

Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance: The Roles of Motivation and Career Development in Pakistan's Education Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the impact of transformational leadership on the performance of employees with the mediation of motivation and moderation of career development opportunities among the teachers in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was chosen, and 280 teachers of the public middle and high schools were included in the survey. SPSS and Process Macro of Hayes were used to analyze the data. It was found that transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on the performance of the employees ($b = .683, p < .001$). This relationship is partially mediated by motivation ($b = .329, p < .001$), and the opportunity of career development moderates the connection between motivation and performance ($b = .198, p = .001$). The research also adds to the body of work related to leadership and motivation because it combines psychological and situational processes and provides a clear implication to guide educational leaders on improving teacher performance by means of leadership development, motivation processes, and career advancement programs.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Employee Motivation; Career Development; Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

The issue of leadership is critical in the current business world where competition is characterized by the dynamic nature of business. As the world keeps changing in terms of technology, globalization, and ever-changing employee demands, the old style of leadership with simple use of control, authority and supervision is no longer enough. New challenges are emerging in organizations in the twenty-first century, and this setting requires leaders who are capable of transcendence of the fundamental roles of management and serve as inspiration, motivational, and developmental sources to their teams. Transformational leadership (TL) has, in this respect, come out as one of the most effective and powerful leadership styles that not only concentrates on meeting the organizational objectives, but also reshaping the attitude, values and performance of the employees. Transformational leadership was first introduced by Burns (1978) and furthered by Bass (1985) and Avolio (1991, 2004) as to the role of the leader in

bringing positive changes to the organization by motivating the followers to contribute to the team and organization beyond their own interest. It has been described that transformational leaders can establish and spread a compelling vision, arousing creative thought, addressing the overall needs of individuals, and generating a sense of meaning and identity. Transformational leaders also connect with employees at an emotional level unlike transactional leaders who aim primarily at rewards and punishments thus motivating them through a sense of intrinsic desire and dedication to perform at their best. By doing this, they will turn common employees into motivated, self-driven and high performing workers who are eager to make a difference in organizations objectives. The years of research provided good evidence of the beneficial influence of transformational leadership on employee performance in terms of motivation, job satisfaction, engagement, and performance (Wang et al., 2011; Hoch et al., 2018). Transformational leaders can increase the confidence, creativity and enthusiasm of employees, hence increasing their productivity and innovation. But despite the extensive support on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, there has been a growing understanding among scholars on the necessity to determine how and why this relationship exists. The process of cognizing about the psychological and contextual mechanisms behind actions of leadership and their relationships with the performance of employees is a fundamental field of study as well as a field of practice. Employee motivation is one of the most significant psychological processes that explain this connection. Motivation is the force inside individuals that makes them work hard and work towards the attainment of the desired objectives. It is observed that an individual works optimally when his or her fundamental psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Self-Determination Theory, 2000, 2012). Transformational leaders are more likely to bring the mentioned needs to fruition by instilling a sense of trust and empowerment, encouraging employees to make individual decisions, and being concerned about their well-being. Inspirational, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence are the four elements of transformational leadership leaders who motivate employees to derive meaning in their work and relate it to a bigger cause (Khan et al., 2023).

When the employees feel that their leaders are inspirational and supportive, they are motivated not externally (they are motivated by rewards or fear), but internally (they are motivated by interest and purpose). Such intrinsic motivation not only increases job satisfaction but also results in an increase in commitment and performance. At that, despite the fact that numerous researches acknowledge motivation as one of the main connections between transformational leadership and performance, little research has been carried out that would examine the effects of various dimensions of transformational leadership on various types of motivation and how such motivational transformations, in response, affect various forms of performance including task performance, creativity, and contextual behavior (Van Dierendonck et al., 2016; Liao et al., 2017). Thus, empirical studies are required to demystify and confirm the mediation effect of the motivation in this leadership-performance linkage. Other than personal motivation, career development has emerged as another important element that determines employee reaction towards transformational leaders. The career development is defined as the process under which the employees acquire knowledge, grow and advance in their organization. It involves availability of training programs, mentoring, promotions and skills development programs which equip employees to the future job roles (Greenhaus et al., 2000; Arthur et al., 2006). Career development in the contemporary workplace is a key factor in job satisfaction and commitment, especially among young generations like the Millennials and Generation Z. These workers are likely to appreciate working environments that do not only provide lucrative remunerations but also learning, appreciation, and growth opportunities (Deliz et al., 2022). Transformational leaders usually support and accommodate employee development by determining the strengths of employees, constructive feedback and by matching their career aspirations with the performance of the organization. The fact that visible career opportunities are present however remains to be seen in strengthening the motivational impact of transformational leadership. That is, will transformational leadership be more effective in employee motivation and performance in cases where

employees are convinced of clear career growth? It is agreeable that employees who see further growth prospects are more likely to be inspired and motivated by the transformational leaders, and employees who do not have such prospects may not necessarily respond well to inspirational leadership actions. Nevertheless, the moderating effects of perceived career development opportunities on transformational leadership-motivation-performance relationship are under-researched despite such theoretical reasoning (Kraimer et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2015). Thus, this research paper fills two major gaps in literature. First, even though motivation is one of the most important mediators of the connection between transformational leadership and performance, there is yet to be conducted a comprehensive empirical test of the relationship that can cover all the complexity of the relationship (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Dvir and Avolio, 2004). Second, the effect of contextual factors on this relationship, including the perceived career development opportunities, is not fully understood. This study will help fill out the picture of the mediating role of motivation and moderating role of career development opportunities to develop a fuller picture of the role of transformational leadership on employee performance. This research has both theoretical and practical contributions, which make it important research. In theory, the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by incorporating both psychological (motivation) and contextual (career development) processes in a single conceptualized framework. This will enable the researchers to comprehend not only the extent to which transformational leadership enhances performance but the way it does it and when (Sekiguchi et al., 2016). It helps in the development of leadership theories specifically transformational leadership theory, and motivation theories including Self-Determination Theory. Additionally, the focus on career development as a moderator makes it relevant to leadership and motivation research by bridging the domain of career development with the field of career management, thus providing a cross-disciplinary view that can be valuable to academic debates. In practice, the results of this study can be useful to leaders, managers, HR professionals and employees. To the leaders, it gives a clear direction of how they can utilize inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention to increase the motivation and performance of the employees. To the HR professionals, it reinforces the role of the alignment of leadership development programs and effective career management systems to retain talent and enhance organizational performance. To the employees, the knowledge of such relationships may assist them to recognize the importance of transformational leadership and the importance of career development in their personal development. Also, if the study is carried out in a particular set up like education or technology industry in Pakistan it can yield locally specific information that organizations operating in similar cultural or economic settings can use to reinforce their leadership and human resource policies. According to these objectives, this study has three major goals, first, to identify the direct relationship of transformational leadership and employee performance, second, to determine the mediating effect of employee motivation on this relationship, and lastly, to examine the possible role of perceived career development opportunities in mediating the relationship between motivation and performance. Based on this, the study aims at providing answers to the following questions: What is the direct impact of transformational leadership on the performance of employees? Is the relationship transformational leadership-employee motivation-performance mediated? Does perceived career development opportunities enhance the relationship between motivation and performance? Through answering these questions, the study will aim to present a holistic insight into how transformational leadership can spark the performance of employees using the two avenues of motivation and career growth. The results not only will be added to the academic literature but also will be used as a practical guide to organizations that would like to create high-performing, motivated, and future-ready workforces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership (TL) is one of the most popular and extensively studied leadership theories in recent decades, especially in terms of its capacity to increase the level of motivation, satisfaction, and performance of employees. In the education sector of Pakistan, where employee engagement, job

satisfaction and institutional efficiency are still acute, it is important to comprehend how transformational leaders can be used to change the behavior and performance of staff to achieve high quality and sustainability of the educational institutions. This segment presents a review of the theoretical and empirical basis of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, a discussion of the mediating power of motivation, a discussion of the moderating power of career development opportunity, and the research gaps that can be further investigated in the future.

Transformational Leadership and Performance of Employees

Firstly, developed by Burns (1978) and later developed by Bass (1985), transformational leadership focuses on the inspiring and transforming of followers through activating higher values, moral purpose, and official goals. In contrast to the transactional leaders in their exchanges, where they supervise and use rewards, the transformational leaders employ charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration in eliciting the best out of their followers (Avolio and Bass, 2004). Such behaviors will result in a good emotional and psychological atmosphere where employees will feel important and encouraged to do more than is expected. Recent research still supports the good association between transformational leadership and employee performance. Aboramadan and Kundi (2020) state that transformational leaders in schools have a positive impact on job performance in faculty members because they provide a sense of belonging and a common set of vision. In a similar fashion, Alqatawenh (2021) discovered that transformational leadership promotes tasks performance and creative problem solving in knowledge-based organizations through promotion of autonomy and innovation. They are leaders who serve as role models and visionaries who help the employees internalize organizational goals as there. Transformational leadership becomes especially topical in the environment of the Pakistani education industry, where teachers and academic personnel should adjust to the changing demands of the pedagogical practices and institutional requirements. A study by Saleem et al. (2022) indicated that transformational leaders in Pakistani universities do a significant job of enhancing commitment and the quality of instruction by the teachers through promoting collaboration, empowerment, and recognition. Such a style of leadership not only enhances the efficiency of tasks but also enhances emotional commitment, which is critical to the stability of an institution in the long term. Moreover, Hussain and Shahzad (2023) discovered that transformational leadership can be used to boost the creativity and performance of employees in higher education by facilitating open communication and lifelong learning. This relationship is theoretically explained by the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) which opines that employees would respond to support, trust, and development opportunities given to them by the leaders with increased effort and loyalty. Transformational leaders manage to generate this good exchange through individualized consideration and building trust where employees feel obligated to make significant contributions. Empirically, the research is always consistent in establishing this connection in various cultural backgrounds (Wang et al., 2020; Afsar et al., 2021), although the mechanisms of this relationship, such as motivation, are not yet fully understood, especially in non-Western societies such as Pakistan.

H1: Transformational Leadership has a positive and significant impact on Employee Performance.

Employee Motivation as a mediator between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

Motivation of employees is also important in the explanation of the relationship between transformational and this aspect of leadership and increased performance. Motivation is the internal force that pushes individuals to attain some goals and continue working (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Transformational leaders can impact motivation in that they tie the work of employees to a purposeful objective and by appeasing the psychological needs of their employees. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) says that individuals are most effective when it comes to satisfying their needs in autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Ryan

and Deci, 2017). Transformational leaders cater to these needs by making them feel empowered (autonomy), developing skills (competence), and having supportive relationships (relatedness). This mechanism is proven by recent studies. Khan et al. (2023) discovered that transformational leadership makes a significant contribution to the intrinsic motivation, which intermediates in leadership and performance in state universities. The ability to inspire and intellectually stimulate their employees results in a feeling of ownership and passion towards their work and hence better job outcomes. On the same note, another study by Nguyen et al. (2021) established the notion that intrinsic motivation serves as a psychological mediator between transformational leadership and employee engagement at educational institutions. It is possible to classify motivation as intrinsic and extrinsic. The main way in which transformational leaders increase intrinsic motivation is an internal motivation to do well since the work is intrinsically rewarding (Gagne & Deci, 2022). They achieve this through associating the role of the employee to the bigger organizational mission and providing motivation and acknowledgment. Conversely, transactional leadership can be based more on extrinsic motivation, which can take the form of monetary or punishment incentives. A number of researchers have concluded that intrinsic motivation has greater and more enduring performance, creativity, and satisfaction impacts (Liu et al., 2022; Iqbal et al., 2024). Motivation has been reported as a burning challenge in the education sector of Pakistan owing to the scarcity of resources, undefined career opportunities as well as workload. Transformational leaders can help mitigate these challenges by motivating the teachers and administrative staff by inspiring and empowering them. According to a study conducted by Fatima et al. (2022), teachers who are motivated under transformational leadership display better quality of teaching and commitment towards student outcomes. In the same vein, Ahmed and Malik (2023) established an indirect, but positive, relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of academic staff due to increased motivation to work and psychological empowerment. These results demonstrate that motivation is a psychological avenue that transformational leaders use to influence behavior, engagement, and consequently performance.

H2: Employee Motivation mediates the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

As a Moderator, Career Development relationship between employee motivation and Employee Performance

Although motivation is an explanation of the way in which transformational leadership fosters performance, the presence of career development opportunities defines when and how much exposure to motivation translates into better performance by employees. Career development is the processes and possibilities that aid in planning and improving the professional development of employees through training, mentoring, promotion, and lifelong learning (Greenhaus et al., 2000). In the contemporary knowledge economy, employees grow more sensitive to the need of organizations to invest in their long-term development. Once the employees have observed visible career growth opportunities, they tend to direct their motivation towards greater performance. Studies show that career development opportunities have the potential to reinforce the linkage between motivation and performance. Indicatively, Ghosh et al. (2021) reported that employee motivation had a significant effect on job satisfaction and engagement through the perceived career growth opportunities. Workers with the perception of being helped by the organization to grow their careers are highly likely to perform better since they see hard work and dedication as an investment in their future career. Similarly, research done by Ali and Ahmed (2023) showed that career development support in developing nations improves the conversion of the motivation into real-world evidence through productivity and retention. Career development in the education system of Pakistan is usually limited by the bureaucratic system of organization, inadequate training facilities, and a slack promotional system. Nevertheless, teachers and administrative personnel who feel like their organization offers educational opportunities and skills development programs are more prone to change

their motivation into a higher teaching standard and organizational input. Aslam et al. (2024) suggest that perceived career development enhances the motivation-performance relationship in the university by solidifying the feeling of professional development and stability among employees. In this way, strong career advancement opportunities are perceived by motivated employees as well, and therefore their energy and efforts are better channeled into better performance. This moderating effect can be theoretically explained by the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) according to which people want to gain and maintain precious resources, including career development and learning opportunities. Employees will feel less stressed and engaged when they believe that the organization offers these resources to them, and they will be able to transfer motivation to the higher performance results. Thus, perceived career development opportunities serve as an environmental status that enhances the positive relationship between employee motivation and employee performance.

H3: Career Development Opportunities positively moderate the indirect relationship between employee motivation and Employee Performance.

Integrating Effect and Conceptual Framework

According to the literature reviewed, transformational leadership has a direct and indirect impact on the performance of employees by motivating them, and the availability of career development opportunities enhances the relationship between motivation and employee performance. It is a unified framework that emphasizes both contextual and psychological processes, which leads to the request to understand leadership processes more holistically (Sekiguchi et al., 2016). In particular, the framework postulates a moderated mediation model: transformational leadership produces more employee motivation (moderator), which in turn produces a greater increase in performance, and that motivational effect on performance is greater when there are good career development opportunities (moderator). Components of this model are supported by empirical research in various sectors; however, there is little empirical research on the pathway as a whole, particularly in the education sector of Pakistan. The majority of the available studies are either interested in the direct influence of leadership or the independent action of motivation and career development. Thus, the inclusion of these variables in a single model adds a more detailed insight into the role of leadership in performance based on both individual and organizational aspects.

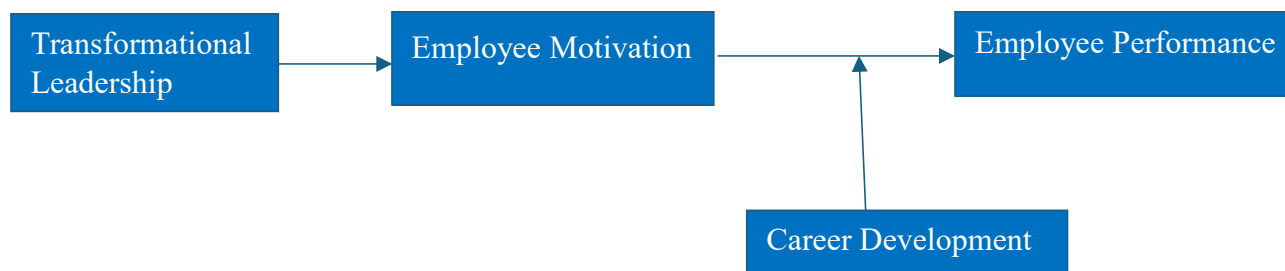
Research Gap Although there is a substantial body of evidence indicating the positive relationship between transformational leadership and positive employee results, there are a number of gaps in the literature, as the majority of research in the education sector of Pakistan has concentrated on the direct association between transformational leadership and performance but have not explored the underlying psychological mechanisms on how this association takes place (Saleem et al., 2022; Hussain and Shahzad, 2023). Additional empirical research is required to test motivation as a mediating variable through some of the tested models, like the Self-Determination Theory. Second, little has been done on contextual/moderating elements of leadership studies in developing countries, such as career development opportunities. Although transformational leaders motivate employees, this discouragement can be undermined when the employees do not have a sense of promotion opportunities. Therefore, one should discuss the necessity to investigate how the perceived career development opportunities reinforce or undermine the TL-motivation-performance relationship (Ali and Ahmed, 2023; Aslam et al., 2024). Third, it is a contextual gap since the majority of transformational leadership studies have been carried out in corporate or Western contexts. The education sector in Pakistan has its specific problems, including low resources, strict hierarchies, and heavy workloads. The knowledge of the workings of transformational leadership in this setting will be beneficial to educational administrators and HR policymakers. Lastly, a methodological drawback exists in the application of holistic models like moderated mediation to test the double-up effects of motivation and career development. Such integrative frameworks have not been used in education in many studies, so the relationship between leadership effect and its dynamism and interactivity is not well understood. By filling these gaps, the current research will help fill gaps in the

theoretical literature by understanding how transformational leadership affects performance, and practical gaps by assisting leaders and policymakers to develop effective leadership and career development programs that will increase employee motivation and performance in educational institutions

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research utilized a quantitative research design in the form of a cross-sectional survey to determine the effects of transformational leadership on employee performance with a mediating factor of motivation and a moderating factor of career development. Quantitative research provides an objective measurement of social phenomena and the test of the correlation between variables using statistical methods (Creswell, 2014). The present study will be targeted at government officials who teach at the middle and high schools in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan because leadership and career development are largely influential in improving employee motivation and performance in the state education sector. The survey involved 280 employees. The researcher applied a convenience sampling method, which is commonly deployed in behavioral research because a full sampling frame is impractical to achieve (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). Since administrative confidentiality and access restrictions made a list of all government school employees unavailable, convenience sampling was the most sensible option. In addition, it provided an opportunity to collect data faster and cheaply. The study was conducted on a voluntary basis, and the respondents were assured that their answers would be kept confidential and would only be employed in an academic context. The questionnaire was tested on a pilot survey comprising 20 respondents to ascertain the clarity, reliability, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. Some minor changes to the wording of items and layout were incorporated based on the feedback. The last questionnaire was handed out in the form of both a physical and an online questionnaire. Everything was rated on a five-point Likert scale with attack points 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Theoretical framework



Survey Measurements

Validated scales used in this study were adapted in accordance with previous research in order to measure all constructs and achieve consistency and comparability. The questionnaire that was developed had four major sections that matched the important variables: transformational leadership, employee motivation, career development, and employee performance. All the constructions were slightly adapted to the public education environment of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was measured using a five-item scale adapted from Bass and Avolio (1995), capturing the dimensions of inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. A sample item includes, *“My school leader inspires me to perform beyond my expectations.”* These items assess how effectively school leaders motivate and guide their staff toward organizational goals.

Employee Motivation

There were four items used to measure employee motivation as adapted by Gagne et al. (2015). The scale is indicative of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which scales the internal motivation and the enthusiasm of employees to work towards accomplishing work objectives. One of the sample questions is, I am encouraged to do well since I like the work I do. An increase in the scores means that the motivation to work is stronger.

Career Development

The moderating variable, career development, was measured using four items modified according to Noe (1996) and Hall (2002). These are the items that induce a sense of growth and promotion to employees in their institutions. One of the statements is, "My organization offers career development and skill enhancement. This variable measures the degree to which perceived development opportunities enhance the motivation-performance relationship.

Employee Performance

Employee performance, the dependent variable, was measured through five items adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) and Campbell (1990). These items evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of employees' work output. A sample item is, "*I consistently meet the performance standards of my job.*" The scale focuses on self-assessed task performance.

Data Analysis and Statistical Techniques

The gathered data were processed by SPSS version 26. Before hypothesis testing, data screening and cleaning were done to eliminate incomplete or inconsistent responses. Demographic characteristics and key variables were described with the help of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution). Cronbach's alpha was used to undertake reliability analysis, and all the constructs performed well with a reliability value of above 0.70. The strength and direction of relationships among variables were solved by using correlation analysis. The mediation and moderation effects were tested by the multiple regression analysis and the Process Macro of Hayes (Model 4 and Model 1). In particular, the mediation between transformational leadership and employee performance was explored through employee motivation, whereas career development was explored through the mediation between motivation and employee performance. Bootstrap analysis with 5,000 samples was used to test the hypotheses at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

Methodological Limitations

Even though the methodology was well developed, there are several limitations. The research design involved a cross-sectional study design, which does not permit causal interpretation of the study variables. Also, the data was self-reported, and it is also possible that common method bias or socially desirable responses may have been present. Convenience sampling does not contribute to the generalizability of the findings to other areas or industries. The limitations were, however, handled by pilot testing, proper instructions, and guaranteeing anonymity to improve response accuracy. The limitations of the present study can be addressed in the future through the application of longitudinal data, multi-source measures, and samples in different regions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	25–30 years	111	39.6%
	30–35 years	131	46.8%
	35–40 years	33	11.8%
	40–45 years	5	1.8%
Gender	Female	40	14.3%
	Male	240	85.7%
Education Level	Master's (18 years)	261	93.2%
	Ph.D.	19	6.8%

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents (N = 280) who participated in this study. The results show that most of the teachers were aged between 30 and 35 years (46.8%), followed by those aged 25–30 years (39.6%), while smaller proportions belonged to the 35–40 years (11.8%) and 40–45 years (1.8%) categories. Regarding gender, most respondents were male (85.7%), whereas female teachers constituted 14.3% of the total sample. In terms of education level, the findings indicate that most of the participants held a Master's degree (93.2%), while 6.8% possessed a Ph.D. qualification.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Transformational Leadership	3.48	0.826	1.00	5.00
Employee Motivation	3.36	0.673	1.00	5.00
Career Development	3.72	0.762	1.00	5.00
Employee Performance	3.40	0.682	1.00	5.00

The descriptive findings show that there were high-moderate and acceptable responses on all the variables. The average scores are between 3.02 and 3.48 and indicate that the respondents have a positive perception of transformational leadership, motivation, career development, and performance. Transformational Leadership (M = 3.48) has the best means, which indicates that it has the most important influence, whereas Career Development (M = 3.02) is moderate. The standard deviations (0.67-0.83) are not too high and cannot be considered too small, which means that there is moderate consistency in the answers.

Table 3: Correlation

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Transformational Leadership	1			
2. Motivation	.633**	1		
3. Career Development	.608**	.570**	1	
4. Employee Performance	.659**	.579**	.703**	1

The correlation analysis results indicate that all the variables have positive and significant associations at the 0.01 level, which implies that there are strong and significant relationships. Transformational Leadership is positively correlated with Motivation ($r = .633$), Career Development ($r = .608$), and Employee Performance ($r = .659$). Similarly, the Motivation and Career Development ($r = .570$) and Career Development and Employee Performance ($r = .703$) are also very correlated. These results show that motivation, career development, and employee performance are positively correlated with better

leadership, which proves the high-moderate to strong and acceptable relationship between the variables of the study.

Table 4: Reliability test

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Reliability Level
Transformational Leadership	5	.871	Excellent
Motivation	5	.813	Good
Career Development	6	.796	Acceptable
Employee Performance	5	.842	Good

The reliability analysis indicates that Cronbach's alpha values of all the constructs are greater than 0.70, which is deemed as good to excellent in a social science study. Transformational Leadership ($\alpha = .871$) has good internal consistency, whereas Motivation ($\alpha = .813$) and Employee Performance ($\alpha = .842$) have only good reliability. Career Development ($\alpha = .796$) is also within an acceptable range. Altogether, the findings show that measurement scales are reliable and internally consistent and can be used in further statistical analysis.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing through Regression

Hypothesis	Relationship	B	R	p-value	Result
H1	Transformational Leadership → Employee Performance	.683	.692	.000	Accepted
H2	Transformational Leadership → Motivation	.579	.579	.000	Accepted
H3	Career Development → Employee Performance	.458	.492	.000	Accepted

The solution of the regression analysis shows that the relationship between all the hypotheses is positive and statistically significant. The Employee Performance of transformational Leadership supported H1 by showing that it has a strong direct influence ($b = .683$, $p < .001$). The mediation confirms the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance is significantly mediated by Employee Motivation ($b = .579$, $p < .001$), and the relationship was substantiated by H2. Also, the moderation analysis showed that Career Development has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between Motivation and Employee Performance ($b = .458$, $p < .001$), which confirms the H3 hypothesis. Generally, the results indicate that transformational leadership improves the performance of employees both directly and indirectly via motivation, and this is greater where they have opportunities for career development.

Table 6: Mediation Analysis

Path	β	SE	t	p	Result
Transformational Leadership → Motivation	.642	.058	11.07	.000	Significant
Motivation → Employee Performance	.512	.072	7.11	.000	Significant
Transformational Leadership → Employee Performance (Direct Effect)	.381	.069	5.52	.000	Significant
Transformational Leadership → Motivation → Employee Performance (Indirect Effect)	.329	—	—	.000	Partial Mediation

The mediation analysis was done to determine whether motivation was mediated between transformational leadership and employee performance. The findings in Table 5 showed that transformational leadership was strongly and positively associated with motivation ($b = .642$, $SE = .058$, $t = 11.07$, $p = .001$), which means that an increase in transformational leadership leads to an increase in employee motivation. Besides, employee performance was highly anticipated by motivation ($b = .512$, $SE = .072$, $t = 7.11$, $p < .001$), implying that employees who are motivated are more likely to perform better. The direct influence of transformational leadership on employee performance also was significant (b

= .381, SE = .069, $t = 5.52$, $p < .001$), and the indirect influence through motivation amounted to $b = .329$ ($p < .001$). The implication of these results is that transformational leadership mediates employee performance by having both a direct and indirect effect on performance through motivation.

Table7: Moderation Analysis

Path	β	SE	t	p	Result
Motivation → Employee Performance	.512	.072	7.11	.000	Significant
Career Development → Employee Performance	.267	.065	4.10	.000	Significant
Motivation × Career Development → Employee Performance (Interaction Effect)	.198	.056	3.54	.001	Significant Moderation

The moderation analysis was conducted to identify that there is a moderate relationship between motivation and employee performance, which is moderated by career development opportunities. Table 6 results have established that motivation ($b = .512$, $p < .001$) and career development ($b = .267$, $p < .001$) significantly forecast employee performance. Furthermore, the interaction term (Motivation x Career Development) also has a significant influence ($b = .198$, $p = .001$), which proves the moderating influence. This implies that motivation has a positive relation to employee performance, especially when there is a higher perception of career development among the employees. Hence, H3 is accepted, which implies that career development positively influences the motivational impact on employee performance.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate how transformational leadership affects employee performance, considering the mediating influence of motivation as well as the moderating influence of career development opportunity among employees within the education institutions of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The findings were found to have significant empirical evidence to support all three hypothesized hypotheses, giving both theoretical and practical understanding of leadership and employee behavior in public organizations. The results of H1 showed that transformational leadership positively and significantly influences the performance of the employees. This finding follows the previous studies that transformational leaders motivate and empower their subordinates, which increases their level of commitment and performance (Alrowwad et al., 2020; Noor et al., 2022). Such leaders with vision, intellectual stimulation, and considerations of people can motivate employees to go beyond what they are assigned to do in their daily job duties, which in the end will lead to improvement in the amount of output and success of the organization. The outcomes of H2 indicated that motivation partly mediates the connection amid transformational leadership and employee performance. This observation indicates that transformational leaders have both direct and indirect impacts on performance through increasing the intrinsic motivation of employees. When employees are motivated, they are likely to be more and more initiative-driven, persistent, and enthusiastic in the achievement of the organizational objectives. This finding, in its turn, aligns with those of Gagne et al. (2021) and Kura (2020), who have also concluded that motivation is one of the most important psychological processes that can connect leadership behaviors to performance outcomes. The biased mediation that was witnessed as a part of this research also shows that there might be additional factors in the performance enhancement that transformational leaders generate, other than motivation. In addition, the results of H3 supported the fact that career development opportunities have a significant moderate effect in relation to the correlation between motivation and employee performance. Particularly, the favorable impact of motivation on performance is more noticeable in cases when employees feel that their organization grants them a chance to improve professionally. This implies that when employees have a bright future, chances of progressing, then they will more likely translate their motivation into work behaviors. The outcome confirms the earlier studies by Naim and Lenka (2018) and Otoe (2022), who highlighted the fact that the availability of career development opportunities increases employee engagement and retention, thereby improving performance.

In general, the research contributes to the current body of knowledge regarding transformational leadership by incorporating the motivational and contextual components into the performance model. It underlines that leadership performance is not merely a question of direct influence but also a question of fostering motivation of employees and giving them developmental assistance. In practice, the results imply that leadership development initiatives should be based upon leadership programs that promote transformational behaviors, encourage employee motivation and develop expert career paths. These initiatives are able to foster the culture of high performance especially in the sectors of government and learning institutions where the prospects of development among employees are usually minimal.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current paper has discussed how transformational leadership affects employee performance, with the mediating role played by motivation and the moderating role played by career development opportunities. The results affirmed that transformational leadership is a significant contributor to the increased employee performance, both directly and indirectly, via motivation. Moreover, the motivation of employees will result in even greater performance outcomes when this motivation is accompanied by the belief of good career development opportunities. These findings emphasize the idea that to be a successful leader, one must not only be able to inspire the followers, but he/she must enhance their psychological and professional development. The results support the argument that transformational leaders provide an empowering workplace that facilitates motivation, trust, and commitment which result in enhanced personal and organizational performance.

Practical Recommendations

Organizations, especially within the education sector, should aim at instituting leadership trainings programs which promote transformational leadership styles such as sharing a vision, personal attention and intellectual stimulation. Furthermore, the managers are advised to employ motivation improvement initiatives by appreciating and rewarding the employees and their contributions, giving constructive feedback, and promoting participatory decision making to maintain the intrinsic motivation. The institutions must also put down the policies of career development well, including professional development workshops, mentoring schemes, and open career promotion schemes, which should enhance the feeling of purpose and growth among the employees. Lastly, a culture of sustainability in performance can be achieved by adopting holistic HR practices in which the transformational leadership, motivation, and career development are integrated into human resource policy in order to facilitate better performance among employees and enhance retention.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future studies could expand this model by including additional mediators such as employee engagement or organizational commitment, and by testing the model across diverse sectors and cultural contexts. Longitudinal research could also provide deeper insights into how transformational leadership and motivation evolve to influence performance.

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