

## Relationship between School Principals' Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Intrinsic Motivation and Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Organizational Culture

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### Abstract

*In this study, the chief objective was to investigate the relationship among school principals' transformational leadership, teachers' intrinsic motivation, job performance, and the mediating role of organizational culture. The research was descriptive and corrective. All teachers engaged at secondary schools of Mianwali district were considered the population, and a sample size of 100 teachers was selected randomly. Adapted research tools (a five-point Likert-Scale questionnaire) were used for data Collection after confirming their validity and reliability through experts' opinions and pilot testing ( $\alpha=0.84$ ). Data analysis was done in SPSS version 26. The research revealed a moderate level of agreement between transformational leadership as practiced by secondary school principals and as perceived by teachers. This research concludes that principals' transformational leadership, together with a supportive organizational culture, is vital for enhancing teachers' intrinsic motivation and job performance. It was further revealed that organizational culture strengthens the connection between transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and teachers' job performance. It is recommended that principals of higher secondary schools know and understand all four dimensions of transformational leadership. They can achieve this by attending training sessions and workshops on educational leadership to enhance their practices and improve teachers' intrinsic motivation and job performance.*

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Intrinsic Motivation, Job Performance, Organizational Culture.

### Introduction

In the educational landscape of the 21st century, where digital technologies are changing the environment of leading, directing, and influencing teachers towards better outcomes, the leaders' leadership styles play a vital role in achieving the aims and objectives of quality education documented in SDG Goal 4 (Alqatawenh, 2018). It is the prime feature of effective educational leadership to provide guidance, inspiration, influence, and motivation to teachers by recognizing their concerns and behaviors, developing their skills, and forming a conducive

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working environment to attain the shared goals of an educational institution (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023).

Generally, leadership is considered an Art of influencing people to reach their full potential in order to accomplish any task. In history, several leadership styles appeared, including transactional, transformational, authentic, passive-avoidant, resonant, servant, and laissez-faire. However, transformational leadership gained high popularity among the leaders of the 21st century in most educational organizations (Specchia et al., 2021; Bush, 2018).

The first developer of transformational leadership theory was Burns (1978). Later, Bass (1985) and Bass and Riggio (2006) expanded on it, describing four essential elements: individualized consideration, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. According to Navarez et al. (2025), leaders practicing these elements can inspire, influence, and motivate educators to achieve the shared goals of an educational organization. Muna (2022) states that leadership skills are vital for directing people towards the vision and mission of the institutions.

Organizational culture refers to shared norms, values, and behaviors in organizations that guide employees in how they communicate, interact, make decisions, and approach their jobs. It is also considered the beliefs and expectations shared by the people of the organization (Kava et al., 2018). According to Akpa et al. (2021), organizational culture is considered a potential element that influences an organization's structure and employee performance. It has several components, including beliefs and values, norms and behaviors, philosophy and expectations, social and psychological environment, and expression. Organizational culture influences employees' motivation, behavior, performance, satisfaction, and decision-making process.

The term motivation is a psychological construct that refers to particular reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way. It is a process that motivates humans to take action to achieve a goal. It has two elements: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic comes from individuals' inner side, whereas extrinsic comes from external factors (Morris et al., 2022).

Intrinsic motivation refers to the activities or tasks that an individual performs for their own satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Intrinsic motivation arises from within individuals and motivates them to complete an activity or task for inner satisfaction instead of any external incentives or rewards. Intrinsic motivation has a significant role in completing activities or tasks (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Performance is documented as the particular actions to perform activities, tasks, or duties in a workplace (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The job performance of teachers involves performing duties or responsibilities related to teaching and learning, classroom management, student engagement, and self-development (Kumar, 2023). In the literature, there is strong evidence that transformational leadership inspires intrinsic motivation, resulting in better job performance among teachers (Hashim et al., 2023). Hallinger and Aung (2025) also claimed that leadership enhances students' learning, teachers' intrinsic motivation, and job performance.

## Literature Review

In educational institutions, leaders who employ a transformational leadership style are thought to inspire their teachers by providing intellectual stimulation, establishing a standard of idealized behavior, presenting an inspiring goal, and demonstrating individual concern. Transformational leaders emphasize several areas, such as establishing a clear vision, inspiring and motivating followers, setting an example, and promoting creativity and innovation. They demonstrate concern and care for each employee, remain adaptable, communicate effectively, assign tasks fairly, promote strong relationships, and uphold higher ethical standards. As a result, this leadership style is essential to achieving the educational organization's goals and objectives, as it increases educators' commitment to their work, thereby improving job performance (Sun et al., 2023).

According to Saleem et al. (2020), school principals are responsible for inspiring and motivating teachers, as well as providing guidance, direction, and coordination for all school-related activities. The primary duties of the principals are to establish and maintain an outstanding teaching-learning environment for the school's educational activities. As part of their responsibilities, educational leaders assist teachers in their instructional strategies, achieve the organization's aims and purposes, demonstrate effective leadership to enhance teachers' professional behavior, provide valuable visions centered on daily practices, and foster a positive culture that encourages excellent job performance.

Mwita and Mrema (2023) claimed that educational leaders who practice a transformational style influence the structural results and psychological state of educators. A school head who practices a transformational leadership style positively influences the school environment, organizational change, and the professional development of the teaching staff. The intellectual stimulation element in this leadership style encourages teaching staff to engage in critical thinking and incorporate innovative strategies into their teaching. In addition, the element of individualized consideration focuses on teachers' morale and job satisfaction, resulting in better performance.

The existing studies in the literature showed that transformational leadership had positive influences on teachers' motivation, creativity, productivity, and performance (Parveen et al., 2022). Taylor et al. (2014) discovered that intrinsic motivation had a positive influence on school achievements in terms of teachers' performance. Froiland and Worrell (2016) also claimed that intrinsic motivation played a positive role in achieving better results and improving teachers' performance. In addition, Xue et al. (2022) discovered that transformational leadership enhanced teachers' intrinsic motivation, resulting in improved teaching practices. According to the results of their study, transformational leadership was positively related to teachers' intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Thanh and Quang (2022) also revealed a positive link between transformational leadership and employees' intrinsic motivation and performance.

Literature also highlighted that transformational leadership practices during COVID-19 played a vital role in managing teachers' stress and turnover, as well as improving performance. Most recently, Abdulmawla et al. (2025) discovered a positive relationship between transformational leadership style, intrinsic motivation, and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in the Philippines. In the same context, Bailey and Gibson (2024) revealed that school leaders using a transformational leadership style maintained better teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Hadijah (2024) discovered that transformational leadership styles improve motivation and job performance. Earlier, Sarwar et al. (2022) also found a positive relationship between leadership style and teachers' job performance, while Thanh and Quang (2022) reported a strong positive relationship between leadership style and employees' intrinsic motivation and job performance. Gunawan (2020) reported a positive influence of transformational leadership on school culture and the work motivation of educators. Going further back, Lee et al. (2019) discovered that transformational leadership is associated with higher levels of performance.

### **Research Questions & Hypotheses**

The following research question and hypotheses were developed:

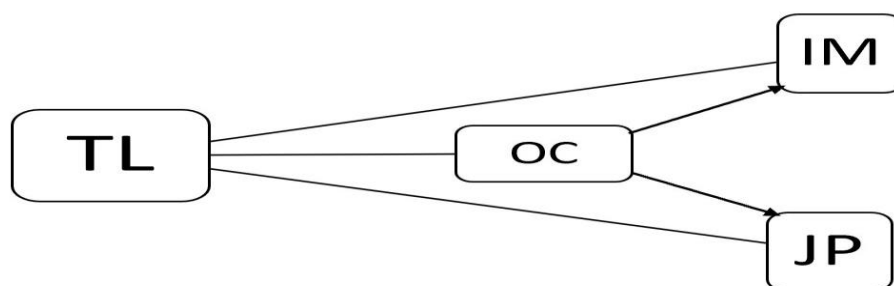
1. What are the teachers' opinions of their principals' transformational leadership, organizational culture, intrinsic motivation, and job performance?
2. There is a statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' intrinsic motivation.
3. There is a statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance.

4. There is a statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership and organizational culture.
5. Organizational culture mediates the correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' intrinsic motivation.
6. Organizational culture mediates the correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance.

### Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive and correlational research design. The teachers of government secondary schools in Mianwali District were the population, and a sample of 100 teachers was selected using the simple random sampling method. An adapted research tool was used for data Collection. This research tool was based on a five-point Likert questionnaire and had four dimensions: transformational leadership style (16 items), organizational culture (10 items), intrinsic motivation (10 items), and job performance (12 items). The total number of items in the questionnaire was 48. Experts' opinions were gathered to ensure validity, and pilot testing was conducted to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability statistics of the questionnaire were ( $\alpha = .87$ ). The researchers collected all the data from the teachers working at higher secondary schools in Mianwali District. The data were analyzed through SPSS, where mean values and standard deviations were calculated to explore the school principals' levels of practicing transformational leadership style. At the same time, Pearson's  $r$  statistic was computed to explore the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. This study used the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1, which shows Transformational Leadership (TL) as the independent variable, Organizational Culture (OC) as the mediating variable, and intrinsic motivation (IM) and job performance (JP) as the dependent variables.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



### Results/Findings

**Table 1: Overall Mean scores and standard deviation of study variable**

| Sr | Variables                        | M    | SD  |
|----|----------------------------------|------|-----|
| 1  | Transformational Leadership (TL) | 3.45 | .56 |
| 2  | Organizational Culture (OC)      | 3.33 | .64 |
| 3  | Intrinsic Motivation (IM)        | 3.17 | .60 |
| 4  | Job Performance (JP)             | 3.36 | .77 |

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the study variables based on teachers' perceptions. It is visible that TL had ( $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=0.56$ ), OC had ( $M=3.33$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ), IM had ( $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ), and JP had ( $M=3.36$ ,  $SD=0.77$ ).

**Table 2: Summary of Correlation Analysis**

| Variables | r value | p-value  | Levels of Relationship |
|-----------|---------|----------|------------------------|
| TL and OC | r=.573  | .000>.01 | Strong Positive        |
| TL and IM | r=.519  | .000>.01 | Moderate Positive      |
| TL and JP | r=.423  | .000>.01 | Moderate Positive      |
| OC and IM | r=.621  | .000>.01 | Strong Positive        |
| OC and JP | r=.497  | .000>.01 | Moderate Positive      |
| IM and JP | r=.417  | .000>.01 | Moderate Positive      |

Table 2 shows the summary of correlation analysis among all variables. It revealed that all variables are interrelated.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables (N = 100)**

| Variables                           | M    | SD   | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Transformational Leadership (TL) | 3.45 | 0.56 | -      |        |        |   |
| 2. Organizational Culture (OC)      | 3.33 | 0.64 | .573** | -      |        |   |
| 3. Intrinsic Motivation (IM)        | 3.17 | 0.60 | .519** | .621** | -      |   |
| 4. Job Performance (JP)             | 3.36 | 0.77 | .423** | .497** | .417** | - |

Results reported in Table 3 show the Pearson correlation analysis. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between school principals' transformational leadership and organizational culture ( $r=.573$ ), a moderate positive relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' intrinsic motivation ( $r=.519$ ), and a moderate positive relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance ( $r=.423$ ). It was also discovered that there is a strong positive relationship between organizational culture and teachers' intrinsic motivation ( $r=.621$ ), and a moderate positive relationship between organizational culture and teachers' job performance ( $r=.497$ ). Moreover, a moderate positive relationship ( $r=.417$ ) between teachers' intrinsic motivation and job performance was also found. Thus, based on these findings, the research hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are accepted.

### Regression Analysis

**Table 4: Mediation Analysis**

| Path                                      | R <sup>2</sup> | B              | SE             | $\beta$        | t-value        | p-value      |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Path a: TL→OC<br>TL                       | 0.328          | 0.659          | 0.095          | 0.573          | 6.922          | .000         |
| Path c: TL→IM (Total Effect)<br>TL        | 0.270          | 0.561          | 0.093          | 0.519          | 6.018          | .000         |
| Paths c and b: TL+OC→IM<br>TL(c)<br>OC(b) | 0.426          | 0.263<br>0.452 | 0.101<br>0.088 | 0.243<br>0.482 | 2.593<br>5.129 | .011<br>.000 |
| Path c: TL+JP (Total Effect)<br>TL        | 0.179          | 0.423          | 0.099          | 0.423          | 4.273          | .000         |
| Paths c and b: TL+OC+JP<br>TL(c)<br>OC(b) | 0.276          | 0.284<br>0.455 | 0.146<br>0.127 | 0.206<br>0.379 | 1.952<br>3.599 | .054<br>.001 |

Note: B=unstandardized coefficient, SE=standard error,  $\beta$ = standardized coefficient. The R<sup>2</sup> values represent the proportion of variance explained by the model. The Sobel test for the indirect effect (TL→ OC→ IM) yielded  $z=4.39$ ,  $p<.001$ . The Sobel test for the indirect effect (TL→ OC→ JP) yielded  $z=3.31$ ,  $p=.001$ .

Table 4 shows that transformational leadership (TL) has a strong positive effect on organizational culture (OC) ( $\beta = 0.573$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.328$ ) and also significantly increases intrinsic motivation (IM) ( $\beta = 0.519$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.270$ ). When both TL and OC are considered together, the direct effect of TL on IM weakens ( $\beta = 0.243$ ,  $p = .011$ ) while OC emerges as a stronger predictor ( $\beta = 0.482$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.426$ ). The Sobel test ( $z = 4.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) confirms that OC significantly mediates the relationship between TL and IM. Similarly, TL has a positive total effect on job performance (JP) ( $\beta = 0.423$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.179$ ). However, when OC is included, TL's effect becomes weaker and marginally non-significant ( $\beta = 0.206$ ,  $p = .054$ ), while OC remains a strong predictor ( $\beta = 0.379$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.276$ ). The Sobel test ( $z = 3.31$ ,  $p = .001$ ) again confirms a significant mediating role of OC. Therefore, based on these findings, research hypotheses 4 and 5 are accepted.

## Discussion

The study revealed a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership of school principals and organizational culture. A moderate positive correlation was confirmed between transformational leadership and both teachers' intrinsic motivation and job performance. The study revealed a significant positive correlation between organizational culture and teachers' intrinsic motivation, a moderate positive correlation between organizational culture and teachers' job performance, and a significant positive correlation between teachers' intrinsic motivation and job performance.

These results are in line with the findings of Abdulmawla et al. (2025), who also reported a positive relationship between transformational leadership style, intrinsic motivation, and teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Similarly, Bailey and Gibson (2024) revealed that school leaders using a transformational leadership style maintained better teachers' job satisfaction and performance, which supports the findings of this study. Hadijah (2024) also found that transformational leadership styles improve motivation and job performance, which is consistent with the present results.

Moreover, the findings of Sarwar et al., (2022) regarding a positive relationship between leadership style and teachers' job performance, Thanh and Quang (2022) regarding a strong positive relationship between leadership style and employees' intrinsic motivation and job performance, Gunawan (2020) regarding a positive influence of transformational leadership on school culture and the work motivation of educators, and Lee et al., (2019) regarding the association of transformational leadership with higher levels of performance, are all consistent with the findings of this research study.

## Conclusion

The present study revealed that teachers showed moderate agreement regarding the practices of their principals' transformational leadership, organizational culture, intrinsic motivation, and job performance. The results also revealed that the principals' transformational leadership significantly affected organizational culture, teachers' intrinsic motivation, and their job performance. Most notably, there was a powerful relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture, and a moderate one with intrinsic motivation and teachers' job performance.

It was concluded that organizational culture had a very significant positive correlation with teachers' intrinsic motivation and a moderate positive correlation with their work performance. Teachers' intrinsic motivation had a positive correlation with work performance as well. Furthermore, the results indicated that teachers' performance and intrinsic motivation are both positively influenced by principals' transformational leadership, although a significant portion of this impact operates through organizational culture. Organizational culture mediates the link between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation, and it strengthens the link

between transformational leadership and teachers' work performance. These findings highlight the point that leadership is more effective when it builds and sustains an effective organizational culture. Overall, this research concludes that principals' transformational leadership, together with a supportive organizational culture, is vital for enhancing teachers' intrinsic motivation and job performance. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers organize training programs for principals to strengthen their ability to inspire, motivate, and stimulate teachers, ultimately improving both their intrinsic motivation and job performance.

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