.93	0.56	0.17	-0.49
Job Satisfaction	3.85	0.89	-0.51	-0.96
Affective Commitment	3.38	0.80	-0.40	-0.59
Continuance Commitment	3.27	0.62	0.10	-0.76
Normative Commitment	3.59	0.79	-0.19	-0.81

In the above Table 1, resonant leadership is there with the highest Skewness (M=3.93, SD=.56) with the value of .17 while its Kurtosis is -.49. This is followed by continuance commitment (M=3.27, SD=.62) with the value of .10 while its Kurtosis is -.76. The lowest among all is job satisfaction (M=3.85, SD=.89) with the value of -.51 while its Kurtosis value is -.96. The values of all the other constructs a lie in between these extremes which fall within the acceptable range (Hair Jr. et al., 2010).

Reliability Analysis

Reliability is the index of consistency of data and provides surety that the data collected has coherence. The instruments used in the study have been widely used by researchers in different settings with acceptable Cronbach's Alpha. Details of reliability of the scales for this study are shown. in Table.3 below.

Table 3
Reliability.Analysis

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Resonant Leadership	3.93	0.56	.85
Job Satisfaction	3.85	0.89	.77
Affective Commitment	3.38	0.80	.82
Continuance Commitment	3.27	0.62	.79
Normative Commitment	3.59	0.79	.83

The alpha value of resonant leadership is the hightse (M=3.93, SD=.56) with the value .85, followed by normative commitment (M=3.59, SD=.79) with alpha=.83. The lowest value for Cronbach alpha is .77 for job satisfaction (M=3.85, SD=.89). The extreme highest and the lowest values of reliability fall within acceptable range.

Correlation Analysis

The constructs' uniqueness and its distinctiveness has been assessed through correlation. Additionally, this analysis also addresses the multicollinearity issue (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Checking correlation is the requirement for regression analysis. The value of the correlation should be between 0.20-0.90. The item with < 0.20 or >0.90 is to be dropped or.merged.(Bryman.&.Bell, 2015). Table 3 shows summarized.results of.correlation.

Table.4
Summarized.Correlation Results

	RL	**JS**	**AC**	**CC**	**NC**
Resonant Leadership	1				
Job Satisfaction	.78	1			
Affective Commitment	.76	.82	1		
Continuance Commitment	.71	.75	.78	1	
Normative Commitment	.73	.75	.77	.85	1

Construct Validity

Instruments with different cultural orginin is validated through construct validity. Discriminant validity acompained with convergent validity is used to assess construct validity (Read,.2013).

Convergent Validity

If variance extracted > .40 and α >.70, it confirms convergent validity (Hair, 2010). Table 4 shows the results of convergent validity confirming the above-mentioned criteria.

Table 5
Convergent Validity

Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance Explained
Resonant Leadership	3.93	0.56	.85	72.30%
Job Satisfaction	3.85	0.89	.77	73.66%
Affective Commitment	3.38	0.80	.82	77.63%
Continuance Commitment	3.27	0.62	.79	78.26%
Normative Commitment	3.59	0.79	.83	85.26%

Discriminant.Validity

Fornell and.Larcker.(1981) recommended that squarre root of VE should be > square of r (correlation) to confirm discriminant validity. Table 5 below.confirms that the data acquired for this study fulfills discriminant.validity requirements.

Table 6
Discriminant Validity

Construct	RL	JS	AC	CC	NC
Resonant Leadership	8.50				
Job Satisfaction	0.6084	8.58			
Affective Commitment	0.5776	0.6724	8.81		
Continuance Commitment	0.5041	0.5625	0.6084	8.85	
Normative Commitment	0.5329	0.5625	0.5929	0.7225	9.23

Confirmatory.Factor.Analysis

CFA was.performed in.order to.assess the fitness of good model-fit for structural model which is represented through Figure 2 below.
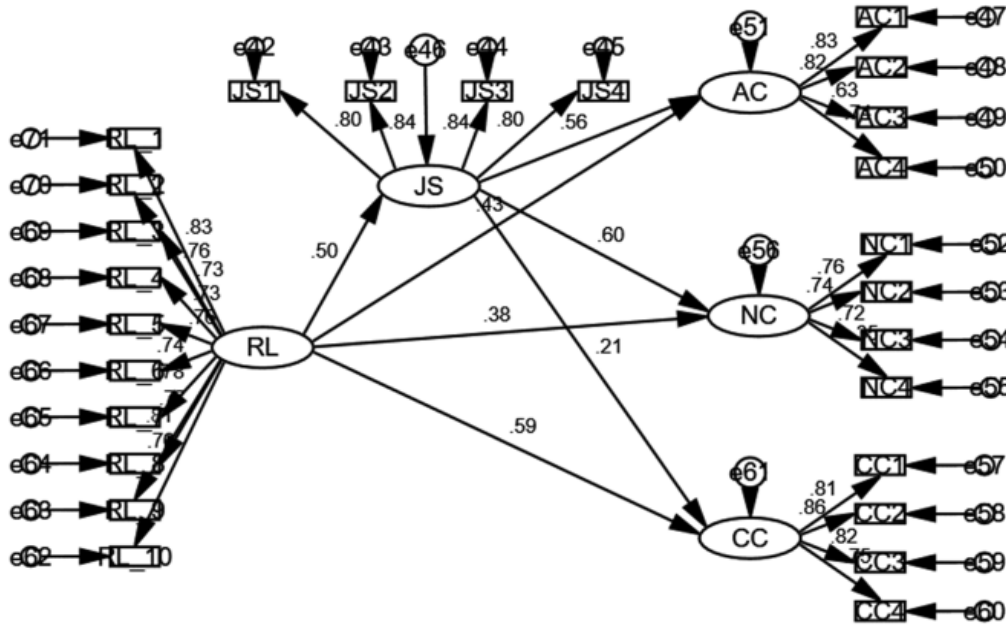
Figure 2: CFA-Structural Model

The $\chi2\,(292) = 758.26$, $p < .05$ while the value of $\chi2/d = 2.59$ which is used to avoid the sensitivity of the Chi Square statics to the sample size (Iacobucci, 2010)2010; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & M\uc0\u252{}ller, 2003. Since the value of less than 3.0 is acceptable for $\chi2/df$, therefore that value 2.59 indicates a good fit (Kline, 2015)"publisher":"Guilford publications","source":"Google Scholar","author":[{"family":"Kline","given":"Rex"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["2015"]]}}],"schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"} . Absolute fit index category shows the value of SRMR = 0.05, while the *RMSEA* value is .05 which indicates an acceptable fit (Hoyle, 2012; Weston, & Gore, 2006). The incremental fit indices show values of TLI and CFI 0.93 and 0.94 respectively. The values for these fit indices > 0.90 indicate reasonable fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The PCFI and PNFI values are 0.85 and 0.82 respectively, demonstrating a good fit. The values close to 1 are considered a good fit for PNFI and PCFI (Lomax & Schumacker, 2012)2012. Overall, the proposed model indicates a good fit for the sample data.

Results of Hypotheses Testing

The theoretical framework proposed in the previous chapter helped to hypothesize that the RL has a positive influence on JS (H_1). Further, it was hypothesized that RL has a positive influence

on AC (H_{2a}), NC (H_{2b}) and CC (H_{2c}). Finally, it was also hypothesized that JS mediates the influence of RL on AC (H_{3a}), NC (H_{3b}) and CC (H_{3c}). Table 6 shows the summary of results.

Table 7
Summarized Results of Mediation Analysis

Effect	Effect Size	S.E.	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
RL on JS (H1)	.55	.05	11.15	.00	-	-
	$R2 = .29$, $F(1) = 124.47$, $p < .05$					
Total Effect of RL on AC	.65	.04	15.66	.00	.57	.73
Direct Effect of RL on AC (H2a)	.41	.04	10.27	.00	.33	.49
Indirect Effect of RL on AC (H3a)	.24	.03			.18	.31
	$R2 = .52$, $F(2) = 252.91$, $p < .05$					
Total Effect of RL on NC	.56	.04	14.52	.00	.48	.64
Direct Effect of RL on NC (H2b)	.31	.04	8.97	.00	.24	.38
Indirect Effect of RL on NC (H3b)	.25	.03			.19	.32
	$R2 = .54$, $F(2) = 276.09$, $p < .05$					
Total Effect of RL on CC	.72	.04	16.97	.00	.64	.80
Direct Effect of RL on CC (H2c)	.61	.05	13.18	.00	.52	.71
Indirect Effect of RL on CC (H3c)	.11	.03			.06	.17

The results.presented in.Table 6 show support.for the.proposed hypotheses. RL significantly predicts JS (b = .55, p < .05) which satisfies the first assumption of mediation and supports H_1. RL significantly predicts AC directly (b =041, p < 0.05) and through the mediation of JS (b = .24, p < .05) which indicates partial mediation as the beta coefficient of RL remained significant in the presence of mediator (JS) and thus support H_{2a} and H_{3a}. Similarly, RL significantly predicts NC directly (b =.31, p < 0.05) and through the mediation of JS (b = .25, p < .05) which indicates again partial mediation and thus support H_{2b} and H_{3b}. Finally, RL significantly predicts CC directly (b =.61, p < 0.05) and through the mediation of JS (b = .11, p < .05) which is the highest effect among all other dimensions of organizational commitment. These results indicate partial mediation and thus support H_{2c} and H_{3c}.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this research validate the role of Affective Events Theory and Social Exchange Theory in explaining how resonant leaders increase job satisfaction of their employees which leads them to have higher and stronger organizational commitment. Resonant leaders' positive influence on employees' moods and emotions is translated into their work domain which results in increased job satisfaction. Further, as outlined by social exchange theory, employees tend to maintain

the equilibrium of social exchange in response to positive emotional treatment from their leaders. Since employees are in the subordination of their leaders, it is not possible for employees to provide their leaders with the same emotional experience as they receive from them. Therefore, employees tend to reciprocate the positive behavior of their leadership by demonstrating commitment to the organization. These findings are consistent with Awang, Ahmad and Zin (2010) which suggested that job satisfaction increases employees' commitment with their organization. These findings are also in compliance with the findings of Wagner, Warren, Cummings, Smith, and Olson (2013) and Ayeni and Phopoola (2007) which found a strong association between job satisfaction and organizational commitment as well as the role of leadership in predicting these outcomes. In summary, resonant leaders' practice of emotional intelligence supports managing the moods and emotions of their own and their employees which creates a positive impact on employees attitudes at workplace.

Future Recommendations

Findings of this study indicate that continuance commitment is more explained by resonant leadership than the other two components. The idea of continuance commitment is concerned with the cost associated with leaving the organization. Furthermore, this is the potential sign of lack of opportunities in the job market. Therefore, future research endeavors in this respect can more clarify this phenomenon. Future research can clarify whether or not job opportunities in market overshadow the role of leadership in increasing employees attachment with the organization. It can also explain if leaders truly resonate through their EI to produce a positive impact on employees' lives without anyother influence.

Limitations

Some limitations, as associated with other researches, are the part of this research. First, this is a research based on cross-sectional data which limits the researcher to make a strong claim. Second, the sampling technique (convenient sampling) employed is considered as the weakest among all. The issue of generalizability is associated with non-probability sampling so with this research as well. Future research with probability-based sampling, specifically, a longitudinal study can provide strength to the findings of this research.

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