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# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE JOB PERFORMANCE IN PAKISTANI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: THE MODERATING ROLES OF JOB RETENTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

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**Abstract**

*The effective performance of administrative employees is essential for the successful functioning of higher education institutions. Administrative staff contribute to institutional governance, student services, resource management, policy implementation, and the coordination of daily organizational activities. Although transformational leadership has been widely associated with positive employee outcomes, limited research has specifically examined its influence on administrative job performance in higher education institutions, particularly in developing countries such as Pakistan. This study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance while examining the moderating roles of job retention and organizational context. Drawing on transformational leadership theory and a contingency perspective, the study argues that transformational leaders can improve employee performance by providing an inspiring vision, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and motivational support. However, the effectiveness of leadership may depend on employees' willingness to remain with the institution and the organizational environment in which leadership is practiced. The study adopts a quantitative and explanatory research design and focuses on administrative employees working in Pakistani higher education institutions. The proposed findings indicate that transformational leadership positively influences administrative job performance and that job retention and a supportive organizational context strengthen this relationship. The study contributes to the leadership literature by extending transformational leadership research to administrative employees and demonstrating the importance of organizational and employee-related conditions in explaining leadership effectiveness.*

## Introduction and Literature Background

Higher education institutions operate in a rapidly changing environment characterized by technological transformation, increasing stakeholder expectations, financial pressures, institutional accountability, and growing competition. The effectiveness of universities depends not only on their academic performance but also on the efficient functioning of their administrative systems.

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Administrative employees play an important role in supporting institutional governance, service delivery, human resource management, financial operations, student services, and policy implementation. Consequently, administrative job performance is an important determinant of institutional effectiveness and sustainability.

Leadership has consistently been recognized as an important factor influencing employee attitudes, behavior, and performance. Among contemporary leadership approaches, transformational leadership has received substantial attention because it encourages employees to exceed routine expectations and contribute to broader organizational objectives. Transformational leaders communicate an inspiring vision, promote creativity, encourage employees to reconsider conventional practices, and provide individualized support and professional development (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Recent research continues to confirm the importance of transformational leadership in higher education institutions. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis of 65 studies found that transformational leadership has a significant positive influence on organizational innovation and performance in higher education institutions. The review particularly identified inspirational motivation and individualized consideration as important drivers of organizational performance (Baroudi et al., 2026).

Evidence from Pakistan also supports the positive role of transformational leadership in employee outcomes. Saif et al. (2024) examined transformational leadership among employees in Pakistani higher education institutions and found positive relationships between transformational leadership, innovative work behavior, and task performance. Their findings suggest that leaders who encourage knowledge sharing and employee development can improve important workplace outcomes. Similarly, Hamayun et al. (2025) reported that transformational leadership positively influenced employee performance among employees working in Pakistani universities.

Despite this growing body of research, administrative employees remain comparatively underrepresented in higher education leadership studies. Much of the existing literature focuses on faculty members, academic leaders, teaching performance, or general employee populations. Administrative employees, however, work within a distinct environment characterized by institutional procedures, service responsibilities, hierarchical reporting relationships, and operational requirements. this paper also identifies this gap and emphasizes that administrative personnel have received limited attention in leadership–performance research.

Transformational leadership may influence administrative job performance by improving employees' motivation and commitment to institutional objectives. Inspirational leaders can help administrative employees understand the broader importance of their work, while intellectual stimulation may encourage them to identify new and effective solutions to administrative challenges. Individualized consideration can strengthen employees' confidence and professional development, whereas idealized influence can create trust and encourage positive workplace behavior.

Recent evidence from higher education supports this argument. Research in universities has shown that leadership and supportive workplace practices are associated with improved employee performance. Nguyen et al. (2025), for example, found that leadership and organizational support were important for understanding employee job performance in higher education institutions. Recent evidence from a challenging higher education context also found that transformational leadership positively influenced employee performance among academic and administrative employees, highlighting the importance of supportive, fair, and inspirational leadership in resource-constrained institutions (Tahsildar & Qani, 2026).

Based on this evidence, the present study proposes that transformational leadership will positively influence administrative job performance.

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**H1: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on administrative job performance.**

However, leadership effectiveness may not be identical for all employees or institutions. Job retention represents an important organizational concern because employees who remain with an institution preserve valuable experience, institutional knowledge, and professional relationships. Employees who expect to continue working within an organization may also have greater opportunities to develop trust in their leaders and become committed to long-term institutional objectives.

Recent research has continued to demonstrate the connection between transformational leadership and retention-related outcomes. Liu et al. (2025), for example, found that transformational leadership was directly associated with employee retention in the educational context. Similarly, Munir et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of transformational leadership for employee retention, particularly by addressing workplace conditions that influence employees' long-term participation in organizations.

In the present study, job retention is considered a condition that may strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance. When employees have a stronger intention to remain with their institution, they may be more willing to invest effort in their responsibilities and respond positively to leadership behaviors.

**H2: Job retention positively moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance, such that the relationship is stronger when job retention is high.**

Organizational context represents another important condition that may influence leadership effectiveness. It includes the institutional structures, culture, communication systems, policies, resource availability, and working conditions within which employees and leaders operate. A supportive organizational environment can provide employees with the opportunities and resources necessary to translate leadership motivation into improved performance.

Leadership does not operate independently of the organizational environment. Even highly effective leaders may experience difficulties in improving employee performance when organizations are characterized by excessive bureaucracy, limited resources, unclear responsibilities, and restricted employee participation. Conversely, a supportive organizational context may strengthen the influence of leadership by facilitating communication, professional development, collaboration, and employee involvement.

The importance of organizational conditions is also evident in recent higher education research. Nguyen et al. (2025) demonstrated the importance of organizational support and transformational leadership for employee job performance in higher education institutions. Moreover, recent research from the higher education sector in the United Arab Emirates found that organizational support played an important role in understanding relationships among leadership, organizational processes, and employee outcomes (Alneyadi & Cherian, 2025).

This paper similarly recognizes organizational context as an important boundary condition. It argues that supportive institutional environments can strengthen leadership outcomes, whereas bureaucratic and resource-constrained environments may reduce the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3: Organizational context positively moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance, such that the relationship is stronger in a supportive organizational context.**

The proposed model is grounded primarily in transformational leadership theory, which explains how leaders influence employee motivation, commitment, and performance. A contingency perspective further supports the

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model by recognizing that leadership effectiveness may vary according to the conditions in which leadership occurs. Thus, transformational leadership is expected to directly improve administrative job performance, while job retention and organizational context are expected to strengthen this relationship.

**Research Method**

The study adopts a quantitative and explanatory research design to examine the relationships among transformational leadership, administrative job performance, job retention, and organizational context. The target population consists of administrative employees working in public and private higher education institutions in Pakistan. Administrative employees are selected because of their significant contribution to university operations and the limited empirical attention given to this employee group in leadership research.

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire containing established measures of the study variables. Respondents should have sufficient experience within their institutions and familiarity with their supervisors to provide informed perceptions of leadership practices and organizational conditions. Participation should remain voluntary, and respondents' confidentiality should be protected throughout the research process.

Before hypothesis testing, the data should be screened for missing values, incomplete responses, and potential outliers. The reliability of the measurement scales should be assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, while construct validity can be evaluated through appropriate validity procedures. Descriptive statistics can be used to summarize the characteristics of respondents and the study variables.

The proposed hypotheses can be tested using regression analysis or structural equation modeling. Moderation analysis is particularly important because the study examines whether job retention and organizational context influence the strength of the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance.

**Results and Discussion**

**The following numerical findings are illustrative because actual statistical results were not available in the uploaded PhD paper. Replace these figures with your actual SPSS or SmartPLS output before submitting the paper.**

The preliminary analysis indicated satisfactory reliability for all study variables. The Cronbach's alpha values were above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, suggesting adequate internal consistency.

| Variable | Cronbach'sAlpha |
|---|---|
| Transformational Leadership | 0.89 |
| Administrative Job Performance | 0.86 |
| Job Retention | 0.83 |
| Organizational Context | 0.88 |

The hypothesis-testing results indicated that transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on administrative job performance. The positive coefficient suggests that administrative employees who experience greater inspirational motivation, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation from their leaders are more likely to demonstrate higher job performance.

| Hypothesis | Relationship | β | t-value | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | TL → AJP | 0.42 | 6.84 | < .001 | Supported |

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| Hypothesis | Relationship | β | t-value | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H2 | TL × JR → AJP | 0.18 | 2.76 | .006 | Supported |
| H3 | TL × OC → AJP | 0.21 | 3.14 | .002 | Supported |

The result for H1 is consistent with recent evidence indicating that transformational leadership contributes positively to employee performance in higher education institutions. Saif et al. (2024) found positive relationships between transformational leadership and task performance among employees in Pakistani higher education institutions, while Baroudi et al. (2026) concluded that transformational leadership positively contributes to organizational performance across higher education settings. The present finding therefore reinforces the argument that leadership practices based on motivation, employee development, and a shared vision can improve administrative effectiveness.

The moderation analysis further indicated that job retention strengthened the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance. This suggests that transformational leadership may be particularly effective when employees are willing to maintain a long-term relationship with their institution. Employees who experience stability and commitment may be more likely to develop productive relationships with leaders and invest greater effort in achieving institutional objectives. This interpretation is consistent with recent studies linking transformational leadership with retention-related outcomes in organizational and educational contexts (Liu et al., 2025; Munir et al., 2025).

The results also indicated that organizational context significantly strengthened the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance. A supportive organizational environment may enable employees to apply the motivation and confidence generated through transformational leadership more effectively. When communication, resources, participation, and institutional support are available, employees may have greater opportunities to translate leadership influence into improved performance. This finding is consistent with recent higher education research emphasizing the importance of organizational support and workplace conditions for employee outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2025; Alneyadi & Cherian, 2025).

Overall, the results support the proposed conceptual model and demonstrate that leadership effectiveness should not be understood as an isolated phenomenon. The positive influence of transformational leadership on administrative job performance appears to depend partly on whether employees remain committed to their institutions and whether the organizational environment supports effective work behavior.

## Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between transformational leadership and administrative job performance in Pakistani higher education institutions while considering the moderating roles of job retention and organizational context. The proposed findings demonstrate that transformational leadership can positively contribute to administrative job performance by inspiring employees, encouraging intellectual development, providing individualized support, and creating a stronger commitment to institutional objectives.

The study further demonstrates the importance of job retention as a condition influencing leadership effectiveness. Employees who maintain a stronger relationship with their institutions may be more receptive to transformational leadership and more willing to invest sustained effort in their responsibilities. Similarly, the findings emphasize that organizational context plays an important role in translating leadership behaviors into improved performance. Supportive institutional structures, effective communication, employee participation, and

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adequate organizational resources can strengthen the positive influence of transformational leadership.

The study contributes to the existing literature by focusing on administrative employees, an important but comparatively underrepresented group in higher education leadership research. It also extends the conventional leadership–performance relationship by demonstrating the importance of employee retention and organizational context as moderating conditions.

From a practical perspective, university administrators and policymakers should invest in leadership development programs that strengthen transformational leadership capabilities. However, leadership development alone may not be sufficient. Universities should simultaneously develop effective employee retention strategies and supportive organizational systems. Professional development, fair employment practices, effective communication, employee participation, and adequate institutional support can help create an environment in which transformational leadership produces stronger performance outcomes.

Future research should use longitudinal designs and multiple sources of data to provide stronger evidence regarding causal relationships. Additional variables, including organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, trust in leadership, and employee engagement, may also be examined to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences administrative performance.

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