
The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction and employee performance. This was a quantitative study. The data were analyzed using the SPSS Ver. 25. This study involved employees of the Northern Technical University in Iraq, who were taken using proportional random sampling techniques so that 125 employees were selected as research respondents. The results of the study showed that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and job satisfaction the practical implications of these findings underscored the importance of developing transformational leadership as strategies for improving employee performance in public organizational environments. These implications could help organizations design more effective human resource development policies and programs.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Northern Technical University, Human Resources Management, Employees.

1. Introduction

The existing pandemic has significantly impacted the industrial activities and the subsequent economic condition of the industrial sector. There is a higher competition between the organisations, which has decreased their commercial activities and negatively affected their annual revenue. Hence, they need to protect their human

resources since they are the main pillar of any organisation.

Emery and Barker (2007) observed that the major reason for consumer gratification within any industrial facility was the relationship between consumers and organisations. John Smith, ex-CEO of Marriott Corporation, further noted that happy customers can only be served by happy employees. Furthermore, Heskett (1987) observed that employee satisfaction leads to a higher employee motivation which can improve service quality. This, in turn, leads to a higher organisational commitment and low employee turnover, which can significantly improve customer satisfaction levels. Hence, many researchers and academicians have focused on factors like the employees' job satisfaction and job assurance concerning organisational performance.

These factors can be influenced by several issues like the demographic differences between the workers, leadership behaviour style implemented by the organisation and the culture. The organisation's leadership style can significantly affect the relationship between the employees and employers, and thus, their job satisfaction, activities and the obligations of the organisations (Wilderom et al., 2004). Many earlier studies have indicated that the lithe administrations, which use a participative management style, focus more on employee benefits, which increases employee gratification and leads to better administrative performance (Mckinnon et al., 2003).

In this study, the researchers highlighted the relationship between Transformational Leadership (TL) behavioural style, job satisfaction and employee performance.

2. Theoretical Issues and Hypothesis

2.1 Transformational Leadership:

The TL style refers to leadership behaviour where the leaders aim to motivate their assistants for deriving the best results in the organisation. Thus, the leaders inspire the employees and encourage them to observe keenly and act ethically (Burns, 1978). Earlier studies stated that TL behaviour was based on 4 main characteristics, i.e., charisma, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualised

consideration. In their study, Bass and Avolio (1995) stated that the idealised influence could be further classified into capable and behavioural measurements. They mentioned that the morals, views and rules followed by the employees were based on the charismatic behaviour of the leaders. The inspirational motivation was regarded as the objective or standard that was based on the actual communication between the leader and employees, which could stimulate the employees and form the basis for self-motivation. On the other hand, the intellectual stimulation was the level to which the leaders wanted the employees to develop so that they could design and implement many inventive projects. Lastly, the individualised consideration formed the basis for the socio-economic activities which allowed the workers to improve and display better performance.

The leaders who implemented the TL style inspired the workers to develop and present more original ideas (Schepers et al., 2005). The transformational leader encourages the workers to show better organisational performance as they possess many qualities which help in reinventing the organisation's structure based on their requirements (Warrick 2011). Top et al., (2015) investigated the relationship between TL behaviour, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational trust when they studied the public aids and the employee activities in 2 Turkish public hospitals. The researchers also determined the effect of TL on the employee performance based on the trust expressed by the members on the TL style, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This leadership style decreases the strain and allows the employees to work for achieving the organisational goals. In one study, the researchers investigated the TL behaviour and its effect on employee commitment to implement changes (Herold et al., 2008). Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009) stated that innovation influenced TL factors, which could affect organisational performance. Wright and Pandey (2010) carried out a review and observed that the TL style was an organisational factor which could motivate the public sector employees. They further noted that TL could indirectly influence mission valence based on organisational goals and public service motivation. The literature suggested that emotional

intelligence and leadership behaviour was based on the TL characteristics which improved the worker performance. Choi et al., (2016) investigated the Malaysian hospitals and noted that job satisfaction of the workers was attributed to the TL.

Furthermore, the leadership quality also showed a secondary effect on worker intelligence and their knowledge, while it could directly affect TL behaviour (Cavazotte et al., 2012). On the other hand, worker performance and well-being were associated with TL (Nielsen and Daniels 2012). Braun et al., (2013) carried out a multilevel analysis for determining the correlation between trust, and worker gratification. Furthermore, Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) noted that the transformational leader behaviour was an active form of leadership in a charismatic environment. The teaching-based leadership facilities were important for young students as they could learn many vital lessons for improving their decision-making abilities, public speaking, problem -solving, or inspiring others. All these activities required communal trust and commitment (Keskes 2014). Finally, A number of previous studies have consistently shown that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance (Ariyanti and Sawitri, 2024).

2.2 Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction was an extensively studied factor, which was expressed by the employees in a positive and pleasant emotional scenario. It was based on the employee's appreciation for their occupation and their work experience (Locke 1976). Hackman and Oldman (1975) developed the model for job satisfaction and noted that the employees showed a positive response if they believed that their work performance was remarkable. In this model, the employees realised that they were responsible for their work performance, which could further improve if they were more attentive. Kennerly (1989) studied the relationship between leadership behaviour, job satisfaction and the organisational culture. They noted that the organisational behaviour, such as warmth, respect and rapport amongst the employees and their leaders were important forecasting factors which indicated job satisfaction in the health field. Billingsley and Cross (1992) noted that some factors such as work

participation, leadership support and lesser conflict amongst the roles were forecasting factors indicating job satisfaction, job commitment and an unwillingness of the employees to quit their jobs. Hence, they stated that leadership was a job-related factor which affected all the dimensions of work and it could also affect the employees' performance, well-being and their behaviour in the organisation. Davis and Newstrom (1985) mentioned that job satisfaction was a combination of both the positive and negative feelings which the employees expressed about their work. Furthermore, job satisfaction indicates the degree to which the employee expectations matched the organisation's actual abilities. Their positive and desirable attitude towards their job reflects their job satisfaction, while an unwanted a negative approach indicated job dissatisfaction (Armstrong 2006). Their job satisfaction is indicative of their logic regarding success. Hence, job satisfaction indicated that the employees enjoyed doing their jobs properly so that they could also get some rewards. It was also recognised as the major factor which led the employees towards a higher income, promotion, recognition, and objective fulfilment that led to their contentment (Kaliski 2007). The employees' level of job satisfaction could vary between 'extremely satisfied' and 'extremely dissatisfied' based on their feelings regarding their job. The people also politicise different aspects of their job like their colleagues, activities, superiors, subordinates and salary (George et al., 2008).

Lu et al., (2005) studied the perceptions regarding employee satisfaction and management performance. They noted that employee satisfaction was a type of reply which was expressed in the organisation based on the employees' job experience. It further represented the emotional feelings and observations of the employees regarding their work and indicated if the employees were happy or not. A transformational leader ensures that the employees are satisfied with their jobs (Nielsen et al., 2009). Job satisfaction is seen to be a positive emotional state or their enjoyable experience while performing a job (Luthans 2007). Gill et al., (2010) observed that the job satisfaction of the employees was influenced by TL, which further affected the perceptions of the employees. In their study, Spector (2003) noted that the organisation commitment and quality of the job performance were dependent

on job satisfaction, which improved the organisational performance. The activities in the organisation were dependent on the transformational leaders who influenced the job satisfaction levels of the employees. Thus, it was noted that leadership significantly affected employee confidence and improved organisational performance (Munir et al., 2012).

Furthermore, job hierarchy, skills, experience and age were some factors which affected job satisfaction (Oshagbemi 2003). Darshan (2011) also noted similar results in their study. Fried and Ferris (1987) stated that for understanding the job satisfaction, the job structures and the personal traits of the employees also had to be investigated. Thus, it was concluded that both the factors, i.e., job satisfaction and TL behaviour affected the organisational performance (Wang et al., 2012), as the transformational leaders motivated the workers and reduced the job turnover ratio (Cumming et al., 2010). Therefore, in commercial terms, job satisfaction could occur at the individual or team levels which were directly shaped by the TL-based traits (Braun et al., 2013). Though the TL shows a major effect, other leadership styles too can affect the commitment and satisfaction levels of the employees. However, owing to its innovativeness and supportive nature, the researchers selected the TL style. The employees expressed higher satisfaction with TL compared to other styles as job satisfaction levels can be easily determined through TL (Hamidifar 2009). Malik et al., (2017) noted that TL factors significantly affected job satisfaction levels and the organisation's commitment to the employees.

Based on the above arguments, the researchers concluded that job satisfaction could encourage the employees to display positive behaviour, while job dissatisfaction would lead to the negative behaviour of the employees.

2.3 Job Performance:

Campbell (1990) defined performance as a behaviour or action which was controlled by the person and could contribute to the objectives or goals of the organisation. It could be measured based on the employee's expertise level. Hence, the behavioural

approach highlights what the employees do during their work shift and focuses more on the activities rather than the results, while the outcome approach determines the result of the employee's behaviour. However, in practice, both the approaches that determine the job performance were related to each other (Sonnetag and Bayer 2005). Furthermore, performance must be differentiated from other concepts like productivity, efficiency or effectiveness (Campbell et al., 1993). Effectiveness is defined as the evaluation of employee performance. Productivity highlights the ratio between the effectiveness and cost of the outcome (Motowidlo and Schmit 1999). The literature regarding job performance distinguishes between the "in-role" and "extra-role" performance (Katz and Kahn 1978). The extra-role performance is called the "organisational citizenship behaviours" (Smith et al., 1983). On the other hand, the contextual performance includes activities which are voluntarily conducted, and not based on the job demands. Hence, it cannot directly contribute to the core business of an organisation (Organ 1997). Contextual performance includes many activities like helping, volunteering, and cooperating with other employees, which were not included in the employees' job profile, however, they could benefit the organisation. Irrespective of the various perspectives and concepts, the researchers observed that the employee performance could significantly affect the organisations. The employees display a better performance while carrying out their job-related responsibilities, which increases their self-efficacy and satisfaction levels (Kanfer and Ackerman 2005). Furthermore, the high performances often tend to get promoted, awarded and honoured. Additionally, they are offered better career opportunities, which are better than those offered to those showing a moderate or weak performance (Van Scotter et al., 2000).

2.4 The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction:

Brown (1992) mentioned that a good leader should be able to alter the elements related to the organisational culture which could affect the organisational performance. Stone et al., (2003) noted that the servant leadership compared to the TL was a relationship-

based leadership, where the workers were of a prime focus, whereas the organisational results were secondary. If the workers felt a sense of dignity in their jobs and could acquire an intrinsic benefit from their activities, they expressed higher job satisfaction. This was a type of service leadership which displayed similar values.

Madlock (2008) observed a statistically significant and positive relationship between employee job satisfaction and supervisors' communication competence. They also reported a better relationship between the supervisors' relational and task leadership styles and employee satisfaction with the communication. However, a weak relationship was noted between the relational and supervisors' task leadership style and employee job satisfaction.

Bushra et al., (2011) studied the relationship between job satisfaction levels and TL amongst 133 bank employees in Pakistan. They noted that the TL positively affected the job satisfaction level, which was reported by 42% of the participants. This indicated that they preferred the TL style. It could be concluded that the TL behaviour influenced the job satisfaction levels and also determined the job commitment (Emery and Barker 2007). However, the relationship between job satisfaction and job commitment was reciprocated (Riaz et al., 2011). The effect of the TL style was based on the ability of all leaders to promote the values regarding goal achievement. It also highlighted the effect of employee performance on goal fulfilment. The transformational leaders motivate the employees to work hard. They also offer them a common vision, where the organisation's well-being was related to their involvement and development (Shamir et al., 1998; Givens, 2008).

In addition to the organisational culture, other occupational factors like job commitment and job satisfaction were investigated with regards to the national culture, since they also affected the leadership style, organisational structure, functionality, internal climate and the organisational culture (Cheng 1995). Some researchers believed that Eastern and Western cultures were vastly different. A few cross-cultural studies also showed that the national (and hence organisational)

cultures were significantly different between the eastern and western countries. Specifically, the studies conducted by Pye (1985) and El Kahal (2001) in Eastern countries (such as China) showed that the Chinese organisations implemented a higher power distance value and bureaucratic type of culture, where the executives and owners were placed on the top of the organisational structure and issued top-down directions. An opposite structure was noted in Western countries such as Australia and the USA (Hofstede 1980; Malone 1997; Conger and Kanungo 1998). In these Western countries, the authority was based on the merit and performance of the individuals. The decision-making was also delegated and decentralised. However, better empowerment by the management improved the employees' productivity, participation, and thus their job satisfaction and job commitment levels.

The TL attributes were similar in western culture and were seen to influence the employees' motivation and performance (Walder 1995). These attributes indicated that a clear vision and empowerment were related to a higher job commitment and job satisfaction (Smith and Peterson 1988; Iverson and Roy 1994). On the other hand, the eastern organisations operated under an "initiating structure" leadership style, which also increased the job satisfaction level (Walder 1995). The organisational and the national culture played a vital role in the employees' job satisfaction and job commitment if the leaders adopted several of the above factors for developing better relationships with their colleagues. No connection was noted between the national culture and the occupational scenario. In one such study, Lok and Crawford (2004) compared the managers of the organisations in Hong Kong and Australia. They noted that the Australian managers reported more supportive and innovative cultural measures, which affected the organisational commitment and job satisfaction levels. However, a significant difference was noted between the 2 groups of participants with regards to the bureaucratic organisational culture and the initiating structure leadership styles. Furthermore, no significant difference was noted with regards to the effect of leadership style on job satisfaction and job commitment levels between the 2 groups. With regards to the demographic characteristics, a statistically significant

difference was noted on the effect of age and gender on the job satisfaction, since these characteristics showed a positive effect on the job satisfaction level of the employees in Hong Kong.

Hence, further research needs to be carried out for determining the presence/absence of a relationship between the organisations in the Eastern and Western countries and the occupational phenomena such as job satisfaction and leadership style.

Aspiridis (2013) noted an interesting factor regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and leadership. They studied the effect of this relationship on the employees' musical performance. They also noted that the employees who attended classical music sessions during their work hours reported a satisfying working environment and higher productivity. Hence, the supervisor's decision to play classical music during their work hours positively influenced the employees' efficiency and instilled a general feeling of satisfaction.

Furthermore, the results concluded that work performance has positive significant relationship with transformational leadership (Kahan et al., 2020).

Finally, the literature review has proved that transformational leadership and job satisfaction greatly influence an employee's decision to leave or stay with his or her organisation (Gan and Voon, 2021).

2.5 The Relationship between the Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance:

TL affected the performance of the health employees in Pakistan. The researchers assessed the mediatory role played by job satisfaction using the regression analysis. It was noted that the job contentment factor mediated the relationship between the independent variable of TL and the dependent variable of employee performance (Naeem and Khanzada, 2018).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

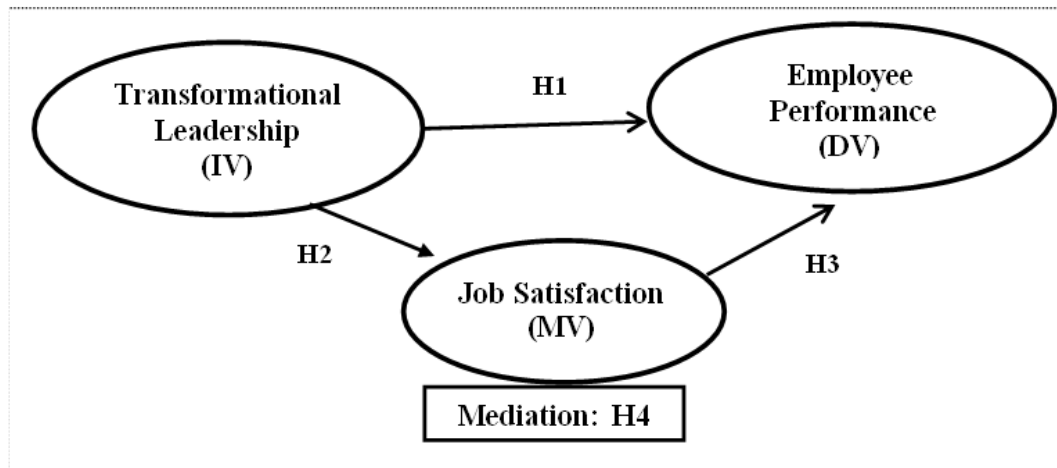


Figure (1): Theoretical Framework of Naeem and Khanzada, (2018).

Job satisfaction increased employee performance (Rezvani et al., 2016). Some researchers (Mujkic et al., 2014; Mangkunegara 2016) observed that when the employees were satisfied with their jobs, their attention towards the completion of their allocated tasks increases. Rezvani et al., (2016) stated that when the employees were satisfied with their jobs, they made better decisions, which improved their problem-solving abilities and their performance. Fisher (2003) supported this argument and observed that the employees with lower job contentment showed poor performance as the disgruntled employees were not very enthusiastic about their work, indicating that they did not work very hard and refrained from putting their efforts into their jobs. Furthermore, employees with low job contentment could tackle all their tasks with lesser keenness and enthusiasm (Judge et al., 2001).

Minavand et al., (2013) determined the degree to which the job satisfaction levels, performance quality and turnover rate of the employees were affected by the leadership style. Their analysis highlighted the significant differences between the employees who followed the task-oriented project managers and the employees who worked with the relationship-oriented project managers. The second group showed a better result.

EKaningsih (2014) noted the effect of TL on the employee performance with regards to factors such as their trust, empowerment and satisfaction with the leadership styles. Trust and empowerment of the employees on their leaders could partially or completely impact the job satisfaction levels as shown below.

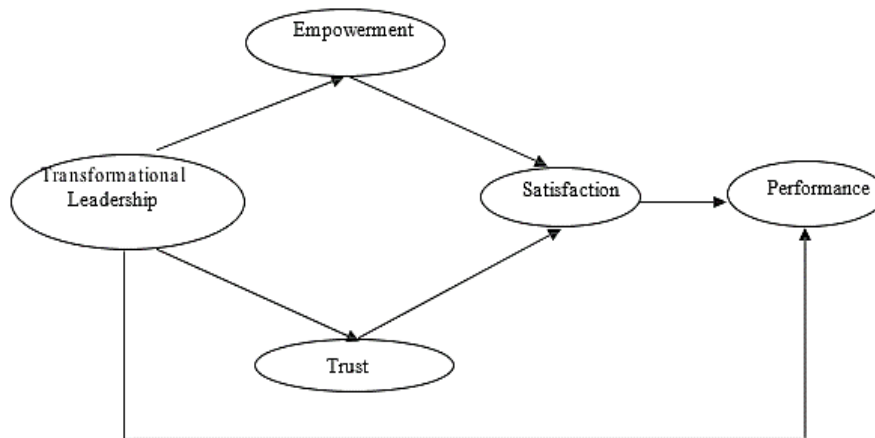


Figure: (2) The influence of the transformational leadership on the performance through empowerment, trust, and satisfaction with leaders (Source: EKaningsih (2014))

Based on the above discussion, the researchers investigated the relationship between the TL, job satisfaction and employee performance in the Northern Technical University, Iraq.

Hence, the below-mentioned hypotheses were proposed:

- Hypothesis 1: Transformational Leadership is positively associated with job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 2: Transformational Leadership is positively related to employee performance.
- Hypothesis 3: Job satisfaction is positively associated with employee performance.
- Hypothesis 4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.

2.6 Proposed Conceptual Framework:

Developing a theoretical model required a thorough investigation of the literature related to the specific topics and formation of speculative suppositions. As a single model cannot clarify the state of the study, the researchers developed a notional model in this study using the configuration proposed by Naeem and Khanzada (2018). Their framework included the major components of TL, job satisfaction and employee performance (Fig. 3). Furthermore, the TL dimension included the factors of individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence and inspirational motivation (Shibru and Darshan 2011; Whyte, 2012). The job satisfaction dimension was derived from the study conducted by Bellingham (2011); while the employee performance dimension was derived from Goodman and Svyantek (1999).

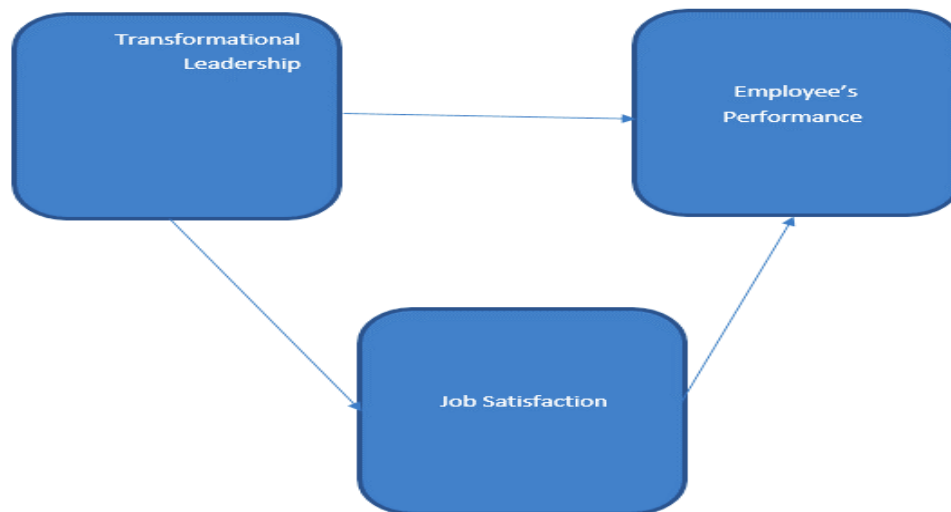


Figure (3): Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology and Findings

Methodology:

The researchers implemented a quantitative research technique in the study. All data was collected from the employees working in 8 faculties of the Northern Technical University. The researchers implemented a conceptual framework for determining the

relationship between TL, job satisfaction and employee performance. They distributed the survey questionnaires physically to the randomly -selected respondents. The questionnaires were written in the English and Arabic languages. The questionnaires included 4 sections; Section 1 included questions related to the demographic information of the respondents; Section 2 covered the TL dimensions (i.e., 19 questions); Section 3 highlighted the employees' job satisfaction levels (17 questions), while Section 4 included questions related to the employee performance (12 questions). These questionnaires were distributed amongst 150 employees. Out of the 130 questionnaires that were collected, 125 were filled (i.e., 96%) Thereafter, these were categorised and analysed. Thus, it was concluded that the employees were willing to share information with the researchers which increased their trust in the data.

Findings:

As shown in Table (1), a majority of the respondents were male (i.e., 77.6%), while 22.4% of respondents were female. The higher number of male respondents was attributed to the cultural values in the country. Furthermore, (32%) of respondents were aged between 30 and 40 years, while (34.4%) of the respondents were aged between 40-50 years. (27.2%) of respondents were aged between 50-60 years while (61.6%) of respondents were aged between 40 and 60 years old. This last age group of respondents had more than 10 years of experience which increased the researchers' confidence in their results. With regards to their experience, 12.8 % of respondents possessed ≤ 5 years of experience, (12 %) of respondents possessed 5-10 years of experience, (26.4 %) of respondents possessed 10-15 years of experience, whereas (48.8 %) of the respondents had ≥ 15 years of experience. Thus, (75.2 %) of the total respondents had ≥ 10 years of experience, which indicated that the results obtained were valid. Lastly, (27.2%) of respondents headed their respective departments while (36%) of the respondents were division administrators.

Table (1): Profile of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	97	77.6
	Female	28	22.4
Age	30-40	40	32
	40-50	43	34.4
	50-60	34	27.2
	60 or more	8	6.4
Experience	Less than 5	16	12.8
	5-10	15	12
	10-15	33	26.4
	15 or more	61	48.8
Position	Dean	2	1.6
	Sub dean	11	8.8
	Head of department	34	27.2
	Manager of department	6	4.8
	Division administrator	45	36
	Unit administrator	27	21

For determining the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers used Cronbach's alpha value for testing the internal consistency of all 3 variables presented in Table (2). The results indicated that the reliability was good.

Table (2): Testing data reliability of each variable

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformational Leadership (TL)	0.906
Job satisfaction (JS)	0.902
Employee Performance (EP)	0.836

Table (3) describes the correlation between all variables used in the study, i.e., TL, job satisfaction and employee's performance. Hence, as the results indicated that the trend was moving in the desired direction, Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were supported.

Table (3): Correlation

Variable	TL	JS	EP
Transformational Leadership (TL)	1	.738**	.900**
Job Satisfaction (JS)		1	.722**
Employee Performance(EP)			1
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

Table (4)

Variables	β	SSE	t	P
TL \longrightarrow EP	.807	.035	22.966	.000

In Table (4), the researchers determined the correlation coefficient value between 2 variables (0.807), while the t-test was significant at (0.01). This indicated that these variables were significantly related. A significant relationship was also noted between TL and job satisfaction (0.01) as shown in Table (5). This supported the presumption that the TL positively affected job satisfaction, while job satisfaction also positively affected the employee performance as shown in Table (6).

Table (5)

Variables	β	SSE	t	P
TL \longrightarrow JS	.722	.060	12.119	.000

Table (6)

Variables	β	SSE	t	P
JS \longrightarrow EP	.661	.057	0.057	.000

Table (7) highlighted the relationship between the 3 variables of job performance, TL and job satisfaction. The researchers used a multiple linear regression technique where the relationships were seen to be relevant (i.e., $F=0.01$). The results for the t-test were satisfactory for the 2 variables, which indicated that these variables affected job satisfaction (0.01).

Table (7)

	β	SSE	t	p	F	P
constant	.725	0.145	5.018	0.000	274.383	.000
TL	.724	0.051	14.122	0.000		
JS	.115	0.52	2.201	0.000		

As shown in Table (8), the regression coefficient value was significant even after including the job satisfaction variable. This showed that this variable partially mediated the relationship between TL and performance. This supported Hypothesis 4.

Table (8)

Independent variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Sig. F Change
TL	.809	.811	.811	.000
TL,JS	.815	.818	.007	.030

4. Conclusions and Discussion

The results noted in this study highlighted the positive relationship between employee performance and TL. It was also noted that job satisfaction acted as a mediator between these relationships.

There is limited empirical evidence regarding the relationship between TL and employee performance. Very few studies (Naeem and Khanzada, 2018) have investigated the relationship between TL and employee performance and (Islam et al., 2003) have investigated the relationship between TL, human capital, job satisfaction and organizational performance.

This was one of the first studies that attempted to investigate different variables in the Northern Technical University. Hence, the results of this study could fill the gap existing in the empirical data regarding leadership. In this study, the researchers used TL as the independent variable, while the earlier studies considered TL as the dependent variable (Stone et al., 2003). This study highlighted the mediatory role played by job satisfaction on the relationship between TL and employee performance. Very little empirical data is available with regard to the mediatory role played by job satisfaction on the relationship between the different variables used in the study. In an earlier study, Minavand et al., (2013) determined the extent to which the leadership style affected the employees' job satisfaction, performance quality and turnover rate.

Currently, business organisations have to operate in very difficult times. They even need to sustain their business despite the massive changes occurring in the world. These factors have reduced the significance of TL in the effective management of the organisations. In this study, the researchers have investigated the relationship between the TL, employee performance and job satisfaction. Here, the data has offered

empirical support which highlighted the mediatory effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between the 2 variables. Further research could provide a better understanding and support for the effect of TL on employee performance.

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