HOW INSTRUMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROMOTES AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: SOCIAL SKILLS AS MEDIATOR

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Employee-organization linkages have been the subject of considerable scholarly and managerial attention. The findings of this research study provide empirical evidence that instrumental leadership attributes predict affective commitment among employees in their organizations. More specifically, based on their expertise and environmental knowledge, instrumental leaders endorse attributes that help followers adhere to the organization's vision through providing timely feedback and facilitating tasks. Instrumental leadership thus promotes a positive workplace in which affective commitment is encouraged. The sample included 226 followers from a major telecom company in Morocco. Employees reported their levels of affective commitment, completed the Social Skills Inventory, and rated their supervisor's instrumental leadership. Results suggest that instrumental leadership may play a role in building employees' affective commitment and that more socially skilled employees may be more likely to develop healthy leader-follower relationships, resulting in affective commitment to the organization as a whole.

[Correction added on 05 February 2026, after first online publication: The copyright line was changed.]

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Introduction

In an interview, a CEO was asked: how many employees work for you? The CEO promptly answered: about half of them (Crowley, 2011). One possible explanation for a seeming loss of employee motivation is affective commitment to the organization (Cohen, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees may commit to the organization for many reasons: They may find the corporate culture and people very interesting. They may anticipate career development and recognition, and they may also be attached to the organization because of the qualities and traits that their leaders possess as they share clearly with their subordinates the vision, goals, and mission of the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In today's organizations, leaders are invited to outline strategy and share its premises with other organizational members (Yukl, 2013). However, this is not enough to develop a clear roadmap to subordinates to achieve expected performance through planned activities. Instrumental leadership is a leadership style that focuses on achieving goals and objectives. Instrumental leaders, who can scan and monitor the environment, should help facilitate tasks and clarify goals for their subordinates in order to build positive attitudes in the workplace (Antonakis & House, 2014). Similarly, instrumental leaders who are skilled at building and sharing clear strategies should promote emotional attachment that enables their subordinates to remain as committed members of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

For Antonakis and House (2014), instrumental leaders are typically task-oriented and goal-driven. In addition, instrumental leaders are good at planning and organizing, and are able to motivate and inspire their team members to achieve their goals. Organizational commitment is the degree to which an employee identifies with and is involved in their organization (Porter et al., 1974). Organizationally committed employees are more likely to stay with their organization, even when faced with challenges (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Committed employees are also more likely to go above and beyond their job duties, and they are more likely to be creative and productive (Gallup, 2018).

There has been a growing body of research that suggests that instrumental leadership can have a positive effect on organizational outcomes (Millhoff & Rowold, 2021a; Sökmen et al., 2023; Yun, 2023). For example, one study found that instrumental leaders were more likely to have employees who were satisfied with their jobs, who felt that their work was important, and who were willing to go the extra mile for their organization (Sökmen et al., 2023).

The current research helps to better understand the relationship between instrumental leadership and organizational commitment. The research could also help to develop strategies for increasing organizational commitment by promoting instrumental leadership and social skills in the workplace. The current study elaborates on the relationship between instrumental leadership and affective commitment with the mediating role of social skills.

Morocco's telecommunications sector is one of the more mature in the region. The sector is surrounded by several challenges such as rapid technological advancements and customer expectations (ANRT, 2024; ITA, 2024). Studying instrumental leadership can provide valuable insights on how instrumental leaders navigate these challenges and complexities.

Research Background and Hypotheses Development

INSTRUMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Termed "instrumental leadership," this theory emphasizes the role of the leader in scanning the internal and external environments, spotting opportunities, and choosing the right strategy while empowering subordinates. Instrumental leadership focuses on achieving goals that underlie an organization's strategy and mission (Antonakis & House, 2014). The leader should perform some tasks including scanning the external environment, detecting emergent problems, and implementing solutions for such problems (Antonakis & Day, 2019). The bottom line of the approach to leadership lies in empowering followers to align their performance to the organization's overall strategy (Antonakis & House, 2014). Prior streams of leadership research focused on transformational leadership which emphasizes the soft skills of leadership, such as

inspiration and coaching, and transactional leadership which focuses on a "carrot and stick approach" by aligning followers with the organization's goals through incentives and disincentives (Hooijberg, 2014). Some research has emerged in the last decade to expand the paradigm of transformational and transactional leadership, calling for a "fuller" full-range of leadership theory that encompasses work facilitation and strategic leadership (Antonakis & House, 2013; Hunt, 2004; Yukl, 2009). Research has shown that transformational and transactional leadership have significant and strong positive relationships with effectiveness (Bass & Riggio, 2006), job satisfaction (Boamah et al., 2018), commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), organizational citizenship behavior (López-Domínguez et al., 2013), and other job-related attitudes. Although there are only a few empirical studies that studied instrumental leadership (IL), it is believed that IL is approximately three times stronger than transformational and transactional leadership (Hooijberg, 2014). For instance, instrumental leadership was found to be significantly important for organizational effectiveness nearly three times more than transformational leadership and contingent rewards (Antonakis & House, 2014).

Antonakis and House (2014) defined instrumental leadership as the application of a leader's expertise in order to monitor both the environment and performance as well as overseeing the implementation of both tactical and strategic solutions. Moreover, Antonakis and House (2014) argued that organizations need leaders to deal with complexities and challenges arising from the widely dynamic business environment. It is also asserted that IL helps "align inputs, including human effort, towards strategic and operational goals" (Antonakis & House, 2014, p. 749). Four factors were developed (see Figure 1) to describe instrumental leadership: (1) environmental monitoring, (2) strategy formulation and implementation, (3) path-goal facilitation, and (4) outcome monitoring. The four factors were grouped into two categories: strategic leadership (Factors 1 & 2) and follower work facilitation (Factors 3 & 4).

The first factor is environmental monitoring which addresses actions taken by leaders in scanning both internal and external environments where the organization operates. In other words, it is about listing an organization's strengths and weaknesses against threats and opportunities (Mumford et al., 2008). The second factor concerns strategy formulation and implementation, which refers to actions taken by leaders to develop policies and objectives that align with the organization's strategic vision and mission (Antonakis & House, 2014). The third factor works to facilitate goal achievement. Based on the Path-Goal Theory of House (1971), path-goal monitoring entails behaviors displayed by leaders to provide necessary resources, support, and orientation while removing obstacles that subordinates encounter as they try to attain goals. The fourth factor is outcome monitoring which requires a leader to deliver feedback concerning enhancement of subordinates' performance.

Figure 1 Components of Instrumental Leadership (Antonakis & House, 2014)

To study instrumental leadership, Antonakis and House (2014) developed a scale and conducted four field studies to examine construct validity of the instrument. Experiments were conducted in homogenous and in diverse samples and showed that instrumental leadership is incrementally valid. Results showed that instrumental leadership was better in predicting effectiveness than was transformational and transactional leadership. For instance, a study constituted a sample of 3150 subordinates with 418 leaders from seven multinational companies across 30 countries. Concurrent validities of leader factors predicting effectiveness prevailed values of two-stage least squares estimates at (.25, $p < .01$) and (.62, $p < .01$) for transformational leadership and instrumental leadership respectively (Antonakis & House, 2014). Instrumental leadership also predicted satisfaction better than transformational

and transactional leadership. Rowold (2014) conducted three studies to further validate the IL scale. The results supported Antonakis and House's (2014) conceptualization of instrumental leadership.

Similarly, Chammas and Hernandez (2019) examined the influence of instrumental leadership behaviors on individual and financial performance in five dimensions which are innovation, career development, team, organization, and work. The results revealed a positive and significant influence of instrumental leadership on all dimensions. Additional studies by Millhoff and Rowold (2021a) and Sökmen et al. (2023) have further established the validity and utility of the IL scale.

INSTRUMENTAL LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO THE WORKPLACE

Employee-organization linkages have been the subject of considerable scholarly and managerial attention. Such linkages range from attendance or absenteeism, retention or turnover, to loyalty and commitment to the organization (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). Commitment to the workplace is an important attitude and behavior that individuals exhibit to depict their psychological identification with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Commitment is defined as the strength of links that associate individuals with their organization in terms of psychological bond and mental identification, values, and which involves significant efforts to exhibit loyalty and show members' willingness to keep their membership in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1974; Porter et al., 1974). Committed employees are more likely to go the extra mile, be productive, and work for the organization for longer period of time. It is argued that affective commitment is the core essence of commitment to the workplace (Mercurio, 2015). Meaning that to understand how and why individuals are or are not committed, it is best explained by their attitudinal affective commitment or the "want to" component, rather than the "need to" or the "ought to" components of organizational commitment (Robbins & Coulter, 2012; Solinger et al., 2008). Therefore, the current study uses only the affective commitment dimension to investigate its relationship with instrumental leadership style and social skills.

Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed important antecedents to affective commitment such as goal clarity and goal difficulty. One of the components of instrumental leadership is path-goal facilitation. An instrumental leader provides both necessary information to attain goals and feedback to facilitate their attainment. For Allen and Meyer (1990), affective commitment was found to be correlated with goal clarity, goal difficulty, and feedback from employees' direct supervisor. Therefore, the first hypothesis stated that employees' perceptions of instrumental leadership are positively correlated with their levels of affective commitment (Hypothesis 1).

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Social skill is a social effectiveness construct. Ferris and associates (2002) defined *social effectiveness* as "the ability to effectively read, understand, and control social interactions" (Ferris et al., 2002, p. 49). For them, social effectiveness covers social skills, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, political skill, social self-efficacy, and self-monitoring among others.

Social Skill was conceptualized in the current research as the mediating factor to bridge and enhance the relationships between instrumental leadership attributes and affective commitment. Social skills appear to be critical while persuading others, as well as the ability to control others' behavior (Riggio, 2014). Related to social competence, the broad concept of social skill relates to being able to manage and react in an appropriate manner in different social situations while playing different social roles (Riggio et al., 2020). Based on more than 30 years of work on leadership development and nonverbal communication (Riggio, 1986; Riggio & Carney, 2003; Riggio et al., 2003; Riggio, 2014) introduced a model to assess social skills among adults in workplace settings.

Riggio (1986) and Riggio and Carney (2003) suggested that social skills are patterns of individual differences in verbal (social) and nonverbal (emotional) communication—and developed an assessment tool called the social skills inventory (SSI). The SSI model consists of three emotional and three social skills. The current study focuses only on the social skills that are

proposed to influence the linkages between instrumental leadership and affective commitment. These skills represent complex social-cognitive communication skills and include sending (expressivity), receiving (sensitivity), and regulation (control) of verbal messages (Riggio, 1986).

Social Expressivity is verbal speaking skill which includes the "ability to engage others in conversation. Social expressivity is related to, but distinct from, being outgoing and extraverted" (Riggio, 2014, p. 33). Social expressivity is also referred to as encoding skill. Persons who are socially expressive are good at public speaking, confident, and comfortable in social interactions (Riggio, 1986).

Social Sensitivity is a verbal listening and decoding skill that "involves one's knowledge of social rules and conventions. In extremes, social sensitivity can lead to social anxiety and withdrawal" (Riggio, 2014, p. 33). Social sensitivity allows individuals to monitor actions in social settings and determine how they should behave in a tactful way. Individuals who are too socially sensitive, however, may overanalyze social situations (Riggio & Carney, 2003).

Social control is a sophisticated "social role-playing skill. Social control is related to being tactful and socially competent" (Riggio, 2014, p. 33). It is consistent with social intelligence, suggesting that individuals who score high on social control possess social intelligence. Additionally, individuals with high levels of social control can regulate their social behaviors and interactions, leading to more effective social relationships (Riggio, 2014). It is assumed that there is a relationship between employees' possession of social skills and their commitment to the organization. Therefore, it was hypothesized that employees' perceptions of instrumental leadership are positively correlated with their scores on social skills (Hypothesis 2). Furthermore, it was hypothesized that employees' scores on social skills are positively correlated with their levels of affective commitment (Hypothesis 3).

MEDIATING ROLE OF SOCIAL SKILLS

The purpose of the present research was to investigate the direct effect of instrumental leadership on affective commitment as perceived by employees. The mediating effects of social skills are also investigated to examine the indirect relationship of instrumental leadership on affective commitment. Relatively, little research has been conducted on social skill as a key moderator and/or mediator between leadership attributes and outcome variables. In fact, a variety of empirical studies were conducted to validate and investigate the role of social skills in moderating variables such as performance (Yun & Lee, 2017), job position (Galais & Moser, 2018), knowledge sharing, continuous learning (Hennekam, 2015), organizational climate (Cuadra-Peralta et al., 2017), and organizational citizenship behavior (Dierdorff & Rubin, 2022).

Rather than focusing on the social skills of leaders, the current research examines the role that follower/employee possession of social skills plays in mediating the relationship between instrumental leadership and employees' affective organizational commitment. For an individual to be socially effective, they first need to be confident and comfortable in social interactions. They must also monitor actions in social settings. Finally, they must be tactful and socially competent. Achieving social effectiveness should be an important asset in developing a strong leader-follower relationship. It is presumed that there is a mediation effect of social skills in the relationship between leaders' instrumental attributes and employees' affective commitment. Therefore, it was hypothesized that employees' social skills mediate the relationship between instrumental leadership and their level of affective commitment (Hypothesis 4). Table 1 summarizes the four hypotheses.

Table 1 Hypotheses of The Study

Hypothesis 1	Employees' perceptions of instrumental leadership are positively correlated with their levels of affective commitment
Hypothesis 2	Employees' perceptions of instrumental leadership are positively correlated with their scores on social skills
Hypothesis 3	Employees' scores on social skills are positively correlated with their levels of affective commitment
Hypothesis 4	Employees' social skills mediate the relationship between instrumental leadership and their level of affective commitment

Method

PARTICIPANTS

Data were collected from 226 employees from a leading telecom operator in Morocco in 2022. Respondents had a mean age of 33.52 years (SD = 8.52 years, minimum = 18; maximum = 66), and 60.2% were males. Most participants (88.1%) had a higher education degree, and 11.9% had finished vocational training. Concerning position, participants with management positions represent 41.2% against 58.8% with no-management positions. As for seniority, 57.5% had more than 5 years of experience, whereas 42.5% had less than 5 years of experience (SD = 6.87 years, minimum = 0.30; maximum = 40).

PROCEDURE AND MEASURES

Approximately 800 employees working in the headquarters were contacted through an online survey. Each participant was requested to participate voluntarily in responding to the questionnaires. The research goals were clearly explained to the participants. Anonymity and confidentiality of their data were also guaranteed. To avoid the risk associated with sharing details regarding the study's topic, research goals were presented in general terms. The topics of instrumental leadership, social skills, and affective commitment were not mentioned to participants.

The scale developed by Antonakis and House (2014) was adopted to measure *instrumental leadership* behaviors as perceived by employees. The instrument consists of 16 items measuring the two general facets where each facet consists of two dimensions of instrumental leadership. Antonakis and House (2014) tested and demonstrated the validity of the instrument. Relying on large samples from four different studies, the authors found evidence for face validity, incremental validity, predictive validity, discriminant validity, concurrent, convergent, and divergent validity. In the study, participants were asked to rate their direct supervisor's behavior as they perceived it on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "Frequently, if not always." Examples of items are "My manager understands the constraints of our organization," "my manager sets specific objectives so that the mission can be accomplished," and "my manager removes obstacles to my goal attainment."

To measure *affective commitment*, the widely used Organizational Commitment Scale of Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) was adopted. The scale measures three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective, normative, and continuance commitments. As suggested by the authors, each dimension can be assessed separately. Eight items measuring the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) were adopted. Participants were asked to rate the degree of their emotional identification with the organization on a five-point Likert scale representing the level of agreement from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree." Statements include "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization." "I enjoy discussing about my organization with people outside it," and "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own."

Participants completed a shortened form of the Social Skills Inventory (SSI; Riggio & Carney, 2003). Only the "social/verbal" dimensions of the SSI were used, as it has been suggested that social dimensions are most important in the leader-follower relationship (Riggio & Tan, 2013). Participants were asked to self-rate 15 statements on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = "Not at all like me" to 5 = "Exactly like me." Examples of the statements are: "I love to socialize" (social expressivity), "there are certain situations in which I find myself worrying about whether I am doing or saying the right things" (social sensitivity), and "I can be comfortable with all types of people-young and old, rich and poor" (social control). In terms of reliability and internal consistency, the SSI has shown in different studies (cross-sectional and longitudinal) good test–retest reliabilities ranging from (.86) to (.96). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the separate subscales ranged from (α = .65) to (α = .88) (Riggio, 2014; Riggio & Carney, 2003). The scale also has demonstrated very good convergent and discriminant validity.

Results

Correlation coefficients among the variables are presented in Table 2. As can be seen in Table 2, the variables of interest are moderately to strongly intercorrelated.

Standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table 3. The outputs show that instrumental leadership has a positive and significant impact on affective com-

Table 2 Means, SDs, Correlations, Cronbach's Alphas, CRs, and AVEs

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	CR	AVE
(1) Instrumental Leadership	3.73	0.79	(.888)									.922	.783
(2) Environment Monitoring	3.78	1.04	.909**									—	—
(3) Strategy Formulation	3.84	0.93	.912**	.773**								—	—
(4) Path-goal Facilitation	3.74	0.91	.920**	.765**	.816**							—	—
(5) Outcome Monitoring	3.56	0.69	.791**	.627**	.609**	.665**						—	—
(6) Affective Commitment	3.71	0.84	.820**	.696**	.806**	.841**	.532**	(.793)				—	—
(7) Social Skills	3.65	0.72	.826**	.776**	.792**	.722**	.613**	.811**	(.825)			.888	.791
(8) Social Expressivity	3.51	0.62	.638**	.528**	.579**	.539**	.649**	.588**	.826**			—	—
(9) Social Sensitivity	3.66	0.88	.727**	.724**	.719**	.624**	.465**	.721**	.899**	.586**		—	—
(10) Social Control	3.77	0.91	.818**	.779**	.786**	.740**	.560**	.824**	.937**	.708**	.763**	—	—

Note. AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; Cronbach's alphas are in parentheses.
**$p < .001$.

Table 3 Structural Equation Modeling: Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	*p*	Conclusion
H1	Instrumental Leadership → Affective Commitment	0.473	.001	Supported
H2	Instrumental Leadership → Social skills	0.826	.001	Supported
H3	Social skills → Affective Commitment	0.420	***	Supported
H4	Instrumental Leadership → Social skills → Affective Commitment	0.820	.001	Supported

Note. β = standardized regression estimate; *p*, *p*-value.
***$p < .001$.

mitment (β = .473, $p < .001$) and social skills (β = .826, $p < .001$). Similarly, affective commitment has a positive and significant impact on affective commitment (β = .420, $p < .001$). This indicates that instrumental leadership has a direct relationship with affective commitment, accounting for 47% of the variation. Instrumental leadership has a direct relationship with social skills, accounting for 82% of the variation. It can be concluded that hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported. Further, social skills explain 42% of variance in affective commitment (β = .420, $p < .001$). For mediation to be considered, there should be a direct effect of exogenous (IL) over endogenous (AC) variables. In addition to that, there should be a direct effect between predictor variables (IL) and mediating variables (SS); and a direct effect of the latter on the outcome variable (AC).

Based on the output of Table 4, instrumental leadership has a positive and significant impact on social skills (β = .473, $p < 0.05$). Further, social skills have a positive and significant effect on affective commitment (β=. 450, $p < 0.05$). In addition to the estimates, Figure 2 exhibits the values of the squared multiple correlations. They represent the adjusted *R*-square (R^2) of the percentage of variance explained by the predictor variables. Instrumental leadership attributes explain 47% and 82% of variances in predicting social skills and affective commitment respectively.

Table 4 presents the outputs of mediation analysis obtained from AMOS version 26. In it, direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect, are each represented

Table 4 Mediation Analysis, Fit indices

Direct effect				Indirect effect				Total effect			
		C.I.				C.I.				C.I.	
β	*p*	Lower	Upper	β	*p*	Lower	Upper	β	*p*	Lower	Upper
0.473	.001	0.294	0.727	0.347	***	0.208	0.492	0.820	.001	0.756	0.875

Note. χ^2 = Chi-square; β = standardized regression coefficient; C.I. = confidence interval; CFI = comparative fit index; CMIN/DF = discrepancy divided by degree of freedom; GFI = goodness of fit index; NFI = normed fit index; *p* = *p*-value; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index.
Model Fit. χ^2 = 551.7 df = 3—CMIN/DF = 183.9—CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000—GFI = 0.996—NFI = 1.000—RMSEA = 0.000.
***p < .001.

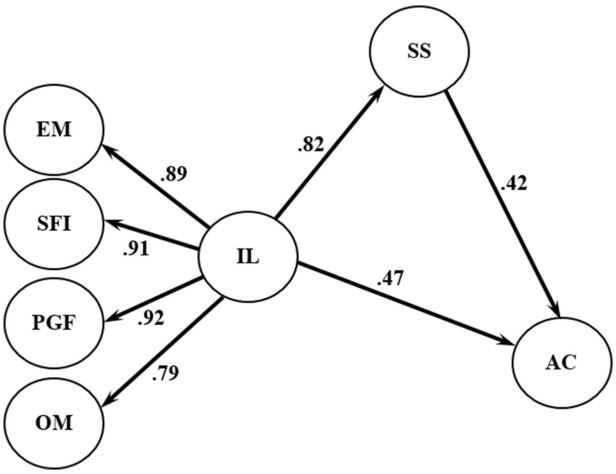

Figure 2 Structural Equation Modeling for Predicting Affective Commitment (standardized path coefficients). ***Note.*** **AC = affective commitment; EM = environment monitoring; IdL = instrumental leadership; OM = outcome monitoring; PGF = path-goal facilitation; SFI = strategy formulation and implication; SS = social skill; *p* < .001**

by standardized regression coefficient (β), p-value (p) and Confidence Intervals (C.I). The direct effect represented in the model (see Figure 2), is the effect of instrumental leadership on social skills, and the effect of social skills on affective commitment. The indirect effect is the product of the direct effects between instrumental leadership and social skills; multiplied by the direct effect of social skills and affective commitment. Finally, the total effect represents the sum of direct and indirect effects. Based on the output shown in Table 4, social skills mediate the positive relationship between instrumental leadership attributes and perceived affective commitment. Thus, hypotheses 3 and 4 are supported.

As for the fit indices, according to the literature, a good fitting model is acceptable if the values of confirmatory fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), Tucker-Lewis (TLI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973), goodness of fit index (GFI; Hair et al., 2014), and normed fit index (NFI) are greater than 0.90. Additionally, the value of root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be less than 0.08. Another indicator is the value of Chi-square (χ^2) which is represented by CMIN divided by degrees of freedom (DF). If the CMIN/DF value is ≤3, this indicates an acceptable fit (Kline, 1998). However, if the CMIN/DF value is ≤5, it shows a reasonable fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). The fit indices, as shown in Table 4, fell within the acceptable ranges: CMIN/DF = 183.9, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, GFI = 0.996, NFI = 1.000, RMSEA = 0.001.

Discussion

Recent research has argued that instrumental leadership has a strong impact on employee commitment. The findings of the current research study provide empirical evidence that instrumental leadership attributes predict affective commitment among employees in their organizations. Previous studies have reported the role of exemplary models of leadership in building emotional identification of workers (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014; Palalic & Ait Sidi Mhamed, 2020; Walumbwa et al., 2005). More specifically, based on their expertise and environmental knowledge, instrumental leaders endorse attributes that help followers adhere to the organization's vision through providing timely feedback and facilitating tasks. Instrumental leadership thus promotes a positive workplace in which affective commitment is

encouraged. The findings also suggest that social skills can play a vital role in better understanding the leader-follower interaction. Specifically, followers who are socially skilled can develop better emotional identification with the workplace while interacting with instrumental leaders.

The current study's findings suggest a full mediation of social skills in the relationship between instrumental leadership attributes, as perceived by followers, and their affective commitment. Findings suggest that social skills of employees can stimulate a high-quality leader-follower relationship and eventually lead to stronger follower emotional attachment to the organization. There are some qualities in instrumental leadership that enhance the follower's responsiveness to what a leader actually articulates. While the strategic facet of IL keeps employees aware of the organization's vision, strengths, and opportunities; the follower's work facilitation facet can help employees engage and commit affectively to achieve organizational objectives (Rowold, 2014; Rowold et al., 2017).

The present research contributes to the nascent empirical work on instrumental leadership theory, by demonstrating its impact on employee commitment, particularly when those employees have high levels of social skills. In addition to support for the effectiveness of instrumental leadership, the research emphasizes the role that interpersonal social skills may play in fostering positive leader-follower relationships (Riggio & Tan, 2013).

LIMITATIONS

The present study has some limitations: First, is the cross-sectional nature of the study and the use of same source data collected only from employees/followers. This was due, in part, to the limitations afforded by collecting data from actual employees in organizations who participated voluntarily. There have been criticisms of leadership research that does not use multiple levels of analysis (e.g., Yammarino & Dionne, 2018). Second, is the sample which consisted of employees from a single organization which limits the generalizability of the results. Finally, the sample size was relatively small, but sufficient for the number of variables in the model and for the analyses.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Since instrumental leadership is in the theory building phase, more research is needed to understand the constructs that capture its strategic and goal facilitation aspects (Antonakis & House, 2014). The research contributes to that growing body of research. Moreover, the research focuses on the impact of instrumental leadership on follower perceptions and attitudes. Another contribution is the use of follower/employee social skills as a possible mediating mechanism in the relationship between instrumental leadership and follower affective commitment. Although there is much talk about the importance of leader "soft skills" (e.g., Riggio & Tan, 2013), there has been very little research incorporating interpersonal skills in studies of leader effectiveness in affecting follower attitudes and behaviors.

From a practice standpoint, managers could be trained to practice instrumental leadership (Millhoff & Rowold, 2021b). As such, the trainability of instrumental leadership could be integrated into human resource training programs. While much of training focuses on developing managers/leaders, the research suggests that including followers in those development efforts should prove fruitful.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

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Appendix A: Instrumental Leadership

My manager:

1. Understands the constraints of our organization.
2. Senses what needs to be changed in our organization.
3. Recognizes the strengths of our organization.
4. Capitalizes on opportunities presented by the external environment.
5. Develops specific policies to support his/her vision.
6. Sets specific objectives so that the mission can be accomplished.
7. Ensures that his/her vision is understood in specific terms.
8. Translates the mission into specific goals.
9. Removes obstacles to my goal attainment.
10. Ensures that I have sufficient resources to reach my goals.
11. Clarifies the path to my goal attainment.
12. Facilitates my goal achievement.
13. Helps me correct my mistakes.
14. Assists me to learn from my mistakes.
15. Provides me with information concerning how mistakes can be avoided.
16. Provides me with constructive feedback about my mistakes.

Appendix B

Affective Commitment Scale

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I enjoy discussing about my organization with people outside it.
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one.
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.
6. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
8. I do not feel a "strong" sense of belonging to my organization.

Appendix C: Social Skills Inventory

1. I love to socialize.
2. There are certain situations in which I find myself worrying about whether I am doing or saying the right things.
3. I can be comfortable with all types of people-young and old, rich and poor.
4. I always mingle at parties.
5. I often worry that people will misinterpret something I have said to them.
6. When in a group of people, I have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about.
7. I usually take the initiative to introduce myself to strangers.
8. I can be strongly affected by someone smiling or frowning at me.

9. I would feel out of place at a party attended by a lot of very important people.
10. At parties I enjoy talking to a lot of different people.
11. It is very important that other people like me.
12. I am often chosen to be the leader of a group.
13. I enjoy going to large parties and meeting new people.
14. I'm generally concerned about the impression I'm making on others.
15. I can easily adjust to being in just about any social situation.