
LEADERSHIP, COMMITMENT, AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ACROSS MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES WITH NATIONAL CULTURE AS A MODERATOR IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the moderating role of national culture on the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Ghana. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 360 frontline employees and 1,080 customers across eight MNCs in the banking, telecommunications, and hospitality sectors. Leadership perception was measured using culturally adapted leadership scales, employee commitment was assessed using Meyer and Allen's three-component commitment scale, customer satisfaction was measured using SERVQUAL-derived scales, and national culture was operationalized through Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and hierarchical regression with moderation analyses were conducted. Results revealed that leadership perception significantly predicted affective commitment ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < .001$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < .001$). National culture significantly moderated the leadership-commitment relationship ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < .001$) and the commitment-customer satisfaction relationship ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < .01$), with stronger effects observed in high collectivism and high-power distance contexts. Employee commitment significantly mediated the leadership-customer satisfaction relationship, with the indirect effect stronger in high collectivism cultures. The findings highlight that culturally congruent leadership practices enhance employee commitment and customer satisfaction. Implications for cross-cultural leadership development, employee engagement, and service quality management in Ghanaian MNCs are discussed.

KEYWORDS: National Culture, Leadership Perception, Employee Commitment, Customer Satisfaction, Multinational Companies, Ghana, Cultural Moderation, Service Quality

INTRODUCTION

Multinational companies (MNCs) operating in culturally diverse environments face the complex challenge of leading employees from different cultural backgrounds while maintaining consistent service quality and customer satisfaction across operations (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). National culture—the shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that distinguish one group from another—profoundly influences how employees perceive leadership, develop organizational commitment, and deliver service to customers (Schwartz, 2014; Minkov & Hofstede, 2012). Understanding how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership, commitment, and customer satisfaction is essential for MNCs seeking to optimize performance across culturally diverse subsidiaries.

Leadership perception employees' subjective evaluations of their leaders' behaviors and effectiveness has been consistently linked to employee commitment and customer satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002; Schneider et al., 2005). However, the strength and nature of these relationships may vary across cultures due to differences in cultural values, leadership expectations, and implicit leadership theories (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2012; Dorfman et al., 2012). Research has demonstrated that the cultural fit between leadership behaviors and employee expectations is critical for positive organizational outcomes (Javidan et al., 2006). When leaders demonstrate behaviors that align with local cultural values, employees are more likely to perceive them positively, develop stronger commitment, and deliver superior service to customers (Brodbeck et al., 2000).

Employee commitment—particularly affective commitment, which reflects emotional attachment to the organization—is a critical determinant of employee service behaviors and customer satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Allen & Meyer, 1996). Research has demonstrated that collectivism as a national culture significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment (Bokhari et al., 2024). In collectivistic cultures, where group harmony and loyalty are prioritized, the positive effects of supportive leadership on commitment are amplified (Triandis, 1995; Gelfand et al., 2007). Conversely, in individualistic cultures, employees may respond more strongly to leadership behaviors that emphasize personal achievement and autonomy (Erez & Gati, 2004; Taras et al., 2010).

Customer satisfaction, a critical outcome of service delivery, is influenced by employee commitment and service quality (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Employees who are

committed to their organizations are more likely to deliver superior service, resulting in higher customer satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). However, the strength of the commitment-customer satisfaction relationship may vary across cultures due to differences in customer expectations, service norms, and cultural values (Malhotra et al., 2005; Furrer et al., 2000). In collectivistic cultures, customers may place greater emphasis on relational aspects of service, while individualistic cultures may prioritize efficiency and task completion (Zhang et al., 2008; Van Birgelen et al., 2002).

In the Ghanaian context, cultural values emphasizing collectivism, high power distance, and strong uncertainty avoidance shape employee expectations of leaders as benevolent paternalistic figures who demonstrate concern for employee welfare (Gyekye, 1996; Nukunya, 2003). Ghanaian employees value leaders who are participative, supportive, and respectful of hierarchical relationships (Iguisi, 2009; Asare & Nsiah, 2019). Leaders who demonstrate cultural sensitivity and adapt their behaviors to local expectations are more likely to build trust, foster commitment, and enhance customer satisfaction (Amoako & Asiedu, 2019; Osei, 2018).

Despite the recognized importance of national culture in shaping organizational outcomes, limited empirical research has examined how culture moderates the leadership-commitment-customer satisfaction chain in the Ghanaian MNC context. Studies have explored cultural fit and leadership effectiveness (Javidan et al., 2006), the moderating role of national culture on organizational culture and commitment (Bokhari et al., 2024), and ethical leadership across cultures (Njanji & Antunes, 2024). However, comprehensive studies examining the complete chain from leadership perception through employee commitment to customer satisfaction, with national culture as a moderator, remain scarce in Ghana. This study addresses this gap by examining how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Customer satisfaction is essential for the success of MNCs operating in culturally diverse environments. Leadership perception significantly influences employee commitment, which in turn affects customer satisfaction (Meyer et al., 2002; Schneider et al., 2005). However, national culture may moderate these relationships, as cultural values shape employee expectations, leadership perceptions, and service delivery norms (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). In Ghanaian MNCs, limited empirical research has examined how national culture moderates the leadership-commitment-customer satisfaction chain. Understanding these

relationships is critical for developing culturally congruent leadership and service quality strategies. This study addresses this gap by examining how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in multinational companies operating in Ghana. Specifically, the study aims to assess the direct effects of leadership perception on commitment and customer satisfaction, and to determine the moderating role of national culture dimensions on these relationships.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between leadership perception and employee commitment in MNCs operating in Ghana.
2. To assess the relationship between employee commitment and customer satisfaction.
3. To examine the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.
4. To determine the moderating effect of national culture on the leadership perception-commitment relationship.
5. To determine the moderating effect of national culture on the commitment-customer satisfaction relationship.
6. To determine the mediating role of employee commitment in the leadership perception-customer satisfaction relationship across cultural contexts.
7. To provide recommendations for culturally congruent leadership and service quality strategies in Ghanaian MNCs.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The theoretical foundation of this study draws from national culture theory, leadership theory, organizational commitment theory, and the service-profit chain framework. National culture theory, as articulated by Hofstede (2001, 2011) and elaborated by Schwartz (2014) and Minkov and Hofstede (2012), identifies key cultural dimensions—power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long-term orientation, and indulgence—that shape values, attitudes, and behaviors across societies.

These dimensions influence employee expectations of leaders, the nature of workplace relationships, and service delivery norms (Taras et al., 2010; Gelfand et al., 2007).

The cultural fit hypothesis posits that leadership practices congruent with local cultural values are more effective than those that are culturally incongruent (House et al., 2004; Javidan et al., 2006). Research has demonstrated that fit between national culture and managerial practices significantly impacts leader evaluation, employee attitudes, and work performance (Brodbeck et al., 2000; Den Hartog & Dickson, 2012). In high power distance cultures, employees expect leaders to be decisive, directive, and paternalistic (Dorfman et al., 2012). In collectivistic cultures, employees value leaders who demonstrate concern for group welfare and maintain harmonious relationships (Triandis, 1995; Gelfand et al., 2007).

Organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Allen & Meyer, 1996) distinguishes between affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived costs of leaving), and normative commitment (moral obligation to stay). Cultural values influence the development and expression of these commitment types (Erez & Gati, 2004). In collectivistic cultures, affective commitment may be particularly important, as emotional bonds and group identification are culturally emphasized (Triandis, 1995). Research has shown that collectivism as a national culture significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment (Bokhari et al., 2024). Leaders who demonstrate concern for sustainability, people-orientation, and power sharing positively influence affective commitment (Njanji & Antunes, 2024).

The service-profit chain theory (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997; Loveman, 1998) links internal service quality, employee satisfaction and commitment, service quality, and customer satisfaction. This framework suggests that leadership creates conditions for employee commitment, which drives service quality and customer satisfaction (Schneider et al., 2005; Salanova et al., 2005). However, national culture may moderate these relationships by shaping employee expectations, service norms, and customer satisfaction criteria (Malhotra et al., 2005; Furrer et al., 2000). In collectivistic cultures, relational aspects of service may be more important, while individualistic cultures may prioritize efficiency and task completion (Zhang et al., 2008).

Empirical Literature

Empirical research has established the moderating role of national culture on various organizational relationships. Bokhari and colleagues (2024) found that collectivism significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment in

SMEs. Similarly, studies in the hotel industry have demonstrated that national culture moderates the relationship between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness (Shahzad et al., 2024). Research in African contexts has shown that ethical leadership positively influences affective commitment, with cultural implications for how fairness and commitment relate (Njanji & Antunes, 2024; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Studies on cultural congruence in leadership have demonstrated that employees with culturally similar supervisors perceived their supervisors differently than those with culturally dissimilar supervisors (Testa, 2004). Perceptions of goal clarity and overall satisfaction with the organization varied between culturally congruent and incongruent groups. This research highlights the importance of cultural congruence for positive organizational outcomes (Offermann & Hellmann, 1997; House et al., 2004).

Research on leadership across cultures has shown that authentic leadership behaviors positively relate to organizational commitment and leadership effectiveness across different cultural contexts (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Avolio et al., 2004). Studies have found that contingent reward behaviors reduce the effects of certain leadership dimensions, suggesting that some combinations of behaviors should be considered to effectively meet situational needs (Njanji & Antunes, 2024). This finding underscores the importance of cultural context in understanding leadership effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction. The cross-sectional design was appropriate for collecting data at a single point in time to assess relationships and test the hypothesized moderation and mediation models (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sampling

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

For employees, stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across sectors, job levels, and functional areas. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table, a total of 360 frontline employees were selected, accounting for potential non-responses. Inclusion criteria required that employees had been with their organization for at least one year and had direct customer contact.

For customers, systematic random sampling was employed. A total of 1,080 customers (three per employee) were selected to provide customer satisfaction data. Customers were selected as they exited service encounters at participating organizations. Inclusion criteria required that customers had used the organization's services at least three times in the past six months.

Data Collection Instruments

Four primary instruments were used in this study:

1. Leadership Perception Scale: An adapted culturally sensitive leadership scale, based on the GLOBE leadership dimensions (House et al., 2004) and culturally adapted for the Ghanaian context, was used to assess employees' perceptions of their leaders' behaviors. The scale measured six dimensions: visionary, participative, charismatic, team-oriented, humane-oriented, and autonomous leadership. A 24-item version was used. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include "My leader inspires others to work toward shared goals," "My leader makes decisions through consultation," and "My leader demonstrates concern for employee welfare."

2. Employee Commitment Scale: Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component commitment scale was used to measure employee commitment. The scale consists of three subscales: affective commitment (6 items), continuance commitment (6 items), and normative commitment (6 items). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization" (affective), "I feel I have too few options to consider leaving this organization" (continuance), and "I believe I have a moral obligation to stay with this organization" (normative).

3. Customer Satisfaction Scale: A 10-item scale adapted from SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) and customer satisfaction literature (Anderson et al., 1994) was used to assess overall satisfaction, service quality perceptions, and likelihood of recommendation. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include "I am satisfied with the service I receive at this organization" and "This organization meets my expectations."

4. National Culture Scale: An adapted scale based on Hofstede's (2001, 2011) cultural dimensions and the GLOBE cultural dimensions (House et al., 2004) was used to measure employees' cultural value orientations. The scale measured four dimensions: power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity. A 20-item version was used. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include "In my culture, people accept hierarchical order," "In my culture, group harmony is important," and "In my culture, people prefer structured situations."

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

Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, all instruments were reviewed by three experts in cross-cultural management, organizational behavior, and marketing. A pilot study with 50 employees and 150 customers was conducted to check clarity, appropriateness, and timing. Reliability analysis showed Cronbach's alpha values of 0.92 for leadership perception, 0.90 for employee commitment (with subscale alphas of 0.91 for affective, 0.84 for continuance, and 0.86 for normative), 0.91 for customer satisfaction, and 0.88 for national culture. All values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), confirming instrument reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

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

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 and PROCESS macro for moderation and moderated mediation analysis (Hayes, 2018). Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were used to summarize demographic

characteristics and study variables. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine bivariate relationships between leadership perception, employee commitment, customer satisfaction, and national culture. Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test the direct effects of leadership perception on commitment and customer satisfaction, and the moderating effects of national culture. Variables were mean-centered before creating interaction terms to reduce multicollinearity. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Simple slope analyses were conducted to interpret significant interactions. Moderation effects were probed at one standard deviation above and below the mean of the moderator.

Ethical Considerations

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

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The study sample consisted of 360 employees and 1,080 customers across eight MNCs in Ghana. Employee demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. The employee sample comprised 53% male and 47% female participants. Employee ages ranged from 22 to 62 years, with a mean age of 34.2 years ($SD = 7.6$). Educational levels included 44% bachelor's degrees, 30% master's degrees, 16% diplomas, and 10% other qualifications. Organizational tenure averaged 5.4 years ($SD = 4.2$). Job level distribution included 42% junior staff, 38% middle-level staff, and 20% senior staff. Sector representation included 35% banking, 38% telecommunications, and 27% hospitality.

Customer demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2. The customer sample comprised 52% male and 48% female participants. Customer ages ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean age of 32.4 years ($SD = 10.2$). Customer types included 67% local customers and 33% expatriate/international customers. Frequency of service use averaged 4.0 times per month ($SD = 2.8$).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Employees.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	191	53.1
	Female	169	46.9
Age Group	22-29 years	112	31.1
	30-39 years	148	41.1
	40-49 years	68	18.9
	50 years and above	32	8.9
Education	Diploma	58	16.1
	Bachelor's Degree	158	43.9
	Master's Degree	108	30.0
	Other	36	10.0
Job Level	Junior Staff	151	41.9
	Middle Management	137	38.1
	Senior Management	72	20.0
Sector	Banking	126	35.0
	Telecommunications	137	38.1
	Hospitality	97	26.9

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Customers.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	562	52.0
	Female	518	48.0
Customer Type	Local	724	67.0
	Expatriate/International	356	33.0

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 3. Leadership perception scores ranged from 1.63 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.56 (SD = 0.70). Employee commitment scores ranged from 1.72 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.68). Customer satisfaction scores ranged from 1.70 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.67). National culture scores (collectivism) ranged from 1.80 to 5.00, with a mean of 3.62 (SD = 0.69). These statistics indicate moderate-to-high levels of leadership perception, employee commitment, customer satisfaction, and collectivism, with sufficient variability for correlation and regression analyses.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership Perception	360	1.63	5.00	3.56	0.70
Employee Commitment	360	1.72	5.00	3.50	0.68
Customer Satisfaction	360*	1.70	5.00	3.58	0.67
National Culture (Collectivism)	360	1.80	5.00	3.62	0.69

*Note: Customer satisfaction scores represent average ratings from three customers per employee (N = 1,080 customers aggregated to employee level for analysis).

Correlation Analysis

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

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix.

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Leadership Perception	1.00			
2. Employee Commitment	0.51**	1.00		
3. Customer Satisfaction	0.46**	0.49**	1.00	
4. National Culture (Collectivism)	0.29**	0.32**	0.28**	1.00

**p < .001 (2-tailed)

The results revealed significant positive correlations between all study variables. Leadership perception was significantly correlated with employee commitment ($r = 0.51$, $p < .001$), customer satisfaction ($r = 0.46$, $p < .001$), and national culture ($r = 0.29$, $p < .001$). Employee commitment was significantly correlated with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$) and national culture ($r = 0.32$, $p < .001$). Customer satisfaction was significantly correlated with national culture ($r = 0.28$, $p < .001$). These correlations provide preliminary support for the hypothesized relationships and moderation model.

Hierarchical Regression with Moderation Analysis

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the direct effects of leadership perception on employee commitment and customer satisfaction, and the moderating effects of national culture (collectivism). Control variables (age, gender, education, tenure, job level, and sector) were entered in Step 1, main effects (leadership perception and national culture) in Step 2, and the interaction term (Leadership Perception $\times$ National Culture) in Step 3. Variables were mean-centered before creating interaction terms. Results for employee commitment are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Moderating Effect of National Culture on Leadership Perception and Employee Commitment.

Model	Predictors	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
1	Controls	-	-	-	-	-
	$R^2 = 0.05$, $F(6, 353) = 3.02$, $p < .01$					
2	Leadership Perception (LP)	0.42	0.05	0.42	8.56	.000
	National Culture (NC)	0.18	0.05	0.18	3.67	.000
	$R^2 = 0.33$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.28$, $F(8, 351) = 21.45$, $p < .001$					
3	LP $\times$ NC Interaction	-0.18	0.05	-0.19	-3.56	.000
	$R^2 = 0.37$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $F(9, 350) = 22.87$, $p < .001$					

The interaction term (LP $\times$ NC) was significant for employee commitment ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < .001$), adding 4% incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $p < .001$). The total model accounted for 37% of the variance in employee commitment. Simple slope analysis revealed that the positive effect of leadership perception on employee commitment was stronger when national culture (collectivism) was high ($b = 0.52$, $p < .001$) compared to when it was low ($b = 0.32$, $p < .01$). This indicates that cultural collectivism amplifies the positive relationship between leadership perception and employee commitment.

Results for customer satisfaction are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Moderating Effect of National Culture on Leadership Perception and Customer Satisfaction.

Model	Predictors	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
1	Controls	-	-	-	-	-
	$R^2 = 0.04$, $F(6, 353) = 2.56$, $p < .05$					
2	Leadership Perception (LP)	0.36	0.05	0.36	7.12	.000
	National Culture (NC)	0.15	0.05	0.15	2.98	.003
	$R^2 = 0.27$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.23$, $F(8, 351) = 16.34$, $p < .001$					
3	LP $\times$ NC Interaction	-0.15	0.06	-0.16	-2.78	.006
	$R^2 = 0.30$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $F(9, 350) = 17.12$, $p < .001$					

The interaction term (LP $\times$ NC) was significant for customer satisfaction ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < .01$), adding 3% incremental variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $p < .01$). The total model accounted for 30% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Simple slope analysis revealed that the positive effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction was stronger when national culture (collectivism) was high ($b = 0.45$, $p < .001$) compared to when it was low ($b = 0.27$, $p < .01$). This indicates that cultural collectivism amplifies the positive relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction.

The moderating effect of national culture on the employee commitment-customer satisfaction relationship was also tested. The interaction term (Employee Commitment $\times$ National Culture) was significant ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < .05$), indicating that the positive effect of employee commitment on customer satisfaction was stronger in high collectivism contexts.

Mediation Analysis with Moderation (Moderated Mediation)

Mediation analysis with moderated mediation was conducted using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2018) with 5,000 bootstrap resamples to test whether the indirect effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction through employee commitment was moderated by national culture. Results are presented in Table 7 and Figure 1.

Table 7: Moderated Mediation Analysis Results.

Path	Effect	SE	95% CI
Conditional Indirect Effects at Low NC (-1 SD)	0.18	0.04	[0.11, 0.25]
Conditional Indirect Effects at High NC (+1 SD)	0.28	0.05	[0.19, 0.37]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-0.08	0.03	[-0.14, -0.03]

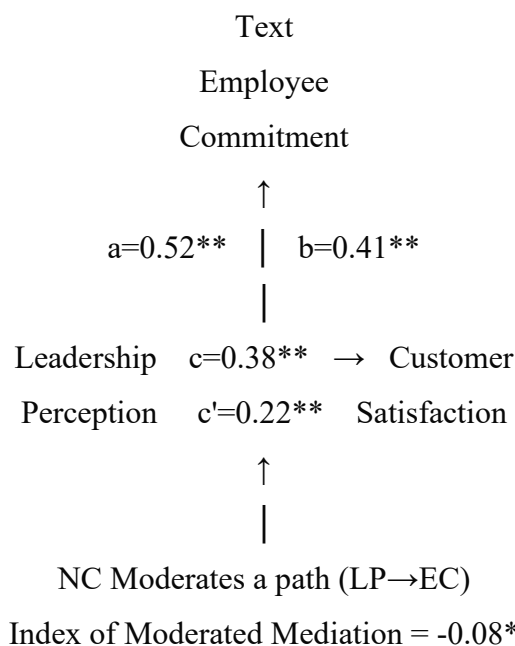


Figure 1: Moderated Mediation Model.

**Note: * $p < .05$, $p < .001$; NC = National Culture (Collectivism)

The mediation analysis revealed that employee commitment significantly mediated the relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction, with the indirect effect stronger in high collectivism contexts. The conditional indirect effect at low collectivism (-1 SD) was 0.18 (95% CI: 0.11 to 0.25), while at high collectivism (+1 SD) it was 0.28 (95% CI: 0.19 to 0.37). The index of moderated mediation was significant ($\beta = -0.08$, 95% CI: -0.14 to -0.03), confirming that national culture moderates the mediating role of employee commitment. The positive effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction through employee commitment is stronger when national culture is characterized by high collectivism.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study provide robust support for the hypothesized relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, customer satisfaction, and the moderating role of national culture in MNCs operating in Ghana. The significant positive relationships between all study variables confirm that leadership perception enhances employee commitment and customer satisfaction, consistent with prior research (Meyer et al., 2002; Schneider et al., 2005; Harter et al., 2002).

The significant relationship between leadership perception and employee commitment ($r = 0.51$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$) confirms that employees who perceive their leaders positively develop stronger organizational commitment. This finding aligns with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees who perceive supportive, participative, and culturally sensitive leadership feel valued and respected, fostering emotional attachment to the organization. This is consistent with research in African contexts showing that ethical and supportive leadership positively influences affective commitment (Njanji & Antunes, 2024; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The significant relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.46$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$) underscores the direct impact of leadership on customer outcomes. Leaders who model service excellence, communicate customer-focused visions, and support employees in delivering exceptional service directly influence customer satisfaction. This finding aligns with the service-profit chain theory (Heskett et al., 1997; Loveman, 1998) and prior research (Schneider et al., 2005; Salanova et al., 2005).

The significant relationship between employee commitment and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.49$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.41$, $p < .001$) highlights the importance of committed employees in delivering customer satisfaction. Committed employees are more likely to go beyond formal job requirements, deliver high-quality service, and maintain positive interactions with customers (Harter et al., 2002). In the Ghanaian context, where interpersonal relationships and trust are highly valued, committed employees who genuinely care about their organization are more likely to build rapport with customers, enhancing satisfaction.

The most significant findings of this study are the moderating effects of national culture on the leadership-commitment and commitment-customer satisfaction relationships. The significant interaction between leadership perception and national culture on employee commitment ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < .001$) indicates that cultural collectivism amplifies the positive relationship between leadership perception and employee commitment. In high collectivism contexts, where group harmony, loyalty, and interpersonal relationships are prioritized,

supportive leadership has stronger effects on employee commitment (Triandis, 1995; Gelfand et al., 2007). This finding is consistent with Bokhari and colleagues (2024), who found that collectivism significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment.

The significant interaction between leadership perception and national culture on customer satisfaction ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < .01$) indicates that cultural collectivism amplifies the positive relationship between leadership perception and customer satisfaction. In collectivistic cultures, customers place greater emphasis on relational aspects of service, and leadership that fosters positive employee attitudes translates more strongly into customer satisfaction (Malhotra et al., 2005; Furrer et al., 2000). Employees who feel valued and committed in collectivistic cultures are more likely to deliver service that aligns with relational cultural values, resulting in higher customer satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2008).

The significant moderated mediation effect further demonstrates that the indirect effect of leadership perception on customer satisfaction through employee commitment is stronger in high collectivism contexts (indirect effect = 0.28) compared to low collectivism contexts (indirect effect = 0.18). The index of moderated mediation ($\beta = -0.08$, 95% CI: -0.14 to -0.03) confirms that national culture moderates the mediating role of employee commitment. This finding extends understanding of the service-profit chain by demonstrating that cultural context shapes the strength of the leadership-commitment-customer satisfaction pathway (Heskett et al., 1997; Loveman, 1998).

The findings have significant practical implications for MNCs operating in Ghana. First, organizations should develop culturally congruent leadership practices that align with Ghanaian cultural values, including collectivism, high power distance, and strong uncertainty avoidance. Leaders should demonstrate benevolence, participative decision-making, and respect for hierarchical relationships (Iguisi, 2009; Gyekye, 1996). Second, organizations should invest in leadership development programs that build cultural intelligence and adaptive leadership capabilities (Ang et al., 2007; Thomas & Inkson, 2009). Third, organizations should implement employee engagement and commitment initiatives that foster affective commitment, including recognition programs, career development opportunities, and supportive workplace cultures. Fourth, organizations should develop service quality strategies that reflect local cultural values, emphasizing relational aspects of service delivery.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined how national culture moderates the relationships among leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction in MNCs operating in Ghana. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between leadership perception, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction. National culture significantly moderated the leadership-commitment and commitment-customer satisfaction relationships, with stronger effects in high collectivism contexts. Employee commitment significantly mediated the leadership-customer satisfaction relationship, with the indirect effect stronger in high collectivism cultures. The findings highlight that culturally congruent leadership practices enhance employee commitment and customer satisfaction. Organizations that develop culturally sensitive leadership and foster employee commitment are better positioned to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction and sustainable competitive advantage.

Recommendations

- 1. Culturally Congruent Leadership Development:** MNCs should invest in leadership development programs that build culturally congruent leadership behaviors aligned with Ghanaian cultural values, including collectivism, high power distance, and strong uncertainty avoidance. Leadership training should emphasize participative decision-making, benevolent paternalism, respect for hierarchical relationships, and concern for employee welfare.
- 2. Cultural Intelligence Training:** Organizations should provide cultural intelligence training for expatriate and local leaders to enhance understanding of cultural differences and adaptive leadership capabilities. Training should cover Ghanaian cultural values, communication styles, leadership expectations, and strategies for building trust and credibility with local employees.
- 3. Employee Engagement and Commitment Initiatives:** Organizations should implement initiatives that enhance employee affective commitment, including recognition and reward programs, career development opportunities, work-life balance policies, and supportive workplace cultures. Committed employees deliver superior service that satisfies customers.
- 4. Culturally Sensitive Service Protocols:** Organizations should develop service protocols that balance global standards with local cultural values. Service delivery should reflect Ghanaian cultural values of interpersonal relationships, respect, personalized attention, and community orientation, while maintaining global service quality benchmarks.

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

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

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

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

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

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