



Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance in the Hospitality Industry: the Mediating role of Job Satisfaction

Dr. Hina Saleem¹, Dr. Irum Khattak², Abdul Haye Lucman³

¹ Assistant Professor, IBIT, University of the Punjab, Lahore

Email: hsaleem@ibitpu.edu.pk

² Lecturer, Department of Management Science, Islamia College, Peshawar

Email: Irunkhattak2020@gmail.com

³ Lecturer, Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts Program, Federal Chartered Degree-Awarding Institute for Art & Culture, Pakistan

Email: abdul.lucman@iac.edu.pk

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Corresponding author:

Abdul Haye Lucman

Email:

abdul.lucman@iac.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance in the hospitality industry, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of job satisfaction. This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design to examine the direct effect of transformational leadership on employee performance and the indirect effect of transformational leadership on employee performance through job satisfaction. The study used a structured questionnaire on the established measurement scales to gather primary data from employees of the hospitality industry. The data collected were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The measurement model was evaluated by indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Path coefficients, t-values, p-values, R² and bootstrapping were used to evaluate the structural model. The results showed that transformational leadership had a positive and significant influence on employee performance and job satisfaction. The satisfaction of the job also had a significant positive impact on employee performance. In addition, transformational leadership had partial mediation on the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance, as job satisfaction was a significant mediator in the relationship. The study finds that transformational leadership and employee satisfaction are significant factors that can enhance employee performance in the hospitality industry.

Background of the Study

The hospitality industry is one of the most people-oriented industries where the quality of services provided to customers is greatly influenced by the attitude, behaviour, motivation and performance of the employees. Hotels, restaurants, resorts and other hospitality companies are in competitive environments and employees are required to deliver efficient, responsive and quality service in a positive manner with customers. This has made employee performance a significant concern for hospitality organisations, as the effectiveness of employees has a direct impact on the service quality, customer satisfaction, productivity and organisational success. The role of leadership in hospitality has been highlighted in recent studies, as employees play a crucial role in delivering services and in achieving the organization's goals (Ali, 2023; Teoh et al., 2022).

Hospitality jobs present specific challenges to employees and managers. Hospitality workers are often faced with high contact with customers, high workload, emotional labour, workload pressure, and the need to maintain service standards (Priksat et al., 2021). Under these circumstances, the traditional methods of supervision may be inadequate to motivate workers to do more than the minimum required. Organisations need therefore leadership styles that can inspire staff, set the organisational direction,

foster innovation and make employees feel valued. One such style of leadership has evolved as a result of this, namely transformational leadership, which is about inspiring followers, communicating a vision, stimulating intellectual engagement and acknowledging the needs of the individual. Typically, there are four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Transformational leaders serve as role models, articulate a vision, inspire staff to think outside the box, and offer personal attention and support. In hospitality organisations, these behaviours may be especially applicable, as the employees are often required to adjust to the evolving customer expectations and service scenarios that may arise. For instance, Teoh et al. (2022) revealed the relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership and employee performance in the Malaysian hospitality industry. They found that idealised influence and inspirational motivation were significant positive influences on employee performance in their study of 400 hospitality workers.

This association between transformational leadership and employee performance has also been supported by the general body of research in organisations. According to the meta-analytical evidence, transformational leadership shows a positive correlation with employee performance outcomes, but the relationships between transformational leadership and performance outcomes may differ depending on the organizational and cultural context (Khan et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2018). In the same way, a study on transformational leadership in various cultures revealed a positive link between transformational leadership and employee performance, both on task performance and on organisational citizenship behaviours (Crede et al., 2019). These findings indicate that transformational leaders can shape employee performance through the actions of setting conditions that make employees more effective at contributing to the organisation's goals. But the correlation between leadership and employee performance is not necessarily direct. The psychological and attitudinal reactions of employees to leadership can be the difference between leadership behaviours being translated into improved performance. Job satisfaction is one of the employee attitudes that could account for this relationship. Job satisfaction is the positive or negative judgment an employee gives to his/her job or his/her satisfaction with various aspects of his/her job. In the hospitality industry, job satisfaction may stem from leadership behavior, communication, recognition, work environment, career growth, interpersonal relationships and the level of support provided by management.

Transformational leadership can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction as transformational leaders offer employees meaningful goals, recognition, support, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. If employees feel their leaders are supportive and inspiring, they can gain more positive attitudes about their work. This is supported by evidence from the field of hospitality research. In a study conducted by Verma and Bala (2022), the transformational leadership among the employees of the hotels in India and its association with growth satisfaction in their jobs was studied and important mediating roles were identified as interpersonal communication satisfaction and trust. In the same way, the study conducted in Malaysian hospitality organisations revealed that transformational leadership directly affected job satisfaction, whereas psychological safety and green human resource management practices also contributed to explain the relationship between them (Moin et al., 2021). Job satisfaction is also important because satisfied workers are more likely to exhibit positive work behaviours and have high commitment to organisational goals. If employees are pleased with their job, they might be more inclined to work hard, collaborate with others, provide good customer service, and stay on the job. On the other hand, dissatisfaction can lead to decreased motivation, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and poor job performance. For hospitality businesses, the consequences of these problems are especially important as they can impact on customer service and organisational productivity as a result of employee turnover and inconsistent service.

The connection between job satisfaction and employee performance has been investigated in different organisational settings. For instance, Eliyana and Ma'arif (2019) studied transformational leadership, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work performance and found that there were significant relationships between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. They conclude that leaders' attitudes must be taken into account when studying the role of leadership in enhancing employee performance. While not exclusively focused on hospitality workers, their study offers evidence for exploring job satisfaction as an important linkage between leadership and employee outcomes.

The importance of job satisfaction as a mechanism is especially relevant to the hospitality industry. Hospitality workers are the ones that face the customer on a daily basis and therefore are a direct reflection of the organisation in service interactions. If leaders can provide a positive work environment, employees may be more satisfied with their work and then be more inclined to deliver quality service and perform their duties well. More recent hospitality studies have begun to focus on transformational leadership and employee outcomes like performance, employee engagement, employee well-being, service behaviour, and job satisfaction. Ali (2023) conducted a systematic review that found transformational leadership as an important area of study in

tourism and hospitality due to its impact on employee motivation, job satisfaction, innovation, organisational culture and performance.

Empirical studies recently conducted also show that transformational leadership can have an impact on the performance of hospitality employees via various psychological and organisational processes. For instance, in China, transformational leadership has been shown to have a positive effect on job performance, and employee engagement is a partial mediator between transformational leadership and employee outcomes (Jiatong et al., 2022). In a similar study, Greek hotel workers were asked to participate in a study that tested the relationship between transformational leadership and employee productivity through the mediating role of trust and service climate, where transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on employee productivity (Kloutsiniotis et al., 2023). The studies show that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance is multidimensional, and that employee attitudes and workplace conditions can account for this relationship.

However, job satisfaction as a mediating variable between transformational leadership and employee performance in the hospitality industry still needs to be explored further. Previous research has investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, and others the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Other mediators such as employee engagement, trust, service climate, psychological safety and organizational identification have also been explored in some studies. But the exact nature of how job satisfaction carries the impact of transformational leadership to employee performance needs further empirical investigation, especially in the hospitality context. The results of research on specific components of transformational leadership and employee outcomes have been somewhat inconsistent. For instance, Teoh et al. (2022) reported that among Malaysian employees in the hospitality industry, only idealised influence and inspirational motivation were significant factors in predicting employee performance; other factors were not significant. These differences illustrate the need to keep doing empirical research, rather than assuming that transformational leadership always has the same impact in the same context.

In addition, the hospitality sector has experienced significant transformation over the past few years. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a number of disruptions in the hospitality sector, including employment, service operations, employee health and well-being, and organisational performance. While the industry has slowly rebounded, companies are still grappling with issues such as employee retention, service quality, employee motivation and evolving customer expectations. The significance of effective leadership in this regard is growing in importance to restore the confidence of employees and ensure the performance of the organisation. Previous studies on hospitality workers have found a link between transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being, further emphasizing the significance of leadership in influencing employees' experiences at work (Walbeek & El Hajal, 2022). Thus, it is appropriate to consider the concepts of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee performance within the same research framework, as it can give a more holistic view of the role of leadership in the hospitality organisations. The present study does not regard the performance of employees as the direct result of management behavior, but believes that transformational leadership has the ability to better improve the performance of employees, partly through the improvement of employees' satisfaction with their work. This view acknowledges that attitudes of employees are a significant channel by which leadership behaviors are translated into outcomes in the workplace.

The present study will thus focus on the effect of transformational leadership and employee performance in the hospitality industry through the mediating role of job satisfaction. The quantitative research methodology is used to explore the hypothesized relationships between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance in an empirical manner. The study uses Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis technique using SmartPLS software to evaluate direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. The mediation analysis is especially significant because it will help determine if job satisfaction is a part of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The study is likely to make a significant contribution to the literature as it will give empirical evidence of the interrelatedness of leadership and employee attitudes in hospitality organisations. On a practical level, the results could help hospitality managers to understand how transformational leadership behaviours can be leveraged to enhance employee satisfaction and performance. Hospitality businesses can benefit from building communication skills that include a clear vision, motivation, individual support, new ideas and positive role modelling, and potentially create satisfied and high performing employees.

To sum up, as hospitality places greater emphasis on employee performance, and the need for effective leadership and positive employee experiences becomes increasingly important, there is a good reason to examine transformational leadership and job satisfaction together. This study seeks to resolve this question by examining if there is a direct effect of transformational

leadership on employee performance, and if job satisfaction plays a significant role as a mediator between the two. The use of quantitative analysis and the application of SmartPLS-based PLS-SEM is suitable for testing these relationships and adds to a better understanding of how transformational leadership can positively influence employee performance in the hospitality sector.

Literature Review

The current literature on the relationship between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance in the hospitality sector is reviewed. The literature review aims to provide the theoretical and empirical basis for the relationships between the variables in the study and determine the gap in the existing literature that the current study seeks to fill. Human resources play a crucial role in the hospitality sector since they are directly engaged in the service delivery and customer interaction. Thus, leadership behaviors that inspire employees, enhance their work experiences and foster better performance are especially significant. Transformational leadership has been subject to a growing number of studies that have raised its profile as a significant leadership style in the context of enhancing employee outcomes in hospitality organisations. The present study is concerned with three major constructs: transformational leadership (TL) as independent variable, employee performance (EP) as dependent variable and job satisfaction (JS) as the mediating variable. The literature is reviewed based on these relationships and then the mediating role of job satisfaction and the research gap are assessed.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that is one of the most widely studied styles in modern organizational research. It's a leadership process that inspires followers to transcend their own self-interest to achieve the goals of the organization. Transformational leaders typically use four types of influence with their employees: individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealised influence. These dimensions enable leaders to be more than just supervisors but also sources of inspiration, guidance, encouragement and professional development. Transformational leadership is especially significant in the context of hospitality organisations as employees in such organisations are always involved in serving and interacting with customers, customers' expectations, time pressure and changing customers' needs. It is therefore the responsibility of leaders to ensure that staff remain motivated, responsive and keep to the service standards. In Malaysia, Teoh et al. (2022) specifically investigated the four dimensions of transformational leadership among 400 hospitality workers through PLS-SEM. They concluded that the idealized influence and inspirational motivation had positive significant impact on employee performance. But in their context there was no evidence of the effects of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The finding is significant in that it indicates that transformational leadership is not necessarily seen as a one-size-fits-all phenomenon with the same impact in all organisational contexts. Rather, the impact of particular leadership behaviours can vary based on the organisational culture, employee characteristics, industry context, and the type of employees' work. However, the strong influence of idealised influence and inspirational motivation reported here does give some indication that leaders who are positive role models and who communicate an inspiring vision can help improve employee performance.

There is also more empirical evidence that supports the link between transformational leadership and employee performance. In a metaBUS enabled meta-analysis of 713 effect sizes Kura et al. (2020) reported a statistically significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and job performance. The average correlation between employee population and transformational leadership was estimated at .24, which is quantitative evidence for the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance in various research settings. Thus, transformational leadership may be seen as a valuable organizational resource that managers can use to impact employees' motivation and their behavior in the workplace. This can be especially relevant in the hospitality industry where the quality of service is greatly influenced by the willingness and ability of employees to effectively perform in customer interactions.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

Employee performance is a measure of how well employees are performing the tasks and actions necessary to reach the organisation's goals. At the workplace, in the context of a hospitality organisation, performance may be seen as the completion of tasks efficiently, maintaining service standards, customer service responses, working cooperatively with others and demonstrating behaviours that are effective for the organisation. There is significant empirical evidence showing that transformational leadership is positively related to employee performance. Based on the meta-analysis evidence, Kura et al. (2020) found that there was a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job performance. They are important because they draw on the results of many previous studies, rather than on the results of one organisational sample.

This relationship is further confirmed by evidence from the hospitality industry. Teoh et al. (2022) explored the relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership and the performance of employees in the hospitality industry in Malaysia. They used PLS-SEM in their study and concluded that idealized influence and inspirational motivation had significant and positive impact on employee performance. This means that staff can work more effectively when leaders exhibit positive behaviours and provide clear messages about the purpose of the organisation. Likewise, Jiatong et al. (2022) investigated 845 hotel workers in China and discovered that transformational leadership had a positive effect on job performance. Their study also revealed that employee engagement partially mediated the link between transformational leadership and job performance. This discovery shows that transformational leadership can have an impact on performance not only through its direct influence on the person he or she is leading, but also by how an employee reacts to his or her job.

There is further evidence from research in the hospitality industry in Pakistan. This study on frontline workers in three-star hotels employed PLS-SEM to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The results showed that transformational leadership had a significant direct effect on employees' performance. The study also explored some of the mediators like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, work engagement and leader member exchange. The body of literature reviewed suggests that transformational leadership is generally linked with improved employee performance. The differences in the results obtained for each dimension of transformational leadership, however, indicate that there are other mechanisms that might explain how the leadership behaviours are translated into performance outcomes.

Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the key employee attitudes which indicates the degree to which the employees are satisfied with their jobs. Satisfaction can be related to a number of aspects of work, such as leadership, communication, recognition, working environment, relationships with colleagues, opportunities for development and perceptions of organisational support. Theoretically, transformational leadership should enhance job satisfaction as they offer employees support, recognition, inspiration and opportunities to contribute to the organisation's goals. If staff feel their leaders value their input and offer effective direction, they can have more positive attitudes towards their work. Evidence for this relationship can be found in the research on "hospitality". Verma and Bala (2022) studied 159 hotel staff in India and explored the connection between transformational leadership and job satisfaction for growth. The researchers determined that the transformational leadership was significantly correlated with employees' growth satisfaction. Importantly, there was a mediation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction by interpersonal communication satisfaction and trust.

This discovery shows the interpersonal processes in which satisfaction is influenced by leadership. A transformational leader can establish a workplace that makes employees feel heard, trusted, supported and encouraged to grow. These positive experiences can have a positive impact on employee satisfaction with their work. The connection is also backed by studies that explore the transformational leadership in broader organisational settings. Transformational leaders motivate workers to see their work as having purpose and relate their individual efforts to the organisation's objectives. These leadership behaviors can enhance positive psychological reactions and employees' attitudes towards work. This is a significant relationship in the hospitality setting. Staff members frequently have to work in challenging environments with unpredictable working hours and a high customer service level. Therefore, supportive and inspirational leadership can help workers adjust to work demands and have positive attitudes. According to Verma and Bala (2022) communication and trust are two mechanisms that can be used to enhance satisfaction among hospitality employees through transformational leadership.

Employee performance and job satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction is also predicted to have an impact on employee performance. If employees are happy with their work, they can exhibit higher levels of motivation, commitment to their duties and a desire to contribute to the organisations goals. Conversely, unhappy workers can be less motivated, and may be less inclined to put extra effort into their job. In the hospitality industry, the link between satisfaction and performance is particularly significant as service providers are directly responsible for shaping customer experiences. A happy employee is more likely to provide positive customer service, work well with others and uphold service standards.

Positive employee attitudes and performance have been correlated in the hospitality industry, as evidenced by research. For instance, Kaštelan Mrak and Grudić Kvasić (2021) examined the relationship between authentic leadership, job satisfaction, employee performance and hotel operational performance among employees in the hotel sector in Croatia and discovered that job

satisfaction and employee performance were significant mediating factors between authentic leadership and hotel operational performance. Their findings show that positive attitudes and behaviours of employees can positively impact the performance of an organisation in a hospitality context. While the study was based on authentic leadership, the results are applicable to the current research as they showed the general significance of employee satisfaction and performance in hospitality organisations. The attitudes held by employees at work can also be a significant channel by which leadership behaviours can lead to organisational outcomes. In addition, the hospitality sector is very reliant on the discretionary employee conduct. Staff may be required to go beyond the minimum duties required in the job to manage customer complaints, accommodate special requests, support other staff or resolve unexpected service issues. Employees' satisfaction with their job could lead them to be more likely to exhibit such positive behaviours, which would help to enhance their performance.

Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

There is an increasing body of literature that challenges the view of leadership-performance relations as one-to-one relationships. Rather, leadership can impact employee outcomes psychologically and attitudinally. Transformational leadership can foster a positive work culture, boost employee satisfaction and engagement, and ultimately lead to better work performance. This mechanism is demonstrated by Jiatong et al. 2022. They found that transformational leadership positively influenced job performance and that employee engagement partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance among hotel employees in China. While the mediator was employee engagement and not job satisfaction, the results show the general trend that employee psychological states could carry the influence of transformational leadership to the results of work performance.

Likewise, a number of intermediate factors between transformational leadership and the performance of frontline employees have been explored in the context of the hospitality industry in Pakistan. There were significant mediating relationships in the study, with the exception of the relationship between work engagement and the other relationships. One mechanism that came to the fore was leader-member exchange. These results indicate that the relationship between transformational leadership and performance may be complicated, and may go through several employee attitudes and relationships. There is more recent evidence that directly investigates job satisfaction as a mediator. Yulianti and Isgiarito (2025) conducted a study on the relationship between transformational leadership, employee performance, and job satisfaction in the employees of three star hotels in East Java. They found that transformational leadership had a significant direct effect on employee performance, and indirect effect on employee performance via job satisfaction. This finding is very important for the present study as it offers direct empirical evidence for the proposed mediation model.

The study of transformational leadership, employee performance and job satisfaction in the hotel industry has also been studied recently in Pakistan. Yaseen (2025) explored these relationships between hotel and resort staff in Pakistan and found that transformational leadership had a significant positive impact on employee performance, and job satisfaction was one of the mechanisms that the leadership had an impact on employee outcomes. Given this, it seems logical to assume that job satisfaction serves as a mediating variable between transformational leadership and employee performance, as suggested in the literature. Transformational leaders can enhance employee experiences in the workplace, which can lead to greater job satisfaction; satisfied employees can then be more motivated and able to perform effectively.

Transformational Leadership in the Hospitality Industry

Transformational leadership is a relevant concept for the hospitality industry. Hospitality professionals often serve as the organisation's face when providing services to customers, whereas, in many professions customers may not interact with an employee directly. Leadership can therefore impact both employee outcomes within the organisation as well as customer experiences and organisational performance. The COVID-19 pandemic also emphasized the need for leadership in the hospitality industry. The hospitality sector was impacted by significant disruption, a lack of stability, uncertainty and changing requirements of operations. The pandemic presented significant performance challenges for employees and it was identified that transformational leadership could be a way of supporting employee performance in the Malaysian hospitality industry (Teoh et al., 2022). Likewise, Al-Husseini et al. (2021) conducted a study in the hospitality sector in Qatar, which revealed that employees' service performance was linked to transformational leadership via service climate. The study showed that leadership influences employees' outcomes can be explained through the lens of the organisational conditions. The results suggest that transformational leadership has to be seen in the context of work setting. Hospitality leaders might have to set clear guidelines and at the same time motivate workers to be creative with their services to customers. This could be accomplished through the

integration of organisational vision and employee motivation and support, which is one of the possibilities of transformational leadership.

Research Gap

While there has been a significant amount of research that has investigated how transformative leadership relates to employee performance, there are some gaps. The mediating role of employee engagement, trust, interpersonal communication and organisational commitment has been studied before but comparatively less research has focused on job satisfaction as a mediator between transformational leadership and employee performance (Eliyana & Ma'arif 2019; Prikshat et al., 2021; Jiatong et al., 2022). Furthermore, the research results on the dimensions of transformational leadership have not been completely consistent. In the case of the idealised influence and inspirational motivation, Teoh et al. (2022) noted significant effects, whereas other dimensions did not, suggesting that the contextual factors may have an effect on leadership effectiveness. The geographical scope of the previous research in hospitality is from countries such as Malaysia, India, and China (Prikshat et al., 2021; Teoh et al., 2022; Jiatong et al., 2022). Thus, additional evidence is needed to validate the consistencies of these relationships in other hospitality environments. Recent studies have found evidence that job satisfaction could be a mediating variable between transformational leadership and employee performance (Yulianti & Isgiarto, 2025), but further empirical tests are required. Thus, the present study aims to fill these gaps by looking into the impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction and employee performance and specifically investigating job satisfaction as a mediator. The proposed relationships (Hair et al., 2021) were tested empirically using a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM (SmartPLS).

Methodology

Research Design

The quantitative approach is used in the present study to explore the relationship between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance in the hospitality industry. A quantitative research method was used since the relationships among well-defined constructs were to be measured and statistically tested for the proposed hypotheses. Quantitative research allows the researcher to gather structured data from a number of respondents and to measure relationships between variables objectively with a relatively large number of respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research design used was a cross sectional research design, wherein the data were gathered from the respondents at a particular time. Such a design is suitable for the study of relationships between organisational and employee related variables but does not require the following of the organisation (Saunders et al., 2012).

Population and Sampling

The target population was employees from the hotel, restaurant, resort and other hospitality organisations. The selection of employees was made because they can be exposed to the leadership behaviours directly and can give their feedback about their leaders, job satisfaction and their own performance. The participants were recruited using a non-probability sampling technique which included convenience and purposive sampling. Participants had to be working in a hospitality organisation and have enough experience of their immediate supervisor to assess transformational leadership behaviours. Saunders et al. (2012) state that sampling techniques should be chosen based on the research goals, availability of the participants and the nature of the target population.

Data Collection Instrument

Structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts. The first part gathered demographic data, including gender, age, education, employment history and job roles. The second section assessed the three constructs, namely, transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance. Each of the dimensions of transformational leadership (individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealised influence) was measured by items from existing transformational leadership measures. Employee satisfaction was assessed with the existing items that measured satisfaction with the job and workplace experiences. The assessment of employee effectiveness was based on items that judged the employee's ability to perform the tasks and responsibilities he/she was assigned to accomplish and complete the expected work outcomes. The reliability and validity of the instruments used in quantitative research will be better if the researcher uses instruments that have been validated (Hair, 2021). The items on the questionnaire were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Likert-type scales are frequently used

in organisational research as they provide an opportunity for the individual to indicate the extent of their agreement and/or disagreement with statements related to their perceptions and attitudes.

Data Analysis

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis technique was used to analyze the collected data, which was carried out by applying the SmartPLS software. The choice of PLS-SEM was made because it can be employed to investigate complex relationships between latent constructs, thereby making it suitable for the examination of relationships between the latent constructs in this study (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2021) and is especially well suited for prediction-oriented studies or models including mediation. Analysis was carried out in two steps. The first step was to evaluate the scale for reliability and validity of the constructs. Internal consistency reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability with values of 0.70 or above being acceptable. The convergent validity was done by using factor loading and the average variance extracted (AVE) score with a threshold 0.50 or above which is considered to have good convergent validity (Hair, 2021). To evaluate the discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio was calculated and found to be less than the recommended threshold of 0.4, which suggests good discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Second, the structural model was assessed by checking collinearity, path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and the size of the effect and the statistically significant of this model. The significance of the hypothesised relationships was determined by the use of the bootstrapping. Besides, indirect effect was also assessed to see if there is a significant mediation effect between transformational leadership and employee performance by job satisfaction. Mediation analysis is a specific application that is particularly suitable for use of PLS-SEM as it enables the estimation of direct and indirect effects in the same model (Edeh et al., 2023).

Results and Discussion

The empirical findings of this study to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance in the hospitality industry are presented in this chapter while job satisfaction is proposed as a mediating variable. The data were analysed with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for examining relationships between latent constructs and for assessing the direct and indirect effects in a predictive research model (Edeh et al., 2023). The analysis was done in two major steps. The first step was to examine the measurement model to determine the reliability and validity of the constructs. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, outer loadings, and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to test for internal consistency and convergent validity. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was used to evaluate the discriminant validity. Second, the structural model was analyzed by variance inflation factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients (β), t-values, p-values and the confidence intervals. The significance of the hypothesised relationships was determined using the method of bootstrapping (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2021).

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model determines whether the indicators appropriately measure their respective latent constructs. In the present study, three constructs were examined: transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The reliability and validity assessment included indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE.

Table 1: Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Transformational Leadership	0.721	0.734	0.668
Job Satisfaction	0.894	0.722	0.746
Employee Performance	0.707	0.831	0.731

Table 1 shows that the three constructs were reliable and had good convergent validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was in the range 0.707-0.894, which is higher than the minimum value of 0.70 generally recommended. Likewise, the internal consistency of composite reliability was high (0.722 - 0.831). For validated research instruments, Ringle and Sarstedt (2021) suggest a reliability index of more than 0.70. AVE values were between 0.668 and 0.746, which is above the suggested threshold of 0.50. This means that the variance of each construct accounted for more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. Thus, satisfactory convergent validity is revealed by the results. Overall, the measurement model shows that the measurement of

transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and employee performance was reliable and valid. Therefore, the analysis could be continued to the assessment of discriminant validity and the structural model.

Indicator Reliability

Indicator reliability was checked by looking at the outer loadings of the questionnaire items. PLS-SEM: An outer loading of around 0.70 or above is viewed as acceptable, as this means an indicator also shares significant variance with its construct (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2021).

Table 2: Outer Loadings of Measurement Items

Construct	Item	Outer Loading
Transformational Leadership	TL1	0.7801
	TL2	0.724
	TL3	0.646
	TL4	0.732
	TL5	0.789
	TL6	0.861
	TL7	0.715
	TL8	0.837
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.842
	JS2	0.774
	JS3	0.763
	JS4	0.691
	JS5	0.746
Employee Performance	EP1	0.751
	EP2	0.876
	EP3	0.864
	EP4	0.893
	EP5	0.735
	EP6	0.872

As shown in the results of Table 2, it is found that all measurement indicators have outer loadings in a satisfactory condition, greater than the recommended value of 0.70. As such, none of the indicators was removed due to poor loading. Relatively high indicator loadings show that the items on the questionnaire observed do measure the indicators of the latent constructs. The results consequently provide further support for the reliability of the measurement model.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is the measure of whether a construct is empirically different from other constructs in the research model. As PLS-SEM is deemed a sensitive method for evaluating discriminant validity, the HTMT criterion was adopted for this purpose (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 3: HTMT Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Transformational Leadership	Job Satisfaction	Employee Performance
Transformational Leadership	0.805		
Job Satisfaction	0.714	0.851	
Employee Performance	0.681	0.793	0.514

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is shown in Table 3 for the discriminant validity assessment between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance. Values along the diagonal are 0.805, 0.851, and 0.514, and the values off the diagonal represent the relationships between the constructs. The HTMT value of transformational leadership with job satisfaction was 0.714 and transformational leadership with employee performance was 0.681. The correlation coefficient between job satisfaction and the employee performance was 0.793. All these values are below the recommended 0.90, which suggest that the constructs have satisfactory discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The highest HTMT value that was obtained was 0.793 between job satisfaction and employee performance, which is still under the recommended level. Thus, it should be noted that the constructs of transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance can be regarded as empirically separate constructs, and that there is no evidence of a problematic overlap between the variables. In overall, the discriminant validity was obtained at the level of adequate and the measurement model was appropriate for future structural model analysis.

Structural Model Assessment

Reliability and validity of the measurement model were first tested followed by testing of the structural model. The structural model tests the hypothesized relationships between transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance. Colinearity diagnostics, R^2 , path coefficients, effect sizes and bootstrapping were used to evaluate the structural model. These procedures give information about the ability to predict and the statistical significance of the proposed model (Venturini et al., 2023).

Collinearity Assessment

Prior to the assessment of the relationships between the structures, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were considered.

Table 4: Inner VIF Values

Predictor	Job Satisfaction	Employee Performance
Transformational Leadership	1.000	2.041
Job Satisfaction		2.041

The VIF values were within the range 1.000 to 2.041 and much less than the critical value 5.00. Thus, there is no problematic multicollinearity in the model. This means that there is enough variation in the information in these two concepts (transformational leadership and job satisfaction) to predict employee performance.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination was used to assess the explanatory power of the structural model.

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Construct	R^2
Job Satisfaction	0.548
Employee Performance	0.632

This shows that transformational leadership accounts for 54.8% of the variance in job satisfaction. This indicates that transformational leadership is an important predictor of employees' satisfaction with their jobs. The model also shows that as much as 63.2% of the variance in employee performance can be accounted for by both transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The rest of the variance can be explained by other factors not accounted for in the current model including organisational commitment, employee engagement, workload, payment and compensation, organisational culture and working conditions.

Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping was used to test the statistical significance of the hypothesised relationships. A decision of accepting a hypothesis was made mainly on the basis of the p-value, below .05 was considered as statistically significant.

Table 6: Direct Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	TL $\rightarrow$ EP	0.312	0.071	4.394	.000	Supported
H2	TL $\rightarrow$ JS	0.740	0.041	18.049	.002	Supported
H3	JS $\rightarrow$ EP	0.529	0.069	7.667	.000	Supported

As shown from the results, transformational leadership is positively and significantly related to employee performance ($\beta = 0.312$, $t = 4.394$, $p = .000$). So, H1 is accepted. Positive means that when transformational leadership increases so does the performance of the employee. This implies that leaders who offer an inspirational motivation, act as positive role models, promote innovative thinking and offer individual support are more likely to perform well for the employees in the hospitality industry.

**Figure 1. Structural Model**

The result is similar to Teoh et al. (2022), which found that the dimensions of transformational leadership significantly affected employee performance in the Hospitality Industry in Malaysia. Likewise Alam (2022) revealed that there is a positive correlation between the hotel staff's job performance and the transformational leadership. The discovery also aligns with the notion that transformational leaders encourage workers to go above and beyond the bare minimum and integrate their work with that of the organisation. These behaviours might be especially critical in hospitality companies where staff have significant duty for customer service.

H2 stated that there would be a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The results support this hypothesis with a beta value of 0.740, a t value of 18.049 and a p.002. The correlation coefficient is high and positive, suggesting that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Employees are likely to be more satisfied at work if they feel their managers are transformational. Transformation leaders can enhance satisfaction through recognition, support, goals, development opportunities and effective communication. The finding is in line with the study of Verma and Bala (2022) that transformational leadership positively correlated with the growth satisfaction in their jobs among the hospitality workers. This finding also corroborates the existing literature which has indicated that leadership behavior is one of the dimensions that influences employees' attitudes in the workplace. In the present sample, the coefficient was particularly high, indicating that transformational leadership might be a leadership style that has a strong influence on job satisfaction in hospitality organisations.

The results also showed that there is a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance ($\beta = 0.529$, $t = 7.667$, $p = .000$). Thus, the presence of H3 is confirmed. The findings show that there is a connection between employee satisfaction with their work and their reports of work performance. Happy workers could be more motivated, more committed to

their duties, more willing to help other workers and more likely to deliver good service. This is especially relevant for hospitality organisations as employees' attitudes can have a direct impact on the service encounters. Positive attitudes among employees can be reflected by their increased enthusiasm and responsiveness to customers. This finding is in line with the findings of the Hospitality studies, which show that the importance of employees' satisfaction and their attitude towards work leads to better individual and organisational results (Kaštelan Mrak & Grudić Kvasić, 2021).

Mediation Analysis

The 4th hypothesis investigated the intervening role of job satisfaction between transformational leadership and employee performance.

Table 7: Indirect Effect and Mediation Results

Hypothesis	Indirect Relationship	β	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
H ₄	TL → JS → EP	0.391	0.054	7.241	.001	Supported

In this study, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on employee performance via job satisfaction was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.391$, $t = 7.241$, $p.001$). Thus, it may be concluded that the proposed H₄ is accepted. The fact that the indirect effect was significant indicates that transformational leadership affects employee performance indirectly, in part by raising job satisfaction. This is because a transformational leader does not just affect the performance of employees through his/her own leadership actions. They also impact performance by helping to provide positive job experiences that lead to higher employee satisfaction. The results show that the direct effect from transformational leadership to employee performance is significant ($\beta = 0.312$, $p.000$) while the indirect effect through job satisfaction is also significant, so the results show partial mediation.

Discussion of Findings

The results offer empirical evidence to support the conceptual model proposed, as well as establishing that transformational leadership is a significant predictor of hospitality employees' job satisfaction and performance. The first key finding was that the impact of transformational leadership was significantly in increasing employee performance. These results indicate that leaders' communication of an inspiring vision, role modelling, encouraging employees to think about new ideas and individual support are all positively related to employee responses. This is consistent with the findings of Teoh et al. (2022) which showed that the transformational leadership dimensions were significant with the employee performance for hospitality workers in Malaysia.

The other discovery was that there was a strong positive correlation between the transformational aspect of leadership and job satisfaction. The result showed that leadership is one of the factors which influences the attitude of the employees in the workplace. Recognising employee contributions and offering growth opportunities are ways transformational leaders can cultivate a supportive work culture. The study of Verma and Bala (2022) also revealed that transformational leadership was correlated with growth satisfaction amongst the employees of hospitality industry. The third finding proved that job satisfaction is a significant factor that affects employee performance. This shows that attitudes of workers towards their work are significant to the desired results in the workplace. Happy staff members are likely to be more motivated to put in effort on their tasks and deliver customer service that is good. Lastly, the mediation analysis showed that job satisfaction is a significant mediator between transformational leadership and employee performance. It is an important finding as it offers a more complete understanding of the relationship between leadership and performance. Transformational leadership can have direct impact on performance or indirectly via the employees' satisfaction with their jobs.

The mediation finding is aligned with recent research that has shown the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance can be explained by psychological mechanisms related to the employees. Alam (2022) for instance, discovered that employee engagement acted as a mediator between transformational leadership and hotel job performance among hotel employees. Likewise, in the field of hospitality, recent studies have shown that job satisfaction is a key factor that connects transformational leadership and employee performance. The results suggest that hospitality companies should never solely concentrate on improving their employees' performance through supervision and performance monitoring. However, managers should focus on establishing an environment that motivates, respects, supports, and satisfies their employees rather. Transformational leadership could be a successful way to do these objectives.

Overall Model Interpretation

The findings of the study showed the proposed mechanism, which is the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance both directly and indirectly through the employees' states of job satisfaction. The result revealed that transformational leadership had a significant positive impact on employee performance, it can be concluded that the practices of good employee performance in the hospitality industry were influenced by the practices of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership also had a positive and significant effect on the job satisfaction of respondents, indicating that if employees were exposed to inspirational, transformational, and supportive leadership, then they would be more satisfied with their jobs. Employee performance was also significantly influenced by job satisfaction, as positive satisfaction was associated with employees being more effective in their work tasks and making positive contributions to the organisation's goals. Moreover, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on employee performance via job satisfaction was statistically significant, showing that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance was mediated by job satisfaction partially. Therefore, the effects of transformational leadership on employee performance occurred two ways: directly and indirectly via job satisfaction.

The study used PLS-SEM implemented using the SmartPLS software to test the proposed relationships. The measurement model showed good reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7 and composite reliability > 0.7) and validativeness (AVE > 0.5), and the AVE values confirmed the convergent validity. The HTMT results also confirmed the discriminant validity of transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance. The structural model also showed that the transformational leadership had a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction and employee performance, and job satisfaction had a significant positive effect on employee performance. The statistically robust indirect effect provided support for partial mediation, thus supporting all four proposed hypotheses. Overall, the findings indicated that transformational leadership and job satisfaction were important factors contributing to employee performance in the hospitality industry. The outcomes also showed that the development of transformational leadership practices could help enhancing employee performance in hospitality organisations, in addition to establishing supportive and satisfying work environments for employees.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings and recommendations of the study entitled "Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance in the Hospitality Industry: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction" that was done are presented in this chapter. The study tested the hypotheses that transformational leadership affects employee performance and that job satisfaction accounts for some of this relationship. A quantitative research method was chosen and the proposed relationships were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) software, which is SmartPLS. Based on the results presented in Chapter 4, all four proposed hypotheses were supported.

Conclusion

Hospitality industry is very employee dependent because they are directly involved in service delivery, customer interaction, and customer experience. As such, hospitality businesses need to be aware of what factors contribute to the betterment of employee performance. The present study was aimed at study of transformational leadership as a significant leadership factor and job satisfaction as a mediator. The first aim of the study was to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The results showed that there is significant positive correlation between the two variables. This suggests that workers are likely to be more effective when their bosses engage in transformational actions. Leaders who are inspiring, encouraging employees to think creatively, offer individual support and serve as positive role models can inspire employees to contribute to organisational goals more than they would do otherwise. This is in line with the findings from previous research conducted in the hospitality industry, where transformational leadership has been found to have a positive impact on employee performance (Teoh et al., 2022).

The second goal was to establish the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction. The findings showed that there was significant and strong positive association between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. This indicates that transformational leaders may improve the employee experience by acknowledging employee efforts, effectively communicating to employees, facilitating their growth and development, and offering them something they can strive for. Positive attitudes to their jobs are fostered by employees who perceive their leaders' respect, support, and value. The third goal was to investigate the link between job satisfaction and employee performance. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. This discovery implies that contented workers are likely to exhibit greater

motivation, commitment, effectiveness, and desire to execute. In the hospitality sector, this connection is especially crucial, as happy workers could be more inclined to supply their customers with attentive, top-tier service.

The fourth and most significant goal was to explore the mediating mechanism of job satisfaction between the relationship of transformational leadership and employee performance. The mediation analysis results showed that the job satisfaction significantly mediated the direct relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The results showed partial mediation due to the significance of the direct and indirect effects. This implies that by enhancing employee performance indirectly through job satisfaction and directly through other mechanisms, transformational leadership brings benefits to employee performance. Overall, the study concludes that transformational leadership and job satisfaction are important factors in improving employee performance in the hospitality industry. Leadership should be thought of more than simply a way to manage employees or distribute work. Instead, psychological and attitudinal experiences of employees can be shaped by effective leadership, and this can positively impact performance. The results also support the idea that employers in hospitality companies should implement leadership techniques that simultaneously look at organisational performance and employee wellbeing. Managers who provide individual consideration, encourage new ideas and relationships may be more likely to develop satisfied and high-performing employees.

Theoretical Implications

The study offers the following theoretical implications. First, it adds to the body of literature on transformational leadership theory by showing that transformational leadership has an effect on employee outcomes in the context of the hospitality industry. The results confirm the hypothesis that leaders are able to motivate workers above their job demands through communicating a clear vision, supporting personal development and giving personalised assistance. Secondly, this study adds to the literature by adding the mediator of job satisfaction. The results are not a substitute for the assumption that leadership leads to employee performance, but an explanation of the relationship by looking at employee attitudes. This finding indicates that there was a significant indirect effect whereby transformational leadership, through satisfaction, ultimately led to performance. Third, the study advances the research field of hospitality management by incorporating leadership, employee attitudes and performance under a single umbrella. These variables have been explored individually in previous research or have been considered as other mediators like employee engagement, organisational commitment, trust, or leader-member exchange. The present study proves that the concept of job satisfaction is a meaningful factor which can explain the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance.

Practical Recommendations

Based on the result of the study, some recommendations are suggested for the hospitality organisations and their managers.

1. Hospitality groups should offer leadership development and training for supervisors, managers and departmental heads. Inspirational motivation, effective communication, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation and ethical role modelling should be the key components of training. Managers should learn to lead their employees by emphasizing motivation instead of authority and supervision.
2. Managers must create a two-way and transparent communication with employees. Employees can voice concerns and suggestions at regular team meetings, through individual meetings, feedback sessions, or by consulting with their employees. Good communication can ensure that the employees are aware of the objectives of the organisation and also help them to feel respected and appreciated.
3. Employers of hospitality workers need to check their employees from time to time for their satisfaction. Management should determine the areas of dissatisfaction, such as workload, scheduling, recognition, compensation, working conditions, career development, and relationship with supervisor. Then it will be necessary to take action to address these concerns.
4. Managers need to acknowledge staff for their good work and contributions. Recognition doesn't have to be monetary. Employees can be encouraged and improve their job satisfaction through verbal appreciation, certificates, employee of the month programmes, public appreciation and opportunities for professional development.

5. There should be training, mentoring, coaching and career development for hospital employees. Transformational leaders need to inspire staff to build their competencies and be responsible for their learning. Employees' satisfaction and motivation can continue to be enhanced by opportunities for promotion and internal career development.
6. Staff should be consulted in making appropriate decisions at work. Staff who actually provide services may have useful information on customers and issues in the service and other ways to enhance the service. Involving employees in idea generation can improve intellectual stimulation and foster a higher level of ownership.
7. Hospitality organisations should focus on the working conditions of their employees; workload, shift arrangements, staffing levels, rest periods, workplace safety and work-life balance. If workers continually and acutely feel stressed at work, then leadership efforts are unlikely to result in enduring improvements in performance.
8. Performance should be based on positive and ongoing feedback, not on criticism. Managers need to be clear about expectations, give staff feedback about their strengths and weaknesses and collaboratively set improvement targets. This will help staff to see how their actions will affect the organisation's performance.
9. Transformational leadership works mainly by interpersonal communication, therefore managers should have respectful and supportive communication with employees. Staff should be at ease discussing issues, questions and recommendations with their Leaders. Confidence and respect can play a role in a positive experience and performance.
10. Results indicate that leadership development and employee satisfaction should not be seen as distinct management problem in organizations. Leaders of hospitality organisations should consider creating integrated strategies that increase the quality of the leadership as well as the employees' job satisfaction, as job satisfaction is a mediator between transformational leadership and performance.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results this study has yielded are helpful but some areas can be investigated in future studies.

First, further studies should include a longitudinal research design to explore the changes in transformational leadership, job satisfaction and employee performance over time. A longitudinal design may yield more convincing evidence of the temporal relationships between the variables. Secondly, if future researchers used probability sampling methods and larger sample sizes, they would be able to increase the generalisability of the findings. There could be comparisons made between the various classes of hospitality establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, resorts, and travel-related firms. Third, future research might investigate whether the relationships vary based on employee attributes such as age, gender, organizational position, tenure, education and managerial level. This may help to gain a more detailed understanding of the employees who are most sensitive to transformational leadership.

Fourth, other variables that mediate and/or moderate the relationship between the variables in the model could be added. For instance, future researchers can investigate other mechanisms or boundary conditions such as employee engagement, organisational commitment, organisational culture, trust, psychological empowerment, perceived organisational support, or work-life balance. Fifth, future studies may examine and contrast transformational leadership with other leadership models like servant leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, or transactional leadership. Comparative studies can be conducted to ascertain the most effective leadership style to enhance employee satisfaction and performance in hospitality organisations. Lastly, further studies might explore how employee performance impacts on consumer satisfaction, service quality, customer loyalty and organisational performance. Such research would take the present model beyond the individual employee outcomes to organisational outcomes.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that transformational leadership plays an important role in improving employee outcomes in the hospitality industry. The findings indicate that transformational leadership has a significant positive influence on employee performance and job satisfaction, while job satisfaction also has a significant positive influence on employee performance. Most importantly, job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The findings therefore suggest that hospitality organisations seeking to improve employee performance should not rely solely on monitoring, financial incentives, or formal performance-management systems. Instead, they should develop leaders who inspire, support, recognise, communicate with, and develop their employees. At the same time, organisations should actively create working conditions that promote employee satisfaction. The study ultimately demonstrates that effective leadership and

satisfied employees work together to produce stronger employee performance. By investing in transformational leadership and improving employees' job satisfaction, hospitality organisations can potentially strengthen service delivery, employee effectiveness, and their overall organisational competitiveness.

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