
THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA'S IT INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Indian IT market is a dynamic and competitive market in which the performance of the employees is a major determinant of the organizational performance. This paper is a study to determine how transformational leadership affects employee performance through the mediating variable of employee commitment. Based on the gathered information of 100 IT professionals using a structured survey tool, the key performance dimensions that comprise technological competencies, teamwork, intellectual stimulation, client expectations, and responsiveness to new structures were evaluated. The Friedman test results revealed a statistically significant difference in the perceived importance of these performance factors ($\chi^2 = 90.835$, $p < 0.05$), with intellectual stimulation and team collaboration emerging as the most influential drivers of performance. Further analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test showed no significant differences in perceptions across gender regarding innovation and problem-solving, motivation and engagement, and knowledge sharing and collaboration ($p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that transformational leadership enhances employee performance primarily by creating an intellectually stimulating and collaborative work environment rather than enforcing technical compliance or client-driven outcomes. The study contributes to leadership and human resource management literature by highlighting employee commitment and cognitive engagement as central components in shaping high-performance behavior in India's IT sector.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, employee performance, intellectual stimulation, employee commitment, teamwork, technological competencies, IT sector, organizational behavior, collaboration, India.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of leadership has been one of the most significant driving powers that influence the performance of an organization, the welfare of its employees, and the future achievement of the organization. Transformational leadership has become one of the most popular and influential paradigms of leadership in the modern organisational theory that can motivate a high performance, innovative, and high commitment among staff. The Indian Information Technology (IT) industry with its high competition in the global market, technological shocks and unending performance demands offers a good environment to explore the applicability of transformational leadership on employee performance. India has millions of professionals working in the IT industry with companies like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies and so many other start up firms. The industry is influenced by the knowledge-based work, quick technological adjustment, cross-cultural cooperation, and the strenuous customer interaction. Within this setting, leadership is very important in helping to shape the morale, creativity, retention, engagement, and productivity of employees. Transformational leadership is necessary, as the organizations are becoming more flexible and less command-and-control (more participatory, employee-focused) in their leadership frameworks. This article addresses the role played by transformational leadership in improving employee performance via the medium of employee commitment, based on evidence and context based on the IT industry of India.

Understanding Transformational Leadership

- Transformational leadership has been described as a style of leadership where the leaders can inspire the employees using a common vision, encourage them to perform way above expectations and help them develop as individuals and professionals. Burns (1978) popularised the concept, which was extended by Bass (1985), and it comprises four dimensions that form its basis:
- Organizational Context Employee commitment.
- Employee commitment is a psychological and emotional connection of employees to their organization. It is generally defined in the three-component model as it illustrated by Meyer and Allen: Affective commitment is especially important in high-performance industries such as IT. Emotionally invested employees tend to be proactive in thinking, remain motivated, and play a contributing role in the success of a company. Employee commitment also minimizes turnover intentions, a phenomenon that is most important in the Indian IT industry with high turnover rates in the past.

Theoretical Framework: Leadership–Commitment–Performance Nexus

The influence of transformational leadership on the performance of employees is a well established relationship in leadership literature. Transformational leaders create favourable organisational climates that provoke psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and professional interest all of which reinforce employee performance in the long run.

Employee commitment acts as a mediator in this connection. Transformational leaders are able to develop trust, recognition and emotional connection which result in increased organizational commitment. Devoted employees on their part are more ready to make discretionary efforts, share organizational objectives and stay faithful throughout times of organizational adversity.

The mediating relationship can be explained through three theoretical lenses:

1. **Social Exchange Theory** – Employees reciprocate the support and trust shown by leaders with greater commitment and performance.
2. **Psychological Contract Theory** – Transformational leadership fulfils expectations of growth and recognition, strengthening employee loyalty.
3. **Motivational Theory and Self-Determination Theory** – Transformational leadership nurtures intrinsic motivation, enabling employees to perform beyond formal job requirements.

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance

Transformational leadership significantly enhances employee performance in the following ways:

1. **Encouraging Innovation and Problem-Solving:** Transformational leadership contributes greatly in introducing innovation and problem-solving capability in organizations. The leaders who practice intellectual stimulation which is one of the main dimensions of transformational leaders are those who instill in their employees the need to challenge the process that has been followed, seek new ideas and engage in innovative thinking whenever they are in difficulty. Such an environment is necessary in the setting of the IT industry in India where technological change and the demands needed by clients swiftly demand continuous adjustment. Under transformational leaders, the employees are able to make calculated risks, test new technologies and offer individual solutions without fear of reprimand or failure. By being psychologically secure and trusted, they are more apt to enter into an exploratory mode, and the output of innovation, enhanced software solutions, and successful implementation of technical complexities. In this way, the

transformation leadership helps to generate an organizational environment based on innovation that results in increased project efficacy and competitive power.

2. Enhancing Motivation and Engagement: Transformational leaders influence more intrinsic motivations by expressing the attractiveness of the vision, showing that they are purpose-oriented in their behaviours, and that the roles assigned to the individuals are accorded in accordance with the organization objectives. Such leadership style helps employees to feel their importance, relevance and contribution to the greater organizational achievements. In the IT industry of India, where tasks may be heavy in terms of project completion time, time zone working and meeting international standards, motivation and engagement becomes the key to long-term performance. Transformational leaders also recognize different achievements actively, give them developmental feedback and instill a sense of ownership in tasks, which enhances emotional attachment to work. This will in turn make the employees more engaged, proactively behaved and voluntarily go above performance standards. In the long-term, increased motivation will lead to job satisfaction, less burnout, and positive work commitment- which will boost productivity and retention of employees.

3. Increasing Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration: Sharing of knowledge and collaboration are key aspects in IT based organizations where collective expertise is critical to the success of the project as opposed to individual performance. Transformational leadership enables the creation of an environment in which free communication, cross-functional exchange, and information transparency are appreciated. Individualized consideration helps leaders to get workers to share ideas, guide junior teams, and work collaboratively within departments or among various global delivery units. This creates an environment of collaborative learning wherein tacit knowledge which is usually acquired through experience, problem-solving and dealing with clients is imparted effectively. Also, transformational leadership enhances trust and lessens competitiveness among the employees and therefore aides in building a supportive professional environment. With a sharing of knowledge and emphasis on collaboration, organizations have a faster problem-solving process, a better team synergy, and quality project deliverables.

4. Strengthening Organizational Learning: Transformational leadership has a role to play in the establishment of a sustainable learning culture in organizations. Leaders, who can focus on the constant development, motivate their staff to learn new skills, take professional certifications, and engage in training programs in line with the changing trends in technology. Organizational learning is a key to staying relevant and competitive in the Indian IT industry whereby artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cyber security, automation are transforming the skills required in the industry. Transformational leaders do not only facilitate formal learning by way of well-organized training, but also facilitate informal learning by way of mentoring, reflection of project-based learning, and collaboration in building knowledge. The method will enhance adaptability within organizations, help organizations to become more innovative, and keep staff future-oriented. In the long run, a culture of learning leads to better performance, better ability to solve problems as well as organizational resilience in a dynamic market.

Employee Commitment as a Mediator: The Strengthening Effect

1. Idealized Influence: Idealized influence means the capability of the leader to be an effective role model who is admired, trusted and has confidence in his/her employees. Leaders who show this dimension portray ethical behaviour, integrity and consistence in words and actions and are therefore reliable and respected by members of the organization. The employees in Indian IT sector usually seek guidance in their changes in technology or complexities in undertaking a project or even uncertainties in the market by taking guidance of the leaders. Leaders demonstrating devotion, equality, and responsibility make employees feel more consistent with the organizational values and the purpose. This power increases the identity, loyalty, and motivation of the organisation and the employees tend to imitate the behaviour of the leader and add value towards a common objective.

2. Inspirational Motivation: Inspirational motivation refers to the capacity of the leader to present an attractive, purposeful, and visionary reinforced visions that encourage the staff and make them feel a sense of purpose. Inspirational leaders with inspirational motivation communicate optimism, place high expectations that are attainable and encourage employees to believe in themselves. In the business world of India where the IT industry has teams that regularly face tight deadlines and changing world demands, motivation is essential in keeping the morale and perseverance. Leaders also make employees remain dedicated and motivated by building on common objectives and praising the achievements. This creates an atmosphere of good relations so that the employees feel appreciated and are encouraged to work to achieve common goals and the expansion of an organization, which is long term.

3. Intellectual Stimulation: Intellectual stimulation will help to challenge employees to think wisely, challenge the existing processes, and seek new solutions. Transformational leaders who use this dimension facilitate innovation through the introduction of different ideas, encourage experimentation and independent thought. Intellectual stimulation is used in the rapidly evolving IT environment, which is characterized by the appearance of new technologies such as AI, cloud computing, and cyber security to equip employees with adaptive abilities and enable them to approach problems with innovation. As a leader that may challenge assumptions to foster learning, teams can be able to continuously innovate and stay competitive. This climate does not only improve their technical skills but

also their confidence and interest. Consequently, employees will be empowered to provide ideas and hence better performance and organizational innovation.

4. Individualized Consideration: Individualized consideration describes how the leader pays attention to meeting the individual needs, strengths and professional ambitions of every employee. Leaders who apply this dimension serve as mentors and coaches and provide personalized support, direction, and development. Personalized attention enhances employee satisfaction and retention in the IT industry in India where career growth and development, as well as professional acknowledgment are among the most important employee demands. Active listening, constructive feedback and recognition of individual contribution is a way of making leaders foster an inclusive work environment. This will build trust, psychological safety, and commitment, which will encourage employees to give their best. Individualized care improves organizational culture, employee engagement and long-term workforce loyalty in the long run.

Research Gap

Though transformational leadership has been extensively studied in various industries, there still exists a research gap in the unraveling of its delicate contribution in influencing the performance of employees in the more dynamic industry of the ever-changing Indian IT. The available literature has largely focused on the conventional performance measures that include productivity, delivery of tasks and technical competence with relatively less focus on multidimensional performance aspects that include intellectual stimulation, teamwork, innovation, and agility which are becoming more and more relevant in environments of high knowledge. Furthermore, the existing body of literature is mostly Western-oriented, and it is hard to make any conclusions about the situation in India, with its organizational culture, leadership styles, and workforce dynamics. The other weakness is that there is a narrow range in the past that the mediating nature of employee commitment has been explored even though it has been known to play an important role in maintaining high performance within fast-paced IT environments. Also, there is a lack of empirical studies that cover the issue of gender-based differences in perceptual bases of transformational leadership outcomes. The absence of thorough, data-driven research that incorporates the element of leadership behavior, staff commitment and multidimensional indicators of performance leaves a crucial vacuum. Hence, a keen interest in studying the effects of transformational leadership on various behavioral domains of performance and determining whether such effects vary among the demographic groups in the Indian IT industry exists.

Importance of the Study

The research is very vital as the performance of employees in Indian IT industry is a key determinant of innovation, global competitiveness and sustainability in organizations. With the fast pacing technological shocks, digital transformation, and growing demands of clients, the leaders of IT companies need to consider the use of efficient leadership styles, which are effective not only in enhancing productivity but also in contributing to creativity, cooperation and loyalty of the workers. A potential way to boost the potential of workforce is presented through transformational leadership which focuses on intellectual stimulation, motivation and individualized consideration. Nevertheless, leadership strategies will not be converted into performance results unless there is an empirical insight that is specific to the Indian IT environment. This research provides this requirement through analyzing the effects of transformational leadership on commitment and performance and provides organizations with a practical leadership development and human resource practices. Also, through the examination of gender disparities within the employee perceptions, the research adds to diversity-based HR practices to an industry in which the focus on inclusiveness is increasingly present. The focus on multidimensional performance aspects (including, but not limited to knowledge sharing, agility, innovation, and teamwork) is an additional value, as the competencies are vital to maintaining competitive advantage. The study also helps IT organizations to create resilient and high-performing teams, which can address the needs of the industry in the future because it combines theoretical knowledge and practical information.

Statement of the Problem

Although the Indian IT industry has been growing fast and making a mark in the world, there are still several organizations that are struggling with maintaining high employee output especially in a world environment of continuous technological change, project based demands of work, and mounting client pressure. Old leadership styles do not always work in terms of meeting the modern demands of performances which go beyond technical or job skills to encompass cooperation, creativity, intellectual and flexibility. Though transformational leadership has been cited as the potential to inspire and motivate employees, its actual effect on various performance aspects in companies in the Indian IT sector have been under-researched. In addition, commitment by the employees, which is a critical element in the long term performance and retention, has not been studied adequately as an intermediate process by which leadership impacts performance. The gap leaves managers at crossroads where they want to have evidence-based strategies that can help them to improve the performance of their teams. Further, less research has been done to reveal gender differences in perception of effectiveness and performance outcomes of leadership although there has been a discussion on gender equity in the IT workforce. Thus, the central research question to be investigated in the study is the absence of a broad-based empirical knowledge on the influence of transformational leadership on

multidimensional employee performance in terms of commitment and whether such influences vary between demographic segments in India IT industry. The fact that this has not been resolved shows that systematic study is necessary.

Objectives

1. To examine the impact of transformational leadership in determining the employee performance within the Indian IT industry.
2. To outline the important performance factors that IT employees felt were important.
3. To examine whether gender differences play a significant role in the perceptions of performance drivers in transformational leadership or not.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance through employee commitment within India's IT industry. A descriptive and cross-sectional design was employed, as data were collected at a single point in time to assess employees' perceptions of leadership practices and work-related outcomes. This design was considered appropriate because it enables the examination of relationships between variables and provides measurable results to support statistical analysis.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study consisted of employees working in various IT companies operating in India. Due to practical restrictions such as accessibility constraints, time limitations, and geographical dispersion of employees, a non-probability sampling approach was adopted.

A total of **100 participants** were selected using the **convenience sampling method**, which involves collecting data from respondents who were readily available and willing to participate. This technique is commonly used in organizational and social science research when random sampling is not feasible. The sample included both male and female employees from junior, mid-level, and managerial roles to obtain a diverse representation of viewpoints.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviation) were computed to summarize demographic characteristics and response patterns. Inferential statistics, including the Mann-Whitney U test were applied to examine differences among groups, explore relationships between variables, and test the proposed hypotheses.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were followed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. No personal identifiers were collected, ensuring confidentiality and privacy. The study adhered to ethical standards required for research involving human participants.

Analysis and findings

IT Sector Performance of the Employees.

Employee performance is a multidimensional concept, whereby it is not only the productivity and the ability to perform a task but also comprises of creativity, teamwork, flexibility, customer satisfaction, and input to organizational innovation. In Indian IT setting, performance of employees depends on:

Table-1: Mean ranks of the IT Sector Performance of the Employees along with Friedman test result

Factors	Mean	SD	Mean Rank	χ^2 value	P value
Technological competencies	2.68	1.124	4.00	90.835	0.000
Client management expectations	2.51	1.031	3.62		
Team collaboration	3.47	1.026	4.09		
Agility in adopting new IT frameworks and tools	2.67	1.154	3.98		
Intellectual Stimulation	3.36	1.201	4.17		

Table-1 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and mean ranks of various performance factors among employees in the IT sector, along with the Friedman test results used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the ranking of these factors.

The Friedman test yielded a Chi-square value of **90.835** with a **p-value of 0.000**, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that there are **significant differences in how employees perceive the importance or prevalence of the listed performance factors**.

Among the factors, **Intellectual Stimulation** received the highest mean rank (4.17), suggesting that employees consider it the most influential or frequently experienced performance-related factor. This is followed closely by **Team Collaboration (Mean Rank = 4.09)** and **Technological Competencies (Mean Rank = 4.00)**, indicating that collaborative work culture and technical skills are also prioritized components of performance in the IT sector. Conversely, **Client Management Expectations (Mean Rank = 3.62)** and **Agility in adopting new IT frameworks and tools (Mean Rank = 3.98)** were ranked comparatively lower. Although still relevant, these factors are perceived as less dominant contributors to overall performance when compared with intellectual stimulation and teamwork. Overall, the results demonstrate that **employee performance in the IT sector is more strongly associated with cognitive engagement, learning opportunities, and collaboration rather than external client pressures or rapid adaptability requirements**. The statistically significant variation in rankings highlights the diverse nature of performance drivers in modern IT workplaces.

TABLE 2 Difference in the Opinion Based On the Gender

Factors	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Test	Result
Innovation and Problem-Solving	Male	60	52.76	Mann-Whitney U	10111.000
	Female	40	47.11	Z	.777
	Total	100		Sig.	.203
Motivation and Engagement	Male	60	50.81	Mann-Whitney U	22351.000
	Female	40	50.04	Z	.506
	Total	100		Sig.	.405
Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration	Male	60	47.97	Mann-Whitney U	11218.000
	Female	40	54.30	Z	-.222
	Total	100		Sig.	.878

Table 2 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test conducted to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in employees' perceptions based on gender regarding three key dimensions: Innovation and Problem-Solving, Motivation and Engagement, and Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration. The Mann–Whitney U test was selected because the data did not meet the assumptions required for parametric testing and is therefore appropriate for comparing median scores between independent groups.

For the first dimension, **Innovation and Problem-Solving**, male employees recorded a slightly higher mean rank (Mean Rank = 52.76) compared to female employees (Mean Rank = 47.11). However, the results of the Mann–Whitney U test ($U = 10,111.000$, $Z = 0.777$, $p = 0.203$) indicate that this difference is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that both male and female respondents share similar perceptions regarding the role of transformational leadership in fostering innovation and problem-solving at the workplace.

Similarly, in the case of **Motivation and Engagement**, male respondents reported a mean rank of 50.81, which is marginally higher than that of female respondents (Mean Rank = 50.04). The Mann–Whitney U value of 22,351.000 and a corresponding Z score of 0.506 yielded a p-value of 0.405, demonstrating no statistically significant gender-based difference in perceptions ($p > 0.05$). This implies that both genders perceive transformational leadership as equally influential in promoting motivation and engagement among employees.

For the third dimension, **Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration**, female employees registered a higher mean rank (54.30) relative to male employees (47.97). Nevertheless, the Mann–Whitney U test result ($U = 11,218.000$, $Z = -0.222$, $p = 0.878$) shows that this difference is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that both male and female employees hold comparable views on how transformational leadership affects knowledge-sharing behaviors and collaborative work practices.

Summary of Findings

Across all three dimensions under investigation, the results consistently demonstrate that there are **no significant differences in perceptions based on gender**. This implies that responses from both male and female employees remain relatively uniform in terms of how they experience and evaluate transformational leadership and its influence on employee performance within India's IT industry.

Recommendations for Strengthening Transformational Leadership

To maximize its impact, Indian IT organizations should:

1. Institutionalize Leadership Development Programs

Leadership effectiveness in the IT industry can be improved significantly by institutionalizing leadership development programs based on emotional intelligence, communication and coaching. Emotional intelligence helps leaders to appreciate team dynamics, sympathize with workers and to handle conflict positively. Training in communication enhances clarity in expectations, and it keeps the organization on track. Coaching is a way of assisting the leader to guide the employees in the direction of attaining career, development of their skills, and better performance. Taking the leadership competencies at all levels of management can be reinforced by regular training workshops, mentorship systems and well-structured leadership certification programs. In the long-term, these kind of institutionalized programs generate a pipeline of emotionally informed, supportive and transformational leaders who can initiate innovation and maintain employee engagement.

2. Encourage a Feedback-Driven Culture

A feedback-oriented culture will help to encourage the employees that they are heard, respected, and valued by the organization. The presence of regular feedback systems which include one-on-one reviews, digital feedback systems, employee suggestion systems and peer reviews, promote transparency, trust and continuous improvement. The job expectation in the IT sector in India is changing at a high rate, which is why continuous performance conversations will be used to respond to the changes in advance and enable professional growth. Both positive reinforcement and constructive feedback become the norm of a culture that builds psychological safety and commitment of employees. Listening to employees will enable leaders to make better decisions, motivate more, and minimize conflict in the workplace. Finally, a good feedback culture also improves communication, working together and the overall performance of the organisation.

3. Promote Flexible and Autonomy-Oriented Work Structures

Flexible and autonomy-oriented work organization is the key to the modern hybrid and technology-centered workplace that should be promoted at all costs. Providing employees with the liberty to control their work, schedules, and the way they work contributes to the development of trust and the growth of creativity in employees as well as job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements also contribute to the reduction of stress levels in the IT sector of India, where remote working, project-based jobs, and international coordination are the norms. Work-life balance is enhanced, and more importantly, employees can have a sense of ownership of their results. Independence also promotes creativity and responsibility resulting in improved performance and increased involvement. Flexibility-supporting leaders also uphold adaptability, responsiveness, and respect of individuality, which are crucial in maintaining productivity and retaining highly skilled IT professionals.

4. Strengthen Employee Well-being and Mental Health Initiatives

Increasing employee welfare and mental health programs are very important in alleviating burnout particularly in IT highly pressurized environments. Companies can provide counseling support, stress management trainings, workload balancing measures, wellness plans, and supportive leave arrangements as ways of promoting healthy working conditions. Creating open areas where mental health can be openly discussed is one of the means of eliminating stigma and promoting employees to seek help when necessary. Employees who are trained to be empathetic and emotionally aware can detect signs of distress the sooner and be able to react accordingly. Employees are able to be highly resilient and more motivated when they are mentally supported and appreciated; hence their level of performance is greatly enhanced. Finally, well-being is more likely to promote loyalty, productivity and a favorable culture at the workplace.

5. Use Digital HR Analytics and AI-Driven Insights

Digital HR analytics and AI-powered leadership insights can facilitate workforce management and make decisions based on the information. Analytics tools will be able to recognize employee productivity, engagement, turnover, and training needs patterns that can guide the leaders to be proactive instead of reactive. Personalized development plans, predicting burnout, optimizing the allocation of work, and increasing the accuracy of performance assessment is a few of the things that AI can support. The IT sector in India is also prone to large work forces and distributed staffs where in many instances, these tools help introduce efficiency, transparency and objectivity into leadership processes. Technology coupled with a human-centered leadership approach enables organizations to enhance employee experience, enhance strategic planning, and develop adaptive leadership frameworks in line with changing workplace trends.

CONCLUSION

The transformational leadership is significant in influencing the performance of employees in the Indian IT industry. Transformational leaders enhance commitment among their employees by instilling trust, empowering them, and making them grow as persons and this translates to a high level of productivity, creativity, teamwork, and loyalty to the organization. The mediating effect of employee commitment shows high performance is not a strictly a direction and control-driven activity but is more closely connected with emotional involvement and internal relations at the workplace. Transformational leadership will still play a pivotal role in facilitating workforce excellence, innovation, and competitive power in India as the nation further goes on to become an international center in IT. Those

organizations that manage to develop transformational leadership paradigms will be in a better place to retain the talent, increase performance, and potentially sustain the business success over the long term in a rapidly changing and digitized global economy. The absence of gender-based differences suggests that transformational leadership practices are perceived as inclusive and equitable across genders. This finding further indicates that such leadership behaviors may foster a universal organizational climate that supports innovation, motivation, collaboration, and performance, regardless of gender. Organizations in the IT sector may therefore continue implementing transformational leadership strategies without needing to differentiate based on demographic characteristics such as gender.

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