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### The Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence and Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship between Leadership Styles and Job Performance in an IT Sector of Pakistan

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#### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the impact of different leadership styles on job performance in the IT sector, focusing on the mediating role of job satisfaction (JS) and the moderating role of emotional intelligence (EI). To identify the relationship between the variables we collect data from the organization through self-administered questionnaire by using likert scale. The population of this study was unknown so we used Rule of 5 to calculate our sample size which was  $(51 \times 5) = 255$ . SmartPLS is being used to analyze the required data. Specifically, we examine transformational (TF), transactional (TS), and laissez-faire leadership (LFL) styles. Our findings indicate that transformational leadership positively influences job performance, while transactional and laissez-faire leadership have negative effects. Particularly, the relationship between transactional leadership and job performance is insignificant, and job satisfaction does not mediate this relationship. This can be attributed to the task-oriented, compliance-driven nature of transactional leadership, which does not encourage the intrinsic motivation, creativity, and self-independence essential for high performance and job satisfaction in the dynamic IT environment. Furthermore, the moderating effect of emotional intelligence is highlighted, showing that it enhances the positive influence of transformational leadership (TFL) but has limited influence on transactional (TS) and laissez faire leadership (LFL). These results highlight the importance of leadership styles that promote engagement and intrinsic motivation in driving job performance and satisfaction in the IT sector.*



## **Introduction**

The Information Technology (IT) sector in Pakistan has witnessed remarkable growth and transformation in recent years, emerging as a significant contributor to the national economy and a key driver of innovation and development. With an expanding market, increasing competition, and evolving technological landscapes, organizations within the IT sector face unique challenges in maintaining competitiveness, fostering innovation, and sustaining high levels of performance (Shafiq Ahmad Kamboh, 2024). In this dynamic environment, effective leadership and organizational dynamics play pivotal roles in shaping employee behaviors, attitudes, and ultimately, organizational outcomes. Leadership styles, such as transformational (TF) and transactional leadership (TSL), have gained considerable attention in organizational research for their differential effects on employee motivation, engagement, and performance. Transformational leadership (TFL), characterized by visionary leadership (VL), inspirational motivation (IM), intellectual stimulation (IS), and individualized consideration (IC), has been associated with higher levels of employee satisfaction (ES), commitment, and performance (Connie Deng, 2023). On the other hand, transactional leadership with its focus on contingent rewards and management-by-exception, has been linked to task compliance and operational efficiency. Understanding the implications of these leadership styles within the context of the IT sector in Pakistan is essential for organizations seeking to optimize their leadership practices and enhance performance outcomes (Hoxha, 2019).

Satisfaction of job emerges as a critical factor in understanding employee well-being, motivation, and performance within organizations. High levels of job satisfaction have been associated with increased productivity, reduced turnover intentions, and enhanced organizational commitment. However, the amount in which job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership styles, and job performance in the context of the IT sector in Pakistan warrants further investigation (Padmakumar Ram, 2021).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence (EI), encompassing the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions effectively, has emerged as a key competency for navigating the complexities of the modern workplace. As organizations strive to cultivate emotionally intelligent leaders and employees, understanding the moderating role of emotional intelligence in shaping the relationships between leadership styles, organizational politics, job satisfaction, and job performance becomes paramount (Alonazi, 2020).

Employees receiving support and encouragement from transformational leaders tend to develop trust in them, feeling valued and gaining self-confidence. Conversely, transactional leaders utilize social behaviors to maximize benefits with minimal cost. Such leaders prompt employees to fulfill their responsibilities, understand their objectives and requirements, and reward good performance (Chun-Chang Lee, 2023).

This study finds the bridge gaps in the existing literature by examining the interplay between transformational leadership (TFL), transactional leadership (TSL), laissez faire leadership (LFL), job satisfaction (JS), emotional intelligence (EI), and job performance (JP) within the IT sector in Pakistan. This research aims to provide valuable insights for organizational leaders, practitioners, and policymakers, facilitating the development of evidence-based strategies for enhancing leadership effectiveness, mitigating the insignificant impacts of organizational politics, fostering job satisfaction (JS), and ultimately, improving job performance (JP) in the IT sector.

## **Literature Review**

## **Theoretical Background**

Transformational leadership concept was firstly introduced by leadership expert Burns who differentiated between ordinary leaders (Transactional) and extraordinary leaders (Transformational). Whereas transactional leaders were observed as those leaders who exchanged tangible rewards for the work and devotion of followers, transformational leaders engaged with followers, focused on advanced order basic needs and created awareness regarding the importance of particular outcomes and new innovative ways in which those outcomes might be accomplished. There are four dimensions of transformational leadership which includes ;(a) Idealized Influence (II), it deals with the building of self-confidence and trust, (b) Inspirational Motivation (IM), it deals with the motivation of overall organization, (c) Intellectual Stimulation (IS), involves in arousing and changing supporters awareness of problems and ability to solve those difficulties and

(d) Individualized Consideration (IC), which involves in responding to the specific necessities of supporters (Batista-Taran, Shuck, Guterrez & Baralt). According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of confidence and motivation through the strength of their vision and personality, these leaders in return get the trust, respect and appreciation from their followers or admirers and have capabilities to encourage this extraordinary performance on followers through actions that motivates outstanding performance.

Fielder's (1964) Contingency theory emphasizes the importance of variables, asserting that a leader's effectiveness in guiding depends on various factors according to situations which includes the leader's preferred style and the skills of the staff, which are also contingent on situational factors. This theory advocates for an adaptable management approach that tailors leadership styles to specific situations rather than prescribing a universal method, aiming to enhance individual performance (Agus Purwanto K. F., 2023).

## **Emotional Intelligence(Ei)**

The concept of Emotional Intelligence(EI) originated from understanding how individuals handle their emotions in various situations, enabling them to perform well even under stressful conditions, without succumbing to fear or becoming overwhelmed. It refers to the ability to effectively manage one's emotions and those of others, often termed as "emotional-awareness" or "emotional management skills". It can more clearly be defined by Daniel Goleman's model on EI: Simply, it serves as an umbrella term encompassing a range of abilities, mainly focusing on soft skills or intrapersonal skills, which are essential components of broader intellectual, technical, and professional skill sets (Chun-Chang Lee, 2023).

Recent research in neurobiology suggests that humans operate from two distinct minds: the rational mind and the primitive, purely emotional mind. A body of prior studies on the human brain indicates that leaders' moods are influenced by the emotions of those around them, for better or for worse. This phenomenon is scientifically attributed to what is called the open loop system, which relies on the nature of the brain's limbic system. According to Harvard Business School (2023), effective leaders reveal a high degree of Emotional Intelligence(EI), which is characterized by self-awareness(SA), self-management(SM), motivation(M), empathy(EP), and social skills(SS). These components are essential for leaders to effectively achieve their goals (Alonazi, 2020).

Previous research has shown that approximately 15 to 25% of individual variations in job performance (JP) or career success can be attributed to IQ, with 80% inherited from the mother and 20% from the father. If the IQ of a manager or leader surpasses that of their followers, it can

potentially have a counterproductive effect on achieving common goals (Dr. Asad Afzal Hummayon, 2019). Research indicates that emotions play an essential role in decision-making and cognitive processes. Stressful situations may impact the cognitive abilities and decision-making processes of leaders. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is key, as those with high EI tend to maintain a healthy balance of feelings such as motivation, calmness, focus, awareness, and appreciation, whereas those with low EI tend to experience feelings of dread, isolation, frustration, guilt, depression, and hatred (Jolanda Dessye Parinussa, 2023).

### **Job Satisfaction as Mediator**

The study by Jolanda Dessye Parinussa (2023) examines job satisfaction as key factor influencing employee performance (EP) and organizational success. It highlights that satisfied employees contribute to higher productivity and lower turnover rates. The research investigates how job satisfaction and job performance mediate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and job commitment among 200 bank employees in Lahore. Using various scales and Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis framework, the findings confirm that both job satisfaction and job performance serve as mediators between EI and job commitment. However, the role of job performance as a mediator lacks strong support in existing literature. The study suggests that employees with high EI can control emotions better, leading to increased job satisfaction, improved efficiency, and stronger commitment to their organization.

Reza Lidia Sari (2020) explores the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among lecturers. The study, conducted with 110 permanent lecturers from five universities in Padang City, Indonesia, examines job satisfaction (JS) as a mediator. Using a questionnaire and mediation analysis via the PROCESS macro, the findings tell that work-life balance (WLB) positively influences both job satisfaction (JS) and organizational commitment. Additionally, job satisfaction (JS) mediates the relationship between work-life balance and commitment. The study underscores the importance of maintaining work-life balance to enhance job satisfaction and strengthen lecturers' commitment to their institutions.

Liu (2019) explores job satisfaction over a 40-year period, noting that employees who remain in the same organization may experience lower satisfaction, while those who switch jobs tend to be happier. Using Herzberg's two-factor theory, the study highlights factors like achievement, recognition, and growth opportunities as key drivers of job satisfaction. The research examines the link among justice and employee commitment, with job satisfaction as a mediator, and also analyzes how affective commitment influences citizenship behavior. Based on data from 241 bank professionals using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the findings reveal that justice significantly impacts employee commitment, which in turn influences citizenship behavior. Additionally, job satisfaction (JS) positively mediates the relationship between justice and commitment.

### **Leadership Styles**

Chun-Chang Lee (2023) explores the impact of transformational (TFL) and transactional leadership (TSL) on job performance (JP), emphasizing the role of leader emotional intelligence (EI) and trust. Transformational leaders inspire employees by fulfilling emotional needs, fostering teamwork, and enhancing decision-making, while transactional leaders use rewards and penalties to motivate performance. Using a hierarchical linear model, the study examines leadership styles and trust as mediators in the job performance of real estate brokers. The findings reveal that leader

emotional intelligence(EI), transformational leadership(TFL), and transactional leadership(TSL) all positively influence job performance(JP), with trust acting as a mediator in these relationships.

Agus Purwanto I. B. (2020) examines the impact of transformational(TF) and transactional leadership(TSL) on the performance of Health Centers (Puskesmas) in Pati, Central Java. Transformational leadership focuses on ethical awareness, institutional reform, and inspiring change, while TSL emphasizes clear expectations and rewards. The study surveyed 120 employees using electronic questionnaires and analyzed data through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with LISREL 8.70. Findings suggest that Puskesmas leaders should adopt both leadership styles to improve staff performance in areas like attendance, cooperation, work quality, attitudes, and job knowledge. A flexible leadership approach is recommended to address daily challenges effectively.

Zelege Amena Hundie (2024) examines the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in hospitals in the Oromia region, Ethiopia. Laissez-faire leadership(LFL), categorized by minimal leader involvement and reliance on independent employees, can be effective in research-oriented environments but may hinder performance in healthcare settings. The study, shown from August to October 2021, surveyed 412 employees across 41 hospitals using self-administered questionnaires. Data were analyzed through SPSS-20 using ordinal logistic regression. The outcomes indicate that transformational leadership(TFL) (with idealized influence(II) and intellectual stimulation(IS)) and laissez-faire leadership(LFL) were significantly associated with employee performance, while transactional leadership showed no significant effect.

Mohammad Ali (2023) and Reyaz (2024) explore the effects of LFL, hands-off approach that grants employees autonomy but is often perceived as "zero leadership." Ali's study, using data from 460 pharmaceutical employees in Bangladesh, finds that LFL positively influences talent attraction, retention, engagement, and development, suggesting that autonomy can benefit self-motivated employees. However, Reyaz (2024) examines multiple leadership styles and highlights that LFL is linked to lower employee motivation and satisfaction due to a lack of guidance. The findings emphasize that while LFL can work in autonomous environments, transformational leadership is more effective in fostering motivation, engagement, and long-term organizational success.

Boateng & Mensah (2024) examine the role of leadership in rapidly changing and competitive industries, with a focus on LFL, which is characterized by minimal involvement, delayed decisions, and lack of feedback. The study also explores leadership in educational settings, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting its impact on resource optimization, teaching practices, and student motivation. Findings reveal that transformational leadership is the dominant style among public basic school head teachers in Kwabre East Municipal, Ashanti Region. Despite moderate teacher satisfaction, the study concludes that job satisfaction is not directly linked to the leadership styles employed by school heads.

### **Job Performance**

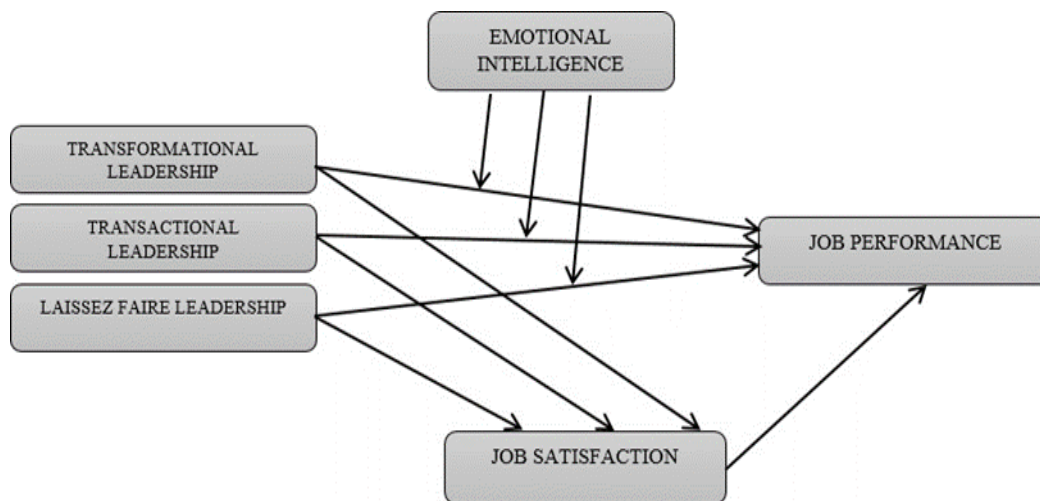
Prakash (2021) defines work performance as the execution of job-related tasks aimed at achieving organizational goals, assessed through task performance and contextual performance. Task performance involves job-specific activities that enhance efficiency, while contextual performance includes extra-role behaviors like teamwork and adherence to rules. The study investigates the influence of organizational politics on job performance using a questionnaire-based approach. Findings reveal strong organizational politics in government offices, particularly regarding pay,

promotion policies, and political behaviors like “going along to get ahead.” Despite this, job performance remains average. Inferential analysis indicates that organizational politics negatively impact employee performance, aligning with previous research across different cultural and organizational contexts.

Dinc (2024) explores the relationship between job satisfaction(JS), job performance(JP), and organizational commitment(OC) in manufacturing firms, particularly in the furniture industry in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Study highlights strong correlation between job satisfaction(JS) and performance, analyzing how different components of organizational commitment—affective and normative commitment—impact both factors. Using factor analysis, reliability tests, and regression analyses on data from 437 employees, the findings reveal that affective and normative commitment(NC) significantly influence job satisfaction(JS), which in turn affects job performance. Additionally, job satisfaction mediates the relationship between commitment and performance, suggesting that enhancing job satisfaction can improve employee productivity in manufacturing firms.

Mehrez (2020) defines job performance as actions that contribute to an organization's long-term value, with HR departments aiming to maximize employee productivity. The study examines the impact of performance appraisal (PA) on job performance(JP), emphasizing the role of motivation in the governmental sector in Qatar. Using survey data from 294 respondents, the findings reveal that the purpose of performance appraisal and evaluation methods positively influence employee motivation and job performance, while criteria and leadership do not. Additionally, a strong positive relationship is found between motivation and job performance(JP). These insights can help HR managers improve employee motivation and productivity through effective performance appraisal strategies.

### Research Framework



### Method

In this study, research design is quantitative in nature because it is an organized analysis by gathering and collecting calculable data and executing statistical methods (Lakshman, Sinha, Biswas, Charles, & Arora, 2000).

### Research Approach(RA)

Deductive research approach will be used in this paper because a cluster of hypotheses have been created which are to be tested for the acceptance or rejection and this approach helps in evaluating the validity and rationality of assumptions or hypotheses (Zalaghi & Khazaei, 2016).

### **Research Population**

A bulky group of people or entities which is the foremost attention of a research query (S. Jacelon & Imperio, 2005). This study will particularly focus among the software developer employees working in IT company i.e Contour Software. Population is unknown in this research.

### **Primary Source of Data**

In this research, data will be collected through questionnaire and all items will be measured by using Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

### **Research Sample**

As population is unknown in this research so rule of 5 is used to calculate the sample size. In rule of 5 we multiply number of questions with 5 to get the desired sample (Neidle, 2012). So, in this research sample size is  $(51 \times 5)$  255.

### **Sampling Technique**

In this research, non-probability convenience sampling technique is used because it is the easiest sampling technique present. In this type of sampling technique, respondents are carefully chosen on the basis of easy accessibility and their readiness to take part (Barratt & Shantikumar, 2018).

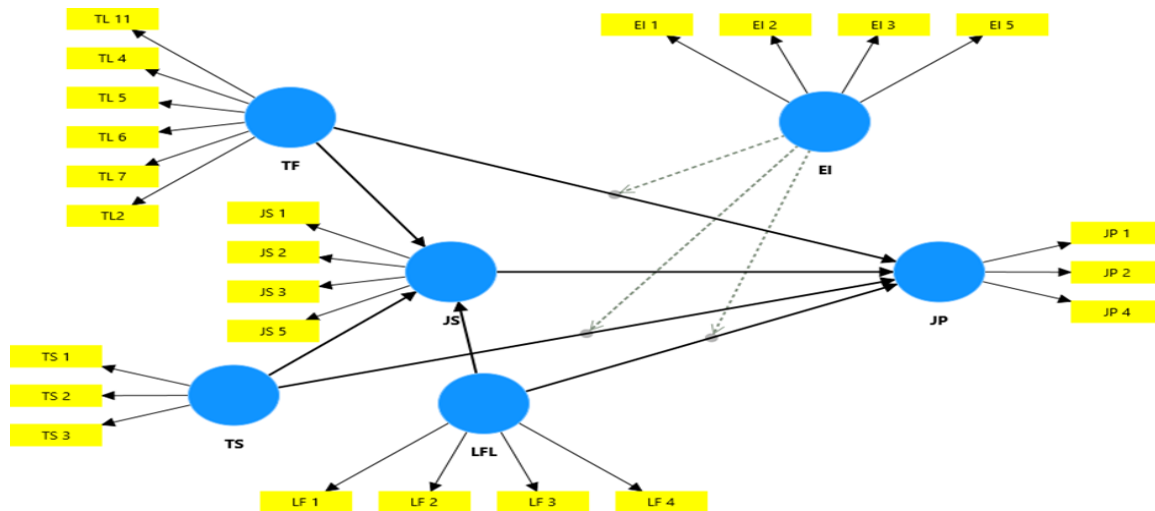
### **Survey Instrument**

Survey Questionnaire will be used in this research as an instrument for the measurement of variables in this research. It is defined as an instrument which consists of questions which helps the researchers to collect data from the respondents for the research purpose (Kerry, 2019).

### **Scales and Sources**

<b>Variable Names</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Source</b>
Transformational Leadership	20	Godfrey K. Gichuki , Kabare Karanja , Rukia Atikiya (2024)
Transactional Leadership	12	Godfrey K. Gichuki , Kabare Karanja , Rukia Atikiya (2024)
Laissez Faire Leadership	4	Kazi Enamul Hoque and Zarin Tasnim Raya (2023)
Job Satisfaction	5	Abdul Qawi Noori (2023)
Emotional Intelligence	5	Wong & Law EI scale (WLEIS)
Job Performance	5	Wadi B Alonazi (2020)

### **Results**



In this study, data analysis was conducted through the partial least square-structure equation model (PLS-SEM) technique. PLS-SEM has gathered considerable attention from scholars in the fields of management and social sciences (Kashif et al., 2018; Umrani et al., 2020). Scholars have emphasized the utility of PLS-SEM in handling complex models (Becker et al., 2012) and managing diverse constructs, including reflective models (Henseler et al., 2018). Furthermore, as highlighted by Chin et al. (2003), PLS-SEM is robust in measuring unobservable variables and does not require data normality. Consequently, hierarchical latent models have gained popularity in recent years (Johnson et al., 2012). Additionally, PLS-SEM is deemed promising for testing mediation-based models (Hair et al., 2019).

Following the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), our study adopted a two-stage procedure for data analysis: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model evaluated the psychometric properties of the conceptual framework, while the structural model confirmed the significance of the hypothesized associations. The outcomes of the measurement model, explain individual item loadings, CR, AVE, and R-square. In accordance with Hair et al. (2014), individual loadings were expected to be 0.5 or above.

Consistent with Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a CR score of 0.70 was considered sufficient. Results in Figure 1 and Table 1 show that CR values ranged from 0.661 to 0.911. According to Hair et al. (2014), the AVE should be 0.7 or above. Table 1 and Figure 1 indicate that AVE values ranged from 0.528 to 0.654. Thus, this study affirmed the internal consistency, validity, and reliability of the measures and the conceptual model. Discriminant validity of the measures was also examined to ensure their distinctiveness within the framework (Duarte and Raposo, 2010). Following the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Chin (1998), we compared each latent construct against the reflective loadings of other constructs.

**Table 1 Measurement Model**

Constructs	Item	Loading	Cr	Ave	R-Square
Transformational leadership	TL11	0.755	0.852	0.552	
	TL4	0.742			
	TL5	0.749			
	TL6	0.848			



Transactional leadership	TL7	0.672			
	TL2	0.678			
	TS1	0.787	0.661	0.561	
	TS2	0.632			
	TS3	0.815			
Laissez faire leadership	LFL1	0.814	0.847	0.654	
	LFL2	0.722			
	LFL3	0.874			
	LFL4	0.796			
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	0.651	0.911	0.581	
	EI2	0.629			
	EI3	0.863			
	EI5	0.872			
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.615	0.742	0.528	0.367
	JS2	0.781			
	JS3	0.866			
	JS5	0.696			
Job Performance	JP1	0.821	0.674	0.556	0.574
	JP2	0.852			
	JP4	0.720			

Results in Table 2 demonstrate that all latent variables are "unique and distinct" as the square root of AVE is greater than the correlating scores.

## Table 2 Discriminant Validity

### Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

	EI	JP	JS	LFL	TF	TS	EI x TF	EI x TS	EI x LFL
EI									
JP	0.810218								
JS	0.692979	0.708369							
LFL	0.38672	0.520891	0.667947						
TF	0.383302	0.700695	0.609499	0.695996					
TS	0.593226	0.750056	0.667609	0.749392	0.883187				
EI x TF	0.37626	0.380859	0.370768	0.207392	0.320316	0.40095			
EI x TS	0.493726	0.369647	0.447164	0.27643	0.383414	0.550591	0.825398		
EI x LFL	0.327949	0.229919	0.375827	0.230227	0.286052	0.408555	0.827371	0.890788	

**Table 3: Direct Hypothesis**

Relationship	Beta	Standard deviation ( O/STDEV  (STDEV))	T statistics	P Values	Decision
LFL -> JP	0.026	0.082	0.326	0.372	Rejected
TF -> JP	0.288	0.103	2.783	0.003	Accepted
TS -> JP	0.103	0.094	1.097	0.136	Rejected

**Table 4: Mediating Hypothesis**

Relationship	Beta	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Decision
LFL -> JS -> JP	-0.008	0.032	0.238	0.406	Rejected
TF -> JS -> JP	0.004	0.021	0.207	0.418	Rejected
TS -> JS -> JP	0.005	0.020	0.227	0.410	Rejected

**Table 5: Moderating Hypothesis**

Relationship	Beta	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Decision
EI x TF -> JP	-0.141	0.088	2.589	0.046	Accepted
EI x TS -> JP	0.102	0.207	0.496	0.310	Rejected
EI x LFL -> JP	-0.140	0.254	0.552	0.290	Rejected

The data revealed the positive relationship of TFL on JP because their p-value is greater than 1.93 ( $\beta$  0.288,  $t$  2.783). Whereas there is an insignificant relationship among TS and JP because their t-value is less than 1.96 ( $\beta$  0.103,  $t$  1.097). Also, the data revealed insignificant relationship among LFL and JP ( $\beta$  0.026,  $t$  0.326,  $p < 0.372$ ). In parallel, the mediating impact of JS on JP also has the negative relationship. This study analyzed the moderating effect of Emotional Intelligence on relationship between three styles of leadership and Job Performance(JP) of the firm. The data revealed that the moderation effect of EI strengthen the effect of TFL and JP ( $\beta$  -0.141,  $t$  2.589) while EI weakens the effect of TS and JP ( $\beta$  0.102,  $t$  0.496) and also weakens the effect of LFL and JP ( $\beta$  -0.140,  $t$  0.552).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between “Leadership Styles (TFL, TSL, and LFL) and Job Performance(JP) through mediating effect of job satisfaction(JS) and moderating effect of Emotional Intelligence(EI)”. There are many leadership styles present but we chose three leadership styles that are transformational leadership(TFL), transactional

leadership(TSL) and laissez faire leadership(LFL) for our research by using different statistical tests.

Hypothesis 1 suggests the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance, and the findings indicated a significant relationship between the two (H1) is supported. These findings align with previous research (Chun-Chang Lee, 2023), which stated that transformational leadership transforms job performance effectively through inspiration and encouragement of the employees because they understand that the motivated employees are the ones who have a strong sense of purpose.

Hypothesis 2 the present study examines the relationship between transactional leadership(TSL) and job performance(JP), and the results of the findings indicated an insignificant relationship between the two (H2) is not supported. These findings align with previous research, because the previous researches (Hoxha, 2019) (Reyaz, 2024) were varied and uncertain which says that transactional leaders give clear chain of command to the employees which can be ineffective for the creative teams because if your team is relying on you they cannot think out of the box.

Hypothesis 3 the current study explored the relationship between laissez faire leadership and job performance. The result of findings indicated an insignificant relationship among the two (H3) is supported. Prior researches (Zelege Amena Hundie, 2024) (Mohammad Ali, 2023) shows the significant as well as insignificant relationship because laissez faire leadership style may be suitable in certain contexts, such as highly independent work environments. Laissez-faire leaders are often seen as uninvolved and withdrawn, which can lead to a lack of cohesiveness within the group. Since the leader seems unconcerned with what is happening, followers sometimes pick up on this and express less care and concern for the project.

Hypothesis 4 analyze the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance through the mediating role of job satisfaction. The findings of result shows that job satisfaction did not mediate between the two constructs which means (H4) is not supported. Previous researches shows the mediating role of job satisfaction (Liu, 2019) (Dinc, 2024) which does not align with the current research. The insignificant mediating result shows that transformational leadership has the direct influence on job performance through mechanisms like enhanced motivation, increased innovation and skill development. Whereas job satisfaction is an important outcome, it operates independently and is not the primary pathway through which transformational leadership affects job performance.

Hypothesis 5 examined the relationship between transactional leadership and job performance through the mediating role of job satisfaction. The findings of the result indicates that job satisfaction does not mediate between TSL and JP thus, H5 is not supported. (PUTRA, 2024) mentioned the weak connection between transactional leadership and job performance, and the fact that job satisfaction doesn't mediate this relationship, can be explained by the nature of transactional leadership. This style focuses on tasks and compliance rather than promoting motivation, creativity, and independence. In the fast-paced IT sector, where high performance and job satisfaction require these qualities, transactional leadership's focus on external rewards that doesn't engage employees deeply, limits its effectiveness on both job performance and satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6 explored the relationship between laissez faire leadership and job performance through the mediating role of job satisfaction. The results shows that job satisfaction did not mediate between LFL and JP which means H6 is not supported. It is not aligned with the previous

researches (Dinc, 2024) (Liu, 2019) which says that job satisfaction plays crucial role in employee job performance. In this research job satisfaction did not mediate between the two because LFL is a type of freestyle leadership which is not liked by the employees because it doesn't give you clear direction nor guidance for what should be done.

Hypothesis 7, emotional intelligence is moderated between transformational leadership and job performance and is aligned with the previous studies (Isabel Coronado-Maldonado, 2023) (Schutte, 2024) which says that EI increases the effectiveness of leadership practices and also improving the emotional and social dynamics within the team which will lead to a more engaged, motivated and high-performing workforce(HPW). So, we can say that H7 is supported.

Hypothesis 8, emotional intelligence is not moderated between transactional leadership and job performance thus H8 is not supported. Results align with the prior studies which shows the mixed outcomes (significant and insignificant) of transactional leadership (Zelege Amena Hundie, 2024) (Chun-Chang Lee, 2023) because the structured, task-oriented nature of IT work and the extrinsic motivation provided by the transactional leadership reduce the need for emotional skills that EI offers.

Hypothesis 9 is not supported because emotional intelligence is not moderated between LFL and job performance. The findings aligned with the previous studies (Zhenfei Zhou, 2024) (Pirsoul et al., 2023) which stated that the hands-off approach of LFL provides limited opportunities which means that EI has little room to impact job performance. The key issues with laissez faire leadership is the lack of guidance and accountability, which are not addressed by the presence of high emotional intelligence(EI).

### **Practical Implications**

Since this study focuses on leadership styles in order to check the job performance of the employees thus increasing their productivity, so we add some recommendation in this regard which are mentioned below:

As transformational leadership style is very effective for employee engagement and enhances job performance therefore it could be taught at all managerial level to enhance performance and engagement level.

Organizations should organize different leadership training programs for understanding different leadership competencies and new skills that will make organization workers more productive, motivated and engaged towards their work to enhance job performance.

Different training programs should be organized for career growth of employees, and measures for reward and punishment should be fair at all level.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Transformational leadership, characterized by vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation(IS), and individualized consideration(IC), positively impacts job performance. The leader's ability to inspire and motivate employees leads to higher levels of engagement, creativity, and productivity. This supports theories like Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory, which posits that transformational leaders enhance employee performance by aligning their values and goals with the organization's vision.

Transactional leadership focuses on task completion and adherence to processes through rewards and punishments. In the IT sector, this may stifle creativity and innovation, leading to decreased job performance. This challenges the assumption that transactional leadership is universally effective across all contexts. It suggests that in highly dynamic and innovative fields like IT, transactional leadership may be less effective.

Laissez-faire leadership(LFL), characterized by a lack of guidance and involvement, often leads to confusion, lack of direction, and poor performance. This supports the view that leadership involvement is crucial for performance, particularly in complex and fast-paced environments like IT.

This research highlights the differential effects of leadership styles on job performance in Pakistan's IT sector. Transformational leadership positively impacts job performance, supporting existing theories that emphasize its role in enhancing employee motivation(EM) and job satisfaction(JS). On the other hand, transactional leadership(TSL) negatively affects performance, challenging traditional views that reward-based leadership is effective across all contexts, especially in sectors requiring creativity and innovation. Laissez-faire leadership also shows a negative impact, reaffirming critiques that inactive leadership weakens performance in environments requiring active guidance.

Additionally, the study underscores the importance of emotional intelligence(EI) as a moderator, enhancing the positive effects of transformational leadership, and job satisfaction as a mediator that explains why transformational leadership leads to better performance. The findings suggest that leadership theories should be adapted to cultural contexts, as Western models may not always apply uniformly across different settings.

## **Limitations of the Study**

While conducting this research, some of the limitations that came in the way are;

### **Time Duration**

This research has been conducted in the limited time span. Availability of more time could have resulted in more credible research.

### **Resources**

This study has been limited to only one IT company due to the lack of resources. More resources could have helped in conducting this research in different companies of Pakistan.

### **Sample Size**

Sample size of this research is small and limited. Large sample size could have given more authentic and convincing results.

## **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future researchers can conduct this research in other sectors, also as this research is limited to one sector that is information technology.

This study is limited to one specific mediating and moderating variable. There are many variables present which can be taken as a mediator or moderator in the future researches.

Large sample size can be taken as this research has been conducted in a limited sample frame.

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