

# THE ROLE OF PATERNALISTIC LEADERSHIP TOWARDS INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE IN ASIAN CONTEXT

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## Abstract

*The present quantitative study based on positivist philosophy, strives to improve the understanding of the paternalistic leadership (PL) and individual work performance(IWP) from subordinate-centered perspective rather than leadership-centered approach through the unique mediation effect of person-environment fit by using a social identity lens. The data is collected from the 367 medical practitioners through multi-stage sampling in the health sectors of Pakistan by survey method. Structural equation modeling(SEM) is used for the hypotheses testing on Smart PLS 3.0. The measurement and structural models showed significant results with partial mediation of P-E Fit dimensions among which person-organization(P-O) fit show the highest mediation effect. The findings of the study suggest that the senior doctors and nurses who attain the qualities of paternalism could enhance the performance of their juniors by establishing their fit with the job, supervisor and organization. The major limitation of the study is the use of self -reported response based on employee perception only. The future studies should address the issue by calculating actual fit and actual performance of employees from multiple data sources using a longitudinal design. In addition, the mediation effect of PE fit with three dimensions of paternalistic leadership need to be examined.*

**Keywords:** Individual Work Performance (IWP), Paternalistic Leadership (PL), Person-Environment (P-E) Fit, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

**JEL Classifications:** Z000

## Introduction

In the times of the fierce competition, one of the critical issues for the organization is the individual's work performance. Now the organizations strive to cut their internal costs through outsourcing and employee reduction to optimize the performance level of the retained workforce

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within the organization (Koopmans, 2014). In this situation, leadership is the significant element in the organizational settings, which is concerned with the success of the organization through its influence on the followers performance (Lin, Ma, Zhang, & Li, 2018).

Literature has identified various leadership styles, where paternalistic leadership has attracted the researcher's attention. Which is primarily concerned with its relational point of view rather than attitude or quality, especially in the eastern cultures (Northouse, 2018). Since few decades, the understanding of leadership theories has gained the momentum of their applicability in different nations and cultures (Aycan, Johnson, & Lansing, 2014; Dorfman, 1996; House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002; Zhang & Xie, 2017).

Among the specific cultural context, paternalistic leadership has been derived with its focus not only on leader characteristics but also on follower's response including their work attitudes and behavior (Ünler & Kılıç, 2019). Paternalism is an important concept of collectivist and high power distance culture. The protection and care of subordinate make them to realize their leader like surrogate parents having high power distance among them (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008).

Literature hints a universally effective leader's behavior which is consistent across all the cultures, but some of leadership styles vary in cultural contexts (Hwang et al., 2015). Leadership and organizational culture influence the values and goals of the individuals (Mansur, 2016). The culture-bound discussion about leadership leads towards the concept of paternalistic leadership (PL) is traditionally quite effective. In the eastern traditions, the fatherly authority is developed in the value system having centralized command (Wang, Guan, & Taylor, 2018). Similarly, there is a close adherence of the fatherly authoritative leadership with their subordinates that might lead towards the positive and negative effects such as fear and work pressure. These diverse consequences urge to explore the deeper relationships of paternalistic leadership. In addition, the unique conceptualization of classical paternalistic framework and moderated mediation relationships towards individual outcomes have attracted the researchers' interest (Wang et al., 2018). This is an acceptable approach of employers of China, India, Turkey, Mexico, Japan and Pakistan (Aycan, 2000; Uhl-Bien, Tierney, Graen, & Wakabayashi, 1990).

As the three major approaches of understanding the behaviors of individuals in cultural perspective is emic, etic and integrated approaches (Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999). The emic perspective is further divided into outside in and inside out categories that explained the Chinese leadership (Wang & Cheng, 2010). It is suggested in inside out approach to conduct the in depth study of paternalistic leadership in detail (Thu & Ting Lin, 2019).

In addition, the concept of structural functionalism has subdivided the leadership in organizations and leadership of organizations. The former is concerned with leadership in each level of organization that is affecting at task completion subordinates while latter is concerned with strategic

planning (Dublin, 1971). At different levels, leaders need different environment and resources: At the embryonic stages this concept emerged at strategic level of Chinese concept out from the development of leadership, the order of paternalistic leadership is changed for example Authoritarianism is relevant to subordinate, Benevolence is caring to them while morality is fairness of personal characteristics (Niu, Wang, & Cheng, 2009).

Leadership is imperative for the performance of the organization from human resource perspective because it is more concerned with the employees than with the procedures (Anwar, 2013). The study of employee performance reveals that when they are treated fairly by the leaders and the organizations, they develop a strong bond to fit with the environment. This person-organization fit enable the employees to redefine their relationship with the organization in terms of social exchange rather than economic exchange (Freire & Azevedo, 2015) which provides the basis to work beyond the call of duty. It seems possible only when the employees match their selves with the organizational values and fit within the environment (Kim, Aryee, Loi, & Kim, 2013). The misfit employees tend to be uncomfortable in their work and the environment, which leads towards negative outcomes for the organizations (Chuang, Shuwei Hsu, Wang, & Judge, 2015).

A study conducted in the health care sector of Turkey, examined the relationship of paternalistic leadership on job performance and intentions to leave and found the positive relationship of two dimensions of paternalistic leadership (Ugurluoglu, Aldogan, Turgut, & Ozatkan, 2018). The mediating role of person-job fit act as a mechanism in the relationship of transformational leadership and work engagement have created a ground for future researchers to study the social interaction between individual and its environment, particularly the person-environment fit (P-E fit) (Bui, Zeng, & Higgs, 2017). In cultural context of Pakistan, a study of paternalistic leadership in the education sector compared the moral and authoritative components being taken as the dimensions but very few studies are seen in health sector (Afsar, 2014).

The study undertaken would deepen our understanding of paternalistic leadership and individual work performance from subordinate centered perspective rather than leadership centered approach as described in leadership literature (Chan, Huang, Snape, & Lam, 2013; Zheng, 2016). This study extends the line of research by analyzing the mediation effect of person-environment fit with its three dimensions between the paternalistic leadership and individual work performance.

### *Industry Overview*

Employee in health care sector work under intense pressure. There is a transition in the global health care because of variations in disease patterns that created a shortage in health care profession which seems below international benchmarks. According to World Health Report 2008, the world health organization given the statistics of 2002, recommends workers to increase at the level of 2.54 (Van Lerberghe, 2008).

The performance of Nurses and doctors play a pivotal role in health care systems. The staff shortage is crucial in the current era. The Nursing leaders and managers are accountable for organizational success. The evidences of literature review focus on limited results in the field of individual work performance (IWP). The current study focuses on what practitioners perceive as motivational factor for them to fit with the environment and whether leadership style is an important factor in creating positive performance? The leadership skills are polished in the mentoring programs held by the organization. Pakistan as a patriarchal society is representing nursing as a women dominating profession, where these figures are striving in achieving recognition and respect.

A comparative study on the government and private Nurses job satisfaction explained the positive impact of transformational leadership on nurses hospitals (Abdelhafiz, Alloubani, & Almatari, 2016). A qualitative approach about the nursing leadership in Pakistan context is studied and revealed certain personal and professional factor, to enhance the certain leadership competencies(Gulzar, Sultana, & Aziz, 2019).

Traditionally, the medical practitioners are supposed to be caring and nurturing in their job status but they could perform well as a leader or manger in order to smoothly run the health care system. In response of all the services they are seen less motivated with deficient moral values in the environment which hinder them to fit in their job, as well as organization. When the leader's command is valued, the supervisor employee relationship gets strengthened and thrill of motivation is sensed. There is a need to provide leadership exposures inside and outside the organizational boundaries to inculcate the leadership qualities in order to get the required outcomes in this sector.

### *Significance*

An individual work performance (IWP) has given significant attention in the field of occupational health, management, education and health sector. The economic pressures and competitiveness demands the institutions to cut their internal cost by enhancing the performance of existing work force (Koopmans, 2014).The sustainable employability for the sake of social security in health care is need for competitive edge in order to survive in challenging environment(World Health Organization Report,2012). In addition, the growing business interests sparked the interest of leadership scholars to deeply understand the relationship between leadership styles and employee work performance from individual-centered perspective (Bedi, 2019).In Asian context, the collectivist and high power distance demands for paternalistic leadership style responsible for the employee work related and behavioral outcomes. The focus of the current study is to understand the underlying mechanism between paternalistic leadership and person environment fit using social identification approach.

### *Problem Statement*

The paradigm shifts of leadership studies from global to cross cultural and then to indigenous concepts urges to understand the culture specific leadership styles. Paternalism is rooted in Chinese culture with Confucianism and Legalism in addition to high power distance being the pillars of collectivist culture (Zheng, 2016). In health sector of Pakistan, leadership role is seen deficient that could stimulate the psychological processes of medical practitioners to enhance their task and contextual performance.

### *Research Objective*

The present research examined the underlying mechanism of person-environment fit with its three dimensions (P-J fit, P-S Fit, P-O Fit) in the linkage between paternalistic leadership and individual work performance. In a nutshell the objective of the research is to test the paternalistic model from the followers, perspective with the mediation of PE fit dimensions.

### *Research Question*

What is the mediating effect of PE fit (P-J, P-S, P-O fit) in the relationship between paternalistic leadership and individual work performance?

## **Literature Review**

### *Individual Work Performance (IWP)*

Individual work performance has two dimensions of task performance and contextual performance. These two dimensions are significant for the organizational effectiveness in the social & psychological context (Ugurluoglu et al., 2018). Moreover, it is argued that organizations cannot survive if it sticks to the performance defined by job description only (Katz, 1964).

### *Paternalistic Leadership*

Paternalism originates from Latin word "pater" meaning father, and is supposed to restrict the freedom of the subordinates to some extent (Bor-Shiuan Cheng, 2004). The concept of paternalism is where a supervisor possesses three dimensions of authority, benevolence and morality.

1. Authoritarian Leadership (AL) is concerned with the authoritative and strong position of leader which is always demanding unquestioned obedience from the subordinates with the strong control

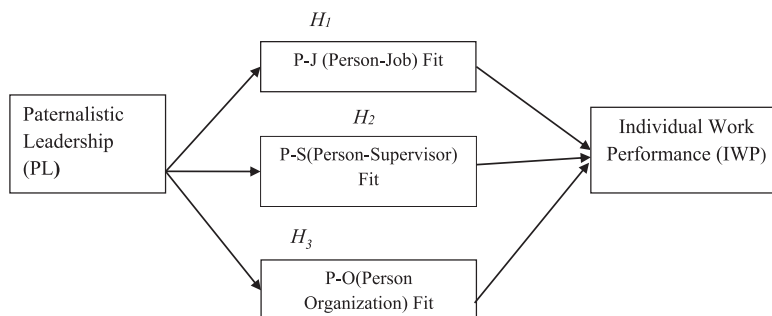
over them (Wang et al., 2018). The concept of authoritarianism is associated with the dictations of the leader about policies, decisions that provide direction to the employees to perform their activities (Farh & Cheng, 2000). This style of dictation of the policies is observed in the countries where higher power distance prevails, although few evidences are found in some western nations (Chen, Zhou, & Klyver, 2018)

2. Benevolence Leadership (BL) is related to the personal well-being and concerns by taking care of the employees,
3. Moral Leadership (ML) refers to superior leadership having virtuous self-discipline and purified from selfishness based on ethical standards and presents a role model (Wang & Cheng, 2010).

### *Person-Environment (P-E) Fit*

The concept of fit is rather complex and is operationalized by three dimensions of Person-Job Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit and Person-Organization Fit. These fit hints towards the alignment of the person with the respective job, supervisor and organization in terms of mutual values and systems (Kristof-brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). All three dimensions have varying degree of impact on the individual work outcomes in any given context.

Paternalistic leaders are also concerned with the family life of the employee through their benevolent attitude and devoting their energies in taking care of the subordinates. Paternalistic leader finds the employees problems when their desired performance is not achieved. Altruism, benevolence, kindness, love, generosity are key features of motivating the individual of human oriented societies will high power distance and collectivist culture (House et al., 2002) which might be a reason of searching a father like figure as in collectivist culture employee expects their supervisor to concern their personal problems along with support in job related issues. This relationship is depicted in the model as under.



*Figure 1: Theoretical Framework*

*Paternalistic Leadership, Person Job Fit and Individual Work Performance*

Benevolent behavior of paternalistic leadership exhibits individualized care for the followers in both working and non-working domains, so it perform its true actions in both aspects (Tang & Naumann, 2015) morality and authoritarianism. Benevolent leadership positively affects organizational citizenship behaviors through leader–member exchange (LMX). Benevolent leader seeks reasons behind the poor performance and makes corrections by mentoring and coaching. The concept of benevolence is deep rooted in is mutual obligation between the two people, as the father is responsible for protecting their children and children show obedience and gratitude in return (Lin et al., 2018). Similarly, employee becomes loyal towards work and may also perform beyond their actual duty by reciprocating the caring attitude of the leader (Bor-Shiuan Cheng, 2004).

On contrary their supervision is supposed to be ineffective (Kozan, 1993). A study in Brazil reveals that employee working with paternalistic leaders feel family atmosphere with person-job fit. Their confidence toward the work is increased (Zheng, 2016). As they consider the work family conflict as less harmful (Jackson, Meyer, & Wang, 2013).

Based on the P-E Fit theory, when an individual feel fit with the job by satisfying his needs and demands of the job, the task and the contextual performance are attained. It is argued that the person's job fit is an important contributing factor which leads towards his desired performance. Based on theory of work adjustment, the employee needs must be met with the demands of the job till the optimal level of fit is created on both sides.

Fit is a dynamic process based upon three activities including perseverance/specify the length of time for adjustment behavior), flexibility (symbolizes the correspondence in activist style while working on the environment) and Reactive (Person working on the self). The above three activities could be explained in compliance of social identification approach the literature has also focused on identity dynamics of leader and followers leading towards positive outcomes (Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2016). The identity perspective revolves around follower centric behavior that is helpful in developing the self-concept which state, that individuals have self-scheme which are activated in particular context (Kerse, 2019).

Furthermore, self-schema is basically formulating the attitude and judgment that is shaping the sense of world through cognitive structures. These small components of self are important to shape the perception, emotions and responses that changes with contextual situation. The conscious self-construal is generated with the questions “who am I and what should I do” that gives the directions toward goal accomplishment with enhancement of skill and tried to fit itself with the task in order to create a person-job fit. Self-identification has divided the self in to three levels, individual level, (directed toward the self-concept) Relational (directed toward role relationship) and collective level (directed toward group level) i.e. Person-job fit.

The self enhancement and uncertain components of social identification when Authoritarian leadership along with benevolence reduces the uncertainty, through their task and skills clarity P-J fit is created.

$H_1$ : P-J Fit mediates the relationship between paternalistic leadership and individual work performance.

#### *Paternalistic Leadership, Person Supervisor Fit (P-S Fit) and Individual Work Performance*

The supervisor–employee relationship is more paternalistic and hierarchical in high power distance countries in comparison to the low power distance countries of Europe and America (Hofstede, 2003; House et al., 2002). Morality of paternalistic leader is concerned with high ethical standards having superior virtues and serving as a role model that could be source of employee encouragement by putting his beliefs in his justified behavior (Farh & Cheng, 2000). The positive perceptions of the individuals towards their leaders create high quality relationships and engage in helpful behaviors along with their duties described in the job description. This virtuous action-exchange reciprocates in creating a fit between the person and the supervisor. Collective good and integrity beyond their self-interest is a long term investment in arousing the moral behavior that leads toward contextual performance (Tang & Naumann, 2015b).

Paternalism is associated with the authoritative decision making but the caring component involves the employees in decision-making so that the final decision could be satisfactory to all (Ugurluoglu et al., 2018). The morality concept of paternalistic leader also demonstrates collective interest rather than self-interest by showing high integrity (Chan et al., 2013). This behavior enhances the employee confidence in leadership's judgment and moves beyond the duties in the formal agreement by creating a person-supervisor fit so the paternalistic relationship of guidance, care and protection is attained between the leaders and the follower. This person-supervisor fit then leads toward the positive individual work performance.

$H_2$ : The relationship between Paternalistic leadership and individual work performance is mediated by P-S Fit.

#### *Paternalistic Leadership, Person-Organization (PO) Fit and Individual Work Performance*

Person-Organization fit is attained when there is match between leadership styles and the organization values which leads towards better results (Yu, 2014; O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991). Paternalistic Leadership is distinct from other leadership constructs as it is important for motivation of employees and providing them psychological connection to the organization and work units (Schaubroeck, Shen, Chong, & Schaubroeck, 2016). This linking and congruence of values are intertwined towards high level of person-organization fit. Mutual understanding and discussion of organizational problems with goal congruence leads towards an enhanced performance. When

the leader's command is valued, the supervisor employee relationship gets strengthened. A thrill of motivation is sensed.

$H_3$ : The relationship between Paternalistic Leadership and Individual Work Performance is mediated by PO Fit.

## Research Methodology

### *Data Collection*

This empirical study employs the questionnaire method based on the five points Likert scale instrument ranging from strongly disagree as "1" to strongly agree as "5" except the items of individual work performance which are labeled between "1" for seldom to "5" for always. In Pakistan, the total number of registered medical practitioners include 208000 doctors, 20463 dentists and 103777 nurses (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2017). Sample was selected through a multi-stage sampling. 500 questionnaires were distributed among the medical practitioners of public and private sectors of Islamabad and 367 responses were analyzed. The sample frequencies show the higher number of females' respondents at 283 than male respondents of 94. This female dominant response reflects the majority of female population in the sample, especially among the nurses.

### *Instrumentation*

Generic operationalization of Koopmans (2014) is used for the measurement of individual work performance that includes the task performance (concerned with job) and contextual performance (other than job). Task performance is measured with the quality of work, organizing the work, result orientation, prioritizing and work efficiency etc. Contextual performance is concerned with the discretionary behavior of the employees that is not a part of core job responsibilities and is mostly viewed as a substitute of organizational citizenship behavior. The scale of contextual performance reflects the dimensions of the concept including supporting behavior, being amicable and enthusiastic. The three components comprise PE fit construct (Person-Job Fit, Person-Organization Fit and Person-Supervisor Fit). Person-Job fit is operationalized into two dimensions that are N-S (Need supply) Fit and D-A (Demand Ability) Fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Person-supervisor fit measures the response of employee towards their supervisor. The perceived P-O fit consists of items including "My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in my life".

Cheng and colleagues' (2004) scale named as global paternalistic leadership scale was used for the measurement of Paternalistic Leadership. The concept was measured by three dimensions that are authoritarian, benevolence and moral characteristics of leadership. The study in the university teachers of Pakistan has validated this scale (Afsar, 2014). The dimension of authority is on the basis of power, control authority and required respect and obedience from the followers. Benevolence

is concerned with preference, concern and encouragement and coaching of supervisor towards the subordinates. Moral character reflects the task responsibility and self-discipline demand of the supervisor. In the Asian context, this characteristic is reflecting a role model in terms of morality.

### *Data Analysis*

The data was analyzed through Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique in SmartPLS 3. Table 1 shows the reliability and validity of the scales. All the values of Cronbach Alfa( $\alpha$ ) are satisfying the minimum threshold of 0.70. The composite reliability of the model is greater than 0.9 which also surpasses the minimum threshold of 0.6 (Höck & Ringle, 2006). The convergent validity is tested by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which is above the threshold of the 0.5 which is considered as good. Paternalistic Leadership, whereas, has the AVE value of 0.45 which is above the threshold of 0.4, regarded as acceptable (Höck & Ringle, 2006). Table 2 reflects the correlations among the variables. Correlation of the IWP is slightly on the higher side with the other variables. Higher correlation may indicate the validity issues, for that purpose HTMT and Fornell Larcker techniques were additionally used to assess any validity concerns which indicate that there are no validity concerns and structural model can be estimated. Single source perception based data may have method biasness, so to ensure that data is free from common method bias single factor analysis was conducted which reflected no such issue in the data with explained variance of less than 50%.

Table 1  
*Reliability and Validity Analysis*

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Context Performance	0.89	0.92	0.61
Paternalistic Leadership	0.82	0.81	0.45
Person Job	0.95	0.96	0.84
Person Organization	0.93	0.96	0.88
Person Supervisor	0.91	0.94	0.85
Task Performance	0.87	0.91	0.68

Table 2 shows that the correlation values are greater than 0.5 and show significance.

Table 2  
*Inter-Correlations among Constructs*

	IWP	PL	P-J Fit	P-O Fit	P-S Fit
PL	0.71				
P-J Fit	0.71	0.56			
P-O Fit	0.72	0.67	0.54		
P-S Fit	0.70	0.67	0.61	0.56	

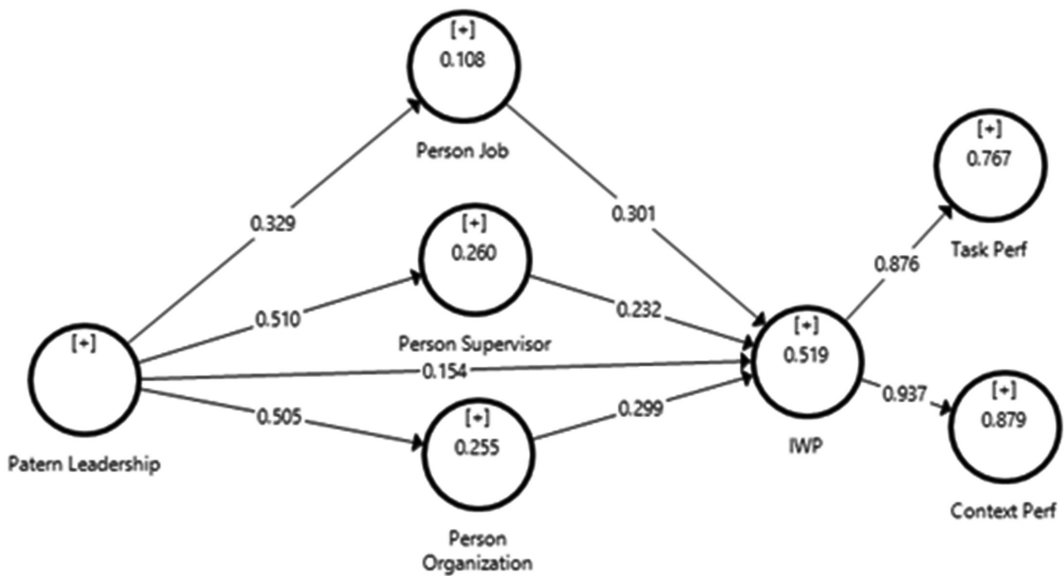


Figure 2: SEM Model

Table 3 shows that T values are greater than 2 and significant with p-value less than 0.5 for all the path relationships.

Table 3  
*Standardized Path Coefficients*

	<b>Coeff.</b>	<b>STDEV</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P Values</b>
PL -> IWP	0.17	0.04	4.75	0.00
PL-> P-J Fit	0.56	0.03	18.88	0.00
PL-> P-O Fit	0.67	0.03	25.73	0.00
PL-> P-S Fit	0.67	0.03	27.08	0.00
P-J Fit -> IWP	0.31	0.03	9.71	0.00
P-O Fit -> IWP	0.31	0.04	8.75	0.00
P-S Fit -> IWP	0.23	0.04	6.21	0.00

Table 4 shows the values for path significance of mediation. All the values in the table are greater than 0.2 that shows partial mediation. Hence, all the hypotheses of the mediation are accepted.

Table 4  
*Variance Accounted For*

<b>IV</b>	<b>MV</b>	<b>DV</b>	<b>VAF</b>
PL	PJ	IWP	0.219
PL	PS	IWP	0.475
PL	PO	IWP	0.550

Table 5  
*HTMT*

	<b>CP</b>	<b>IWP</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>P-J Fit</b>	<b>P-O Fit</b>	<b>P-S Fit</b>
PL	0.49	0.56				
P-J Fit	0.48	0.55	0.36			
P-O Fit	0.49	0.57	0.56	0.31		
P-S Fit	0.49	0.57	0.58	0.43	0.35	
TP	0.69	0.91	0.54	0.54	0.58	0.57

Table 6  
*FornellLarcker*

	CP	PL	P-J Fit	P-O Fit	P-S Fit	TP
CP	0.86					
PL	0.46	0.65				
P-J Fit	0.46	0.33	0.88			
P-O Fit	0.45	0.51	0.28	0.91		
P-S Fit	0.44	0.51	0.38	0.31	0.89	
TP	0.65	0.50	0.51	0.53	0.52	0.91

The hypothesized model was tested by PLS-SEM on SmartPLS3. The three component of PE Fit (P-J fit, P-S Fit and P-O fit) showed partial mediation in the relationship between paternalistic leadership and individual work performance, where P-O fit showed the highest mediating effect of all three. This may indicate the scope of the P-O fit which is relatively broader than the P-J fit and P-S fit, hence have higher role to play in translating the paternalistic leadership into the work outcomes.

### Conclusion

The study examined the mediation of three PE fit components together in explaining the relationship of paternalistic leadership and individual work performance. The findings of the study explained that the morality, benevolence and authoritarianism of paternalistic leader could affect together in fitting the employee towards its job, supervisor as well as organization that leads to increased task and contextual performance. The concept of paternalism and cultural norms are incorporated in Asian context so the study contributed the existing literature of paternalistic leadership and individual work performance on the basis of PE fit theory as an additional mechanism that differentiate from the previous studies. The findings of the study suggest that those senior doctors and nurses who attain the qualities of paternalism could enhance performance of their juniors by establishing their fit with the job, supervisor and organization.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

Since the limitations in research are unavoidable in spite of its implications. A self-report survey is conducting for data collection that could be susceptible for generating common method variance as all the perceptual measures of explanatory and dependent variables are collected from same respondents. The variables are measured using the self-reported data from one source only that could be addressed in the future studies to proceed by calculating actual fit rather than perceived fit

and performance by including other sources using a longitudinal design. For future research, other leadership styles should be compared with dimensions of paternalistic leadership.

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