

The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation – A Methodological Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, with a specific focus on the mediating role of intrinsic motivation. A quantitative research design was employed to collect primary data from employees in the banking sector through online questionnaires. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI), and the Job Performance Scale (JPS) were used to measure transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance, respectively. A convenience sampling technique was adopted, with 180 participants selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis to test the hypothesized relationships. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and adherence to The University of the West Indies' (UWI) ethical protocols, were strictly observed. The methodological approach ensures reliable and valid data collection, providing a structured framework to examine the psychological mechanisms linking transformational leadership behaviors and employee outcomes. This research contributes to understanding how leadership practices foster motivation and performance in organizational settings.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Employee performance, Intrinsic motivation, Quantitative research, Survey methodology, Banking sector

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a critical factor influencing employee attitudes, motivation, and overall performance within organizations. In dynamic and competitive work environments, effective leadership practices are essential for maintaining productivity, fostering innovation, and achieving strategic organizational objectives. Among the various leadership styles explored in organizational research, transformational leadership has emerged as particularly influential because of its ability to inspire employees and cultivate long-term commitment to the organization. Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership style where leaders motivate followers to transcend their personal interests for the collective good while simultaneously promoting their professional growth and development (Bass, 1985). This leadership approach emphasizes building strong leader-follower relationships and encourages employees to achieve higher levels of engagement and performance.

The relationship between leadership and employee performance has been widely studied, with numerous scholars confirming that transformational leadership positively impacts performance by enhancing motivation, creativity, and organizational commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Yukl, 2010). However, leadership does not influence performance in isolation; it operates through psychological mechanisms such as motivation and employee attitudes. One of the key mediators in this process is intrinsic motivation, which refers to the internal drive to engage in activities due to inherent interest, enjoyment, or personal satisfaction rather than external rewards (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Employees

who are intrinsically motivated demonstrate higher levels of persistence, creativity, and engagement in their work tasks.

Drawing upon Social Cognitive Theory, leadership behaviors shape employee motivation and performance through observational learning and the development of self-efficacy beliefs. When leaders provide support, encouragement, and opportunities for skill development, employees develop confidence in their capabilities and are more likely to perform effectively. This study therefore investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance while examining intrinsic motivation as a mediating variable. Understanding this relationship provides valuable insights for organizations aiming to enhance performance by fostering supportive environments that encourage motivation and engagement.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Quantitative Approach

A quantitative research design was adopted for this study due to its suitability in examining relationships between measurable variables and testing hypotheses. Quantitative research relies on the collection of numerical data, enabling the identification of trends, correlations, and cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Bryman & Cramer, 2012). Unlike qualitative research, which explores participants' subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to their social environment (Tenny & Sharts-Hopko, 2022; Marques, Moraes, & Arantes, 2022), quantitative research emphasizes objectivity, replicability, and systematic measurement of variables. It allows for statistical generalization to larger populations, making it particularly relevant for studies involving multiple participants across organizations (Carr, 1994; Ahmad et al., 2019).

Qualitative methods, while valuable for exploring complex social phenomena, are limited in their ability to quantify relationships or test hypotheses. They often rely on subjective interpretations of experiences, which may omit contextual sensitivities and provide limited generalizability (Silverman, 2010; Sallee & Flood, 2012). In contrast, quantitative research allows for structured analysis of numerical data using established statistical procedures, minimizing subjectivity and supporting the testing of theoretical models (Rasinger, 2016). Therefore, the quantitative approach was selected for this study because it enables precise measurement of transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance, and provides a robust framework for testing the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the leadership-performance relationship.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered to employees in the banking sector. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section captured demographic information, including age, gender, educational attainment, and employment history, which facilitated the analysis of responses across different demographic groups (Efah, 2020; Stark & Bruhn, 2014). The second section measured transformational leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995), which evaluates dimensions such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This 36-item scale utilized a five-point Likert rating system ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), providing a reliable means of assessing leadership behaviors (Jackson, Meyer, & Wang, 2012; Ward, 2019).

The third section focused on employee performance, operationalized using the Job Performance Scale, which measures task performance, contextual performance, and job satisfaction. Participants rated items on a seven-point Likert scale, from very poor (1) to very good (7) (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006; Novita & Meilani, 2023). The fourth section assessed intrinsic motivation using the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), capturing dimensions such as interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, and effort/importance. By incorporating validated scales with satisfactory internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, the questionnaire ensured methodological rigor and reliability (Taljaard, 2020; Zulfqar, 2016).

The questionnaire was distributed electronically via email, providing participants with flexibility to complete the survey at their convenience. Participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous, would only be used for research purposes, and that they could withdraw at any time without consequences, in accordance with ethical protocols established by The University of the West Indies (Deakins, 2023; Rahman & Ferdausy, 2012; UWI Ethics Committee, 2023).

Sampling Technique

The study employed convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method that enables the selection of readily available participants. Convenience sampling was deemed appropriate given the geographical dispersion of potential participants and the practical need for timely data collection (Wienclaw, 2019). A total of 180 participants were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate, a sample size determined through a priori power analysis to ensure adequate statistical power of 95% at an alpha level of 0.05 (Brooks, 2023; Samanmalie & Anjalika, 2023). This sample included employees from multiple banking organizations, ensuring diversity in occupational roles and enhancing the generalizability of the findings within the sector.

The use of Likert scales within the questionnaire facilitated the systematic quantification of participants' responses to transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance. These scales allowed for the consistent measurement of psychological constructs and enabled robust statistical analysis, aligning with the study's quantitative research design (Memon & Jena, 2017; Desir, 2020).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through a structured online survey distributed via email to participants. Each email contained a brief description of the study, a link to the questionnaire, and clear instructions for completing the survey. The online format was chosen for its cost-effectiveness, convenience, and ability to reach participants across multiple locations (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Couper, 2008).

In line with ethical standards, participants were provided with detailed information regarding the study's purpose, expected time to complete the survey, voluntary participation, and confidentiality assurances. A consent form was embedded at the beginning of the questionnaire, allowing participants to indicate their willingness to participate. They were informed that declining to participate would not affect their employment or professional relationships. The responses were anonymized, aggregated, and strictly used for research purposes, in accordance with the ethical protocols of The University of the West Indies (UWI Ethics Committee, 2023).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using PSPP, a statistical software tool compatible with SPSS, to ensure accurate and replicable analysis (Ojiaku, Nkamnebe, & Chibuike, 2018; Kavoura, Sakas, & Tomaras, 2018). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize participant demographics and central tendencies in the data. Correlation analysis examined the relationships among transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance, while hierarchical regression analysis tested the hypothesized causal relationships and the mediating effect of intrinsic motivation (Khan et al., 2020; Ghadi, 2012). This analytical approach allowed for the examination of both direct and indirect effects, providing a comprehensive understanding of how transformational leadership influences employee performance through intrinsic motivation.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature and theoretical foundations, four hypotheses were proposed for testing in this study. The first hypothesis posits that transformational leadership positively influences employee performance. The second hypothesis proposes that intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. The third hypothesis predicts a positive relationship between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation. The fourth hypothesis suggests that intrinsic motivation positively impacts employee performance. These hypotheses guided the formulation of the survey instrument and the analytical strategy employed to explore the psychological mechanisms linking leadership and performance.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical rigor was maintained throughout the research process. The study received approval from The University of the West Indies' Campus Research Ethics Committee. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study, and written consent was obtained prior to survey participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly upheld, with responses being aggregated and analyzed without identifying information. Participants were also informed that the data would be used exclusively for research purposes, in line with ethical protocols. The study ensured that respondents could withdraw at any time without repercussions, thereby safeguarding their rights and well-being (Chattu et al., 2020; Deakins, 2023; Rahman & Ferdausy, 2012; UWI Ethics Committee, 2023).

Summary

This chapter detailed the methodological framework for examining the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, as well as the mediating role of intrinsic motivation. The study employed a quantitative approach with validated measurement instruments, convenience sampling, and a sample size of 180 participants from the banking sector. Data were collected via online questionnaires, ensuring accessibility and adherence to ethical standards. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression were employed to test the proposed hypotheses. The methodology outlined ensures reliable, valid, and ethical collection and analysis of data, providing a robust foundation for investigating the mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences employee performance.

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