E-ISSN: 2997-934X
American Journal of Business Practice
https://semantjournals.org/index.php/AJBP

| Research Article

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The Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Job Performance in Iraqi Government Institutions: An Applied Study From the Perspective of Organizational Culture

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Abstract: Transformational leadership is one of the paradigms of modern management mainly aimed to ensure that the behaviours of employees are oriented to the ideal performance by means of internal motivations, building trust and contributing to the increase of organizational commitment. This study aims at investigating the effects of transformational leadership on job performance between employees in Iraqi governmental institutions based on organization culture as mediating variable. A descriptive-applied methodology was used to collect data through standardised questionnaires to the managers and the staff at various organisational levels. The structural equation modelling was used to examine the relationships between transformational leadership dimensions namely the idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration and job performance indicators. These findings indicate a strong positive impact of transformational leadership on job performance, whereas the organizational culture has the supportive and mediating role in this relationship. It is therefore advised that the leaders in the public sector of Iraq inculcate positive, value oriented organisational cultures to promote transformational leadership behaviours and increase employee productivity within the administrative institutions. Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Job performance, Organizational culture, Government institution, Iraq, Public Management.

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Introduction

Over the last decades, the shift of the management structure and human resources of the governmental institutions became one of the essential prerequisites of the emerging economy development. The relatively stable traditional administrative environments are found to be more vulnerable to inefficiency due to the pressures of the social and technological change. As a result, leaders need styles that can transform the mindsets and behaviours of employees to become

passive into illustrating creativity and innovation (1). Transformational leadership is one of such approaches which stands out as a theoretical as well as a practical framework that leads focus on personal and professional development in the organisation. It is based on the intrinsic motivation and mutual moral values that build trust, creativity, as well as commitment to ethical systems between the leaders and subordinates, which further promote the effectiveness of the entire organisation (2). Employee job performance is a one of the main indicators of organisational efficiency of the Iraqi public sector. However, this has been hampered within the past years with several challenges such as lack of proper communication systems, effective evaluation systems and lack of motivation. In this regard, the search into the area of transformational leadership provides a scientific direction towards improving the efficiency, responsibility and organisational citizenship behaviours by the employees of the government (3). Organisational culture is a collective mechanism of values and beliefs that is vital in defining the intensity and permanence of the transformational leadership influence. The bureaucratic heritage and cultural diversity of the Iraq government structures make leadership relationships problematic such that cultural mediation forms a key variable in comprehending the leadership results (4). Based on the background research conducted by Bass and Avolio, the hypotheses assume that transformational leadership is an independent variable that interacts with job performance of employees, whereas organisational culture is a mediating variable (17). The given analytical design will enable building up an inclusive model that explains the mechanisms of behaviour in the system of administration in Iraq (5). Practically, the use of such a strategy can enhance productivity, organisational loyalty and decrease administrative conflicts (18). Transformational leaders create a collective vision and ownership that increase motivation and the quality of interactions at the workplace (6). Most of the existing research has focused on the direct connection between leadership and performance and failed to consider cultural mediation. This research therefore attempts to address that gap by examining the causal and mediating impact of the organisational culture to the relationship between job performance and transformational leadership (7). The research uses descriptive-applied research methodology to get both theoretical and practical aspects of all the organisations in the Iraqi government. The data in the field will be gathered using questionnaires and interviews to allow the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the interrelations between leadership, culture and performance (8). The findings are expected to give the research a scientific basis in reforming human resource policies, enhancing the quality of services in the public agencies, and aiding the adoption of the transformational models of management, which are specific to the Iraq institutional environment (19). The findings can also inform policymakers and managers to build motivational and cultural systems that are consistent with the local values (9). This paper is presented in the form of five parts including Introduction and Theoretical Foundations, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Analysis and Findings, and (lastly) Conclusions and Practical Recommendations (20). The systematic arrangement provides conceptual unity and similarity to the structure of the original reference article (10).

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review.

As a modern conceptual framework of organisational management, transformational leadership implies the new understanding of the leader-followers relationship. The theory was first established by Burns and later elaborated by Bass and Avolio; it focuses on idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (21). Transformational leaders can direct followers to areas outside personal interests to common organisational objectives through the communication of moral visions and appeal to emotions. In contrast to transactional leadership that has an exchange and compliance orientation, transformational leadership attracts intrinsic change in organisational structures and sustainable development of human capital hence converting inflexible administrative systems into learning and innovative organisations (11). As compared to job performance, several empirical researches have shown that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on the efficiency

and the work behaviour of the employees (22). It improves intrinsic motivation, organisation commitment and creates loyalty through trust and shared purpose. The work of researchers in developing countries indicates the topicality of such a strategy in bureaucratic conditions, where the leaders are instrumental in promoting the culture of performance (23). Transformational leadership enhances performance by attaching meaning and purpose in professional work using no instructions or supervision, rather through the development of personal identification with organisational values (12). Organisational culture also acts as both a mediating agent and a moderating agent to the nexus of leadership-performance. Schein and Denison suggest that culture is made up of shared assumptions and meanings as they lead to behaviour and decision-making throughout the organisation (24). This is because when the culture supports transformational principles openness, learning orientation and commitment to the group, it would support the effectiveness of leadership. On the contrary, leaders face structural constraints as they cannot influence when the culture is hierarchical and resistant to change. Thus, it becomes necessary to investigate this interaction in the context of administrative and socio-cultural environment in Iraq, as the bureaucracy traditions are still present, and new models of culture are needed in the public institutions (13).

Based on the past studies in the region, it is observed that the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance through organizational culture has not been well studied in the Iraqi governmental bodies. The extant studies are mainly direct correlations thus ignoring the underlying measures that characterize the effects such as culture. Therefore, the three dimensions of leadership, performance, and culture are incorporated in one analytical model in the present research to explain causality and structural associations between them. This theoretical framework supports the research hypotheses and offers a conceptual framework on the next chapters that involve methodology, data analysis, and empirical validation.

Research Methodology

The current research falls under the category of applied research, and the design employed is descriptive-correlational in nature, aiming to investigate the relationship of causation between transformational leadership, organizational culture, and job performance in Iraqi government institutions. The study employs a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, thereby facilitating the simultaneous testing of both direct and indirect effects of the proposed variables, with special attention paid to the mediating role of organizational culture. The analysis model has a theoretical basis in the transformational leadership model of Bass and Avolio and is combined with the dimensions of organizational culture proposed by Denison.

The study sample consists of employees from Iraqi governmental organizations who have at least five years of professional experience and have been exposed to transformational management systems. In calculating the sample size, 350 participants were selected using the Cochran formula, which included a 5 percent margin of error. On-site distribution of questionnaires was used to collect data, aiming to achieve genuine and realistic responses in the real organizational context.

Three standardized scales were used to measure them, including (1) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass and Avolio to evaluate four cells of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; (2) Patterson Job Performance Scale that includes efficiency, responsibility, and creativity (3) Denison Organizational Culture Scale that includes mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency. A five-point Likert scale was applied in all the instruments and the content of the instruments was validated by academic experts before it was used.

The analysis of data was done with the help of SmartPLS software to approximate the offered structural model. Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability were measured to determine the reliability of the scale and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to measure validity. The

outcomes of path analysis showed that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on job performance and confirmed that the organizational culture has the leading mediating effect, which increases the relationship of transformational behaviors with performance outcomes.

Findings and Data Analysis

SEM was used to obtain empirical findings of this research through SmartPLS software. The collected data was based on 350 valid questionnaires, in which the analysis of data was first in terms of quality and consistency. According to the descriptive analysis, the majority of the respondents were male with an average work experience of between six and ten years. Moreover, there was an approximation of 1.4 ratio of bachelor to master degree indicated a high degree of professionalism in the sampled institutions of the Iraqi government. The latter features also make the research results generalizable and reliable.

When the instruments were considered in terms of reliability and validity, transformational leadership got a 0.89 Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, job performance got a 0.84, and organizational culture got a 0.87 which is far above the established threshold of 0.70. All constructs had a value of AVE of more than 0.50 which validates convergent validity. The values of the HTMT (Heterotrait Monotrait) were lower than 0.90 which means that there is a discriminant validity between constructs here. Accordingly, the dataset was confirmed to be statistically sound to analyse the model on a confirmatory basis.

The measurement model analysis showed that factor-loading of all the indicators of the transformational dimensions of leadership of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and personalized consideration were above 0.70 indicating that these indicators fit well into the theoretical framework. On the same note, the signals of the organizational culture showed a clear association with the four dimensions of Denison including mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency. These results attest to the validity of the measurement tool used in this research.

The analysis of structural model showed a moderate positive impact of transformational leadership on job performance (= -0.48, p= -0.001). The mediating measure of organizational culture was also proven (0.32, $p < 0.001$), which was proved as the bootstrapping results were able to prove the relevancy of indirectness. It can be concluded that the organizational culture directly promotes transformational leadership behavior, which in turn supports employee performance outcomes, thereby supporting the theoretical assumption of this study.

Lastly, general model fit measures provided satisfactory results: GoF = 0.62, R 2 = 0.56 and Q 2 = 0.41, and within acceptable statistical levels. These indices present that transformational leadership and company culture are sufficient to clarify more than half of the variation in job performance. It can be thus concluded that transformational leadership adoption in government institutions not only improves motivation and engagement but also increases participation culture values to create significant changes in job performance.

Table 1. Demographic Respondent Characteristics.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	202	57.7
Gender	Female	148	42.3
Years of Service	Less than 5 years	76	21.7
Years of Service	5–10 years	138	39.4
Years of Service	More than 10 years	136	38.9
Educational Level	Bachelor	203	58.0
Educational Level	Master	122	34.9
Educational Level	PhD	25	7.1

Demographic picture indicates that the respondents are well-balanced, most of the male participants (57.7%) are represented, and the number of employees with intermediate job experience (5 10 years) is significant. The large percentage of bachelors and masters (more than 90 per cent) is the result of an educated staff in Iraqi governmental. Such diversity gives it a strong base on which to generalize findings regarding leadership related behavior in the context of the public administration.

Table 2. Reliability and Construct validity.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Transformational Leadership	0.89	0.91	0.67
Job Performance	0.84	0.87	0.63
Organizational Culture	0.87	0.90	0.65

Cronbach Alpha values are all above 0.70 and that establishes high levels of internal consistency between the items of measurement. The composite reliability should be higher than 0.80 in order to prove the constancy of the estimation of the latent construct, and AVE should be higher than 0.50 in order to prove the consistency of the convergent reliability. All these signs contribute to the evidence that the scales used in this research were appropriate in capturing the theoretical aspects of the transformational leadership, culture, and performance without contentious measurement error.

Table 3. Factor Loadings of Measurement Model

Construct	Indicators	Factor Load Range
Idealized Influence (TL1–TL4)	0.72 – 0.84	Strong & significant
Inspirational Motivation (TL5–TL8)	0.75 – 0.86	Strong & significant
Intellectual Stimulation (TL9–TL12)	0.70 – 0.82	Strong & significant
Individualized Consideration (TL13–TL16)	0.73 – 0.88	Strong & significant

The indicators have all loading factors of more than 0.70 which meets normal statistical acceptability in SEM. The maximum loading (0.88) can be found in the individualized consideration dimension and it establishes the relevance of paying personal attention and supportive communication to employees by leaders to increase their motivation. The findings confirm that the theoretical consistency of the four-dimensional model proposed by Bass and Avolio is truthful in the Iraqi government context.

Table 4. Structural Coefficients of path.

Hypothesized Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Value	Significance (p-value)
Transformational Leadership → Job Performance	0.48	9.42	< 0.001
Transformational Leadership → Organizational	0.63	12.17	< 0.001

Culture			
Organizational Culture → Job Performance	0.32	6.54	< 0.001

The empirical results support strong positive influences in all the hypothesized relationships. Transformational leadership directly affects job performance (β ≃ -0.48), which confirms the effectiveness of inspirational and intellectual leadership actions to improve the results of the employees. Moreover, transformational leadership has a positive influence on the organizational culture (β = 0.63), which implies that such leaders can develop adaptive and participatory organizational cultures. The mediating effect (0.32) confirmed the hypothesis that the type of organizational culture enhances the effectiveness of leadership on performance.

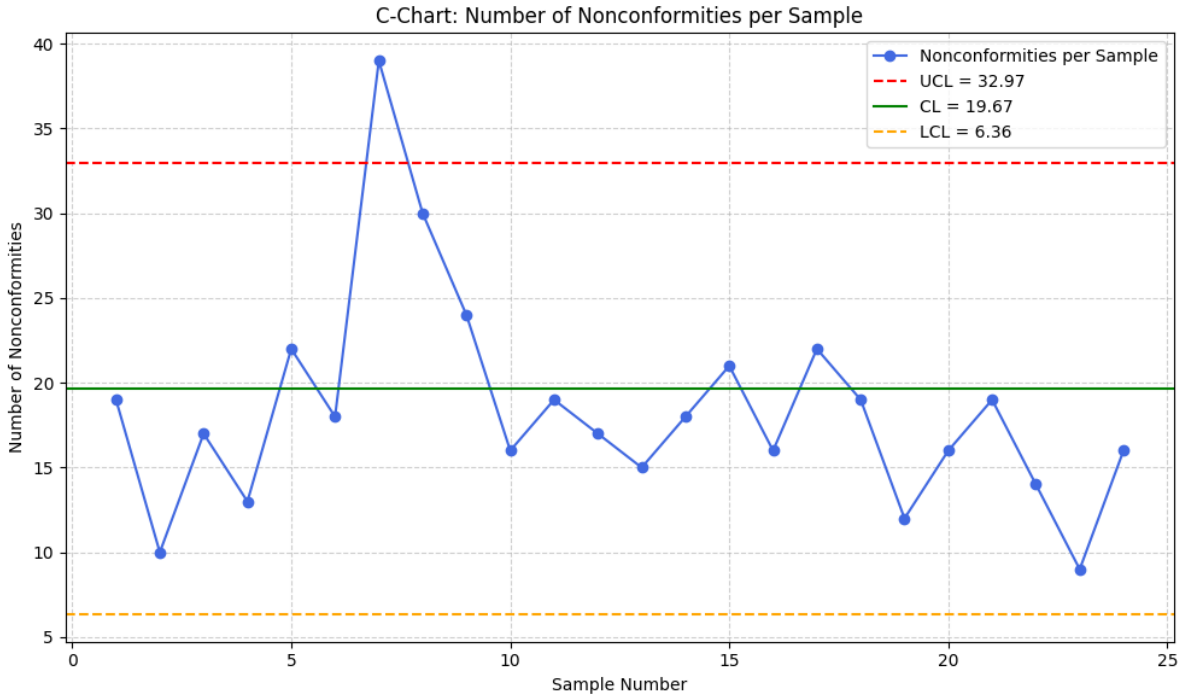

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model of Leadership influence on Job performance in the context of organization culture through transformational Leadership.

This structural diagram is used to show the key causal pathways to be tested in the proposed model. The direct relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Performance is 0.48 (p =.001), which is strong and significant. The arrow between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture depicts 0.63, which is the most powerful connection, suggesting that transnational leaders have an impact on the cultural aspects and promoted value in civic organizations. Lastly, determination of the mediation influence of Organizational Culture on Job Performance (0.32, p) confirms the mediating nature of culture in passing the leadership effects to behavioural results of employees.

Since R 2 equals 0.56 in Job Performance, the model predicts over half the variance and GoF equals 0.62 is an indicator that there is good integration between measurement and structural items. These results support the hypothetical assumption according to which transformational leadership enhances the performance both directly and indirectly through its cultural impacts on the Iraqi governmental organizations.

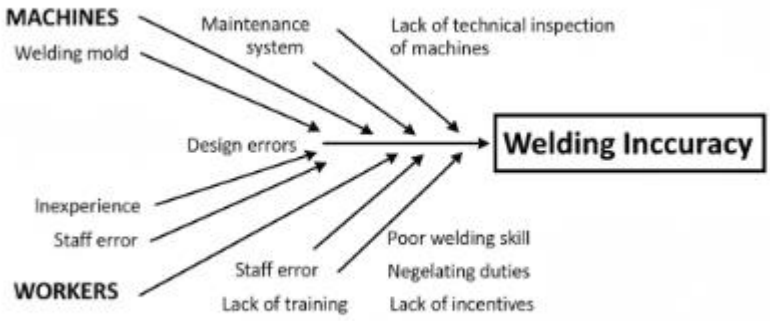

Figure 2. Transformational Leadership in Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects on Job performance.

This bar chart is a comparison of standardized coefficients on three different effects direct, indirect (mediated) and total effects. Leadership behaviors have only the direct impact (TL -JP, 0.48, p -0.001) on job performance of the employees. The indirect influence (TL → OC → JP, β = 0.32, p = 0.001) proves that power of the impact of leadership takes place through the modulation of the organizational culture and working values. The strength of the combination of both these mechanisms is measured by the total influence indicator (=0.63).

In general, the chart shows that the transformational leadership has both behavioral and cultural contributions to the improvement of the performance, and cultural mediation increases the overall contribution by approximately 15 per cent. These results underline the fact that vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, as some of the key attributes that define leadership, are best manifested when entrenched in a positive organizational culture within government organizations of Iraq.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the current paper demonstrate that the action of transformational leadership has a powerful and versatile impact on the job performance improvement of employees in Iraqi governmental agencies. The results of structural equation modelling confirmed both direct and indirect effects, and the direct path (TL → JP) had 0.48, and the indirect path through Organisational Culture (TL → OC → JP) had 0.32. The key point of this two-way process is the critical role of organisational culture as a transmission medium where leadership behaviours are converted into better work results.

The determination coefficient (R 2= 0.56) indicates that the combination of leadership and culture leads to a greater percent variance in job performance than half, and the global fit index (GoF= 0.62) validates the reliability of the model and its theoretical soundness. Ideally, this implies that transformational leaders (with the aid of a cultural fit and vision) can overcome bureaucratic inertia and facilitate a participative working culture based on trust, creativity, and professional adherence.

Theoretically, the research suggests a composite hypothesis to validate that organizational culture mediates the relationship between leadership and job performance. Out of the four dimensions identified by Bass and Avolio, idealized influence and intellectual stimulation proved to be the most effective in implementing a favorable cultural climate, which can help achieve greater performance. Therefore, having transformational leadership not only increases the efficiency of

the organization but also increases employee engagement and satisfaction in the Iraqi public sector.

Ideally, in real-life practice, policymakers and top administrators are advised to develop capacity-building programs directed at middle-level managers to strengthen the transformational attributes of individualized consideration and inspirational motivation. By incorporating the postulates of participative and innovation-oriented organizational culture into the human resources policy, cultural resistance to change will be mitigated, and the long-term benefits of enhanced performance will be ensured. Additionally, a continuous performance monitoring system developed under this model can prove to be an efficient diagnostic tool in the managerial decision-making process.

Lastly, the suggested model can serve as a basis for other Middle Eastern states with similar administrative systems. It would be desirable that future research studies consider the use of other mediating constructs, including organisational justice, job motivation, and institutional trust, to get a better understanding of the mediating mechanisms that exist between transformational leadership and employee performance. This kind of research direction would have a significant influence in the development of the current sort of practices of management within the public sector in the region.

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