

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Performance with Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

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ABSTRACT

The National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka play a crucial role in preparing future teachers. Yet, the goal of producing quality teachers remains unmet as limited resources, outdated practices, and systemic inefficiencies continue to undermine their effectiveness. To address this gap, it examined how transformational leadership impacts job performance, with job satisfaction as a mediator. This exploratory study addresses the gap by examining these dynamics among 226 teacher educators, using an online questionnaire administered through convenience sampling. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling was applied, with higher-order constructs modelled formatively and first-order dimensions reflectively, and mediation assessed via bootstrapping. This study is grounded in five key theories explaining motivation and workplace behaviour. Four hypotheses were tested, with two receiving empirical support. Transformational leadership had a modest direct impact on job performance but no significant effect on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction influenced performance but did not mediate the relationship between leadership and performance. The study recommends enhancing professional development, supportive environments, and leadership training to improve satisfaction and performance. Future research should examine alternative leadership styles and explore other potential mediators. A key limitation is that the study was confined to the National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Colleges of education, Job performance, Job satisfaction, Partial least squares structural equation modelling, Transformational leadership.

Introduction

The National Colleges of Education (NCoEs) in Sri Lanka are the primary institutions preparing non-graduate teachers for schools (Asian Development Bank, 2017), producing the majority of trained teachers currently in service (Ministry of Education, 2024). Teacher educators in NCoEs play a crucial role in shaping the education system by preparing competent and motivated teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, the NCOEs encountered several shortcomings and constraints, such as inadequate training for administrative staff, outdated curricula, insufficient resources, limited incentive mechanisms, and a decline in the overall quality of teaching personnel (Jayasena, 2014). Consequently, the goal of producing fully professional teachers remains unmet (Jayasena, 2014). In this context, it becomes imperative to investigate how leadership style can enhance job performance, particularly through the mediating influence of job satisfaction, thereby contributing to improved outcomes in teacher education institutions. Moreover, Weerakkody and team (2024) highlighted the importance of conducting empirical research on the impact of transformational leadership on job performance within colleges of education. In Sri Lanka, the existing research has examined the impact of transformational leadership on job performance in manufacturing (Balasuriya & Perera,

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2021), government institutions (Raveendran & Gamage, 2019), and general education (Nanthakumar *et al.*, 2021), leaving Colleges of Education relatively underexplored (Weerakkody *et al.*, 2024). However, Raveendran (2021) emphasizes the need to examine mediating factors, with job satisfaction being central. Accordingly, this study addresses the gap by asking: Does transformational leadership impact job performance, with job satisfaction as a mediator, among teacher educators of NCoEs in Sri Lanka? To answer, it pursues four specific objectives: to examine the impact of transformational leadership on job performance, to study the impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, to explore the impact of job satisfaction on job performance, and to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction between transformational leadership and job performance (González *et al.*, 2022; Makhdoom *et al.*, 2022; Lee *et al.*, 2023; Homayoun *et al.*, 2024).

Through these objectives, the study aims to generate new insights into the interrelationships among transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and job performance, thereby contributing to both the scholarly literature and the practical development of the teacher educators of the NCoEs in Sri Lanka (Aloufi, 2022; Madhukar, 2022; Ranganadhareddy & Varghese, 2022; Ruin *et al.*, 2022; Bodnar *et al.*, 2023; Osadchuk *et al.*, 2023; Padma *et al.*, 2023).

Literature Review

It outlines how transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and job performance are conceptualized within the context of this research.

Transformational Leadership

According to Bass (2006), transformational leadership is a prime example of exceptional leadership performance. It consists of four core dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, all of which play a vital role in facilitating organisational change and development.

Idealized influence reflects the leader's ability to act as a role model, earning the trust and respect of followers by demonstrating integrity, ethical standards, and a strong sense of purpose. Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's capacity to articulate a compelling vision, communicate high expectations, and inspire enthusiasm and commitment among team members. Intellectual stimulation involves encouraging creativity and innovation by challenging existing assumptions, promoting problem-solving, and supporting critical thinking. Finally, individualized consideration highlights the leader's attentiveness to the unique needs, strengths, and aspirations of each follower, providing mentorship, support, and opportunities for growth.

Together, these four dimensions create an environment in which people feel appreciated, motivated, and empowered to make meaningful contributions to company goals. In educational settings, transformational leadership has been found to increase teacher commitment, improve professional collaboration, and stimulate instructional innovation. Thus, Bass's (2006) paradigm emphasizes the importance of transformational leadership in achieving long-term organizational change and improving institutional performance.

Job Performance

Recognizing the complexity of job performance, Koopmans (2014) proposed a comprehensive framework that moves beyond traditional, one-dimensional measures of employee output. Their model encompasses three core dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

Task performance refers to the effectiveness with which employees carry out the duties and responsibilities that are formally part of their job description, such as meeting teaching targets, completing administrative work, or delivering services to expected standards. Contextual performance, on the other hand, includes voluntary and extra-role behaviours that support the social and psychological environment of the workplace (Kauser *et al.*, 2022; Van, 2022; Deisy *et al.*, 2023; Fanani *et al.*, 2023; Ghanizadeh *et al.*, 2023). These behaviours, teamwork, organizational citizenship, cooperation, and mentoring, are not explicitly required but significantly enhance overall organizational functioning. In contrast, counterproductive work behaviour involves actions that harm the organization or its members, such as absenteeism, lack of commitment, resistance to change, or deliberate inefficiency.

By integrating both positive and negative aspects of work behaviour, this framework highlights that job performance is not limited to the successful completion of formal tasks but represents a dynamic mix of behaviours that collectively influence organizational success. In educational settings, a teacher educator's effectiveness should not be judged solely



on classroom instruction. It must also consider their willingness to mentor peers, contribute to institutional development, and refrain from behaviours that undermine collegiality or institutional goals. This multidimensional perspective provides a more holistic and realistic understanding of employee performance and offers valuable insights for leaders and policymakers seeking to enhance productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Job Satisfaction

Rounds *et al.* (1981) underlined that employees have several psychological requirements that must be met in order to feel job satisfaction and create effective role alignment within a company. They referred to these demands as reinforcers, emphasizing how they motivate behaviour and shape workplace experiences (Al-Johani *et al.*, 2022; Alnemer *et al.*, 2022; Shawky *et al.*, 2022; Almotawah *et al.*, 2023; Ansari *et al.*, 2023; Belaldavar & Angadi, 2024). Based on this conceptual framework, the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ) was created to systematically measure these needs and their relative importance to employees. The MIQ identifies twenty different demands that drive work adjustment and combines them into six overarching work values: achievement, comfort, status, altruism, safety, and autonomy.

Achievement reflects the desire for accomplishment, challenge, and the use of one's abilities, and comfort emphasizes job conditions such as security, compensation, and a manageable workload. Status relates to recognition, advancement, and the prestige associated with one's role, and altruism represents the motivation to help others, contribute to society, and engage in service-oriented tasks. Safety refers to stability, predictability, and the assurance of a supportive work environment. Autonomy reflects the need for independence, decision-making freedom, and self-direction.

Together, these values shape how individuals perceive their work environment and determine the extent to which their roles meet personal and professional needs. By capturing these dimensions, the MIQ provides a comprehensive framework for understanding workplace satisfaction and adjustment, making it a valuable tool for both organizational research and human resource development.



Materials and Methods

This study employed an exploratory research design to examine the proposed relationships among transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and job performance in the context of teacher educators of National Colleges of Education (NCoEs) in Sri Lanka. The target population consisted of 548 teacher educators currently serving across these institutions. Based on the sample size determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 226 participants was deemed appropriate to ensure statistical validity and generalizability within the given context.

Given the target population's vast geographical dispersion and the logistical problems of physical data collection, a non-probability sample method called convenience sampling was used. This method allowed the researcher to more effectively reach participants while assuring enough representation from various universities. An online questionnaire was used to collect data, allowing for more efficient dissemination, lower expenses, and a wider reach across the country. To operationalize the study variables, the researcher used three approved measurement techniques. Supermane *et al.* (2018) examined transformational leadership with the Transformational Leadership Inventory, which was adapted from Bass and Avolio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Job performance was evaluated using the 3-item Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans, 2014), and job happiness was measured using the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ) short form (Rounds *et al.*, 1981). All dimensions in the study were tested with standardized Likert scale items, which ensured consistency and reliability in collecting participant impressions. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), a reliable technique for testing complicated models that include both formative and reflecting features. Furthermore, mediation effects were explored using the bootstrapping approach, which produces more precise estimates of indirect effects and improves the rigor of hypothesis testing.

Conceptual Framework

A review of theoretical and empirical literature informed the study's conceptual framework, ensuring it is grounded in prior research. The framework (**Figure 1**) positions transformational leadership as the independent variable, job performance as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction as the mediating variable.

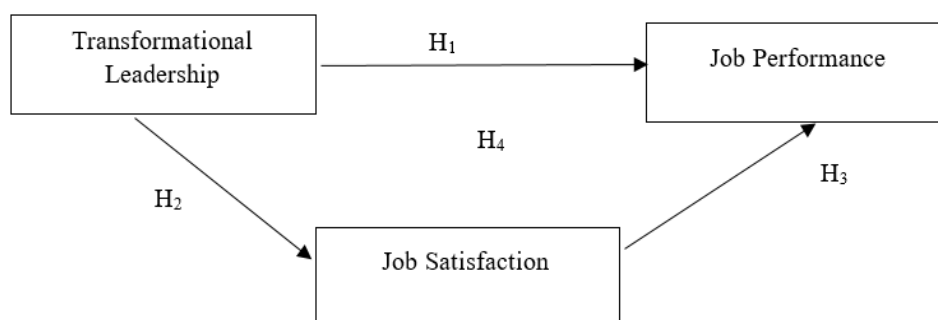


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework
Source. Developed based on theoretical insights (2025)

Formulating Hypotheses

This study draws upon five theoretical foundations—Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, the Theory of Work Adjustment, and Social Exchange Theory—to explain how transformational leadership influences job satisfaction and job performance within Sri Lanka's National Colleges of Education.

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Performance

From a social exchange theory perspective, inadequate resources, recognition, or support weaken reciprocal trust between leaders and subordinates, reducing the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory similarly suggests that the absence of hygiene factors and limited motivators undermines satisfaction and engagement, weakening the leadership–performance link. McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory indicates that while transformational leaders can enhance performance by meeting employees' needs for achievement, power, and affiliation, outdated curricula and limited incentives restrict this process. Goal-Setting Theory adds that insufficient training and resources hinder leaders' ability to set and pursue meaningful goals, while the Theory of Work Adjustment highlights that poor alignment between employee needs and job reinforcements reduces satisfaction and commitment.

Collectively, these perspectives indicate that the impact of transformational leadership on job performance is highly contingent upon a supportive organizational environment that fosters motivation, satisfaction, and goal alignment. Empirical studies support this theoretical linkage. Research by Balasuriya and Perera, (2021) on selected porcelain manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka confirms that transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on employee performance. Raveendran (2021) found that perceived transformational leadership style has a significant impact on job performance among employees in various public sector organizations in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, thereby supporting this relationship. Empirical evidence from an apparel manufacturing company in Sri Lanka indicates that transformational leadership significantly and positively influences job performance.

This finding is further supported by empirical studies conducted in Indonesia (Anggiani, 2022; Junaedy *et al.*, 2022; Nurfaizi & Muafi, 2022), Pakistan (Thebo *et al.*, 2021), and Taiwan (Lai *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the first hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H1: There is a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership on job performance among teacher educators of the National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka.

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction

According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the absence of key hygiene factors—such as resources, incentives, and administrative support—creates dissatisfaction, while limited motivators like recognition and professional growth

weaken engagement. Thus, even transformational leaders may struggle to generate satisfaction in such conditions. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, institutional shortcomings erode trust and reciprocity, reducing the emotional foundation of satisfaction. McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory likewise suggests that without opportunities for achievement and advancement, leaders' efforts to inspire excellence become less effective. Goal-setting theory further emphasizes that inadequate resources and weak administration hinder the setting and attainment of meaningful goals, reducing satisfaction derived from accomplishment. Consistent with the Theory of Work Adjustment, poor institutional support disrupts the alignment between individual needs and job reinforcements, further lowering satisfaction.

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives demonstrate that the positive impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction is contingent upon a supportive organizational context that provides adequate resources, incentives, and opportunities for growth. Perera (2023) found that transformational leadership positively influence job satisfaction among employees in small and medium Information and Technology enterprises in Sri Lanka. Chandrasekara (2019) confirmed, in a study on the apparel manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka, that transformational leadership has a significant positive influence on job satisfaction.

This claim is supported by evidence from contexts beyond Sri Lanka, including studies by Shaukat *et al.* (2023) in Pakistan, as well as Firdaus *et al.* (2023) and Dewi *et al.* (2023) in Indonesia. The second hypothesis can be formulated as;

H2: There is a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction among teacher educators of the National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka.

Impact of Job Satisfaction on Job Performance

According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, inadequate hygiene factors—such as working conditions, incentives, and institutional support—create dissatisfaction that limits employees' motivation to perform, even when intrinsic satisfaction exists. Social Exchange Theory similarly argues that when organizations fail to reciprocate employees' efforts with appropriate rewards or recognition, commitment declines, weakening the satisfaction–performance relationship. McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory further suggests that satisfaction from achievement and recognition enhances performance, but outdated curricula and limited professional development restrict such opportunities, reducing the motivational impact of satisfaction. Goal-setting theory adds that satisfaction improves performance when clear, attainable goals are supported by feedback and resources; in resource-poor environments, this link weakens. Consistent with the Theory of Work Adjustment, poor alignment between employee needs and job reinforcements—such as weak incentives and inadequate facilities—reduces the extent to which satisfaction translates into improved performance.

Empirical evidence from Sri Lanka supports these theoretical insights. Rodrigo *et al.* (2022) found that managers in a Sri Lankan manufacturing company who reported higher job satisfaction consistently exhibited better job performance. Similarly, a research (Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020) on Generation Y management trainees in public banks in Sri Lanka indicated that job satisfaction positively impacts employee performance.

These theoretical insights, extending beyond the Sri Lankan context, are supported by the findings of Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023) in Pakistan, Assiddiki (2023) in Indonesia, and Omar *et al.* (2020) in Malaysia. Accordingly, the third hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H3: There is a positive and significant impact of job satisfaction on job performance among teacher educators of NCoEs in Sri Lanka.

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Job Performance Mediated by Job Satisfaction

The impact of transformational leadership on job performance, mediated by job satisfaction, is strongly shaped by the wider organizational context. In Sri Lanka's National Colleges of Education, systemic issues such as inadequate staff training, outdated curricula, limited resources, weak incentive systems, and declining teaching quality reduce the effectiveness of transformational leadership. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the lack of essential hygiene factors, including fair incentives and institutional support, creates dissatisfaction that weakens job satisfaction's mediating role. Social Exchange Theory similarly suggests that when institutions fail to reciprocate employees' efforts with support and recognition, trust erodes, reducing employees' willingness to respond with greater



satisfaction and performance. McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory also indicates that limited opportunities for growth and recognition diminish intrinsic motivation, weakening the leadership–performance link. In line with Goal-Setting Theory and the Theory of Work Adjustment, inadequate resources and outdated systems hinder goal achievement and person–environment fit, preventing satisfaction from effectively translating into higher performance. These institutional shortcomings collectively reduce the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the transformational leadership–performance relationship.

Empirical evidence beyond Sri Lanka, Pracoyo *et al.* (2022) in Indonesia, Kandi *et al.* (2022) in Pakistan, and Edward and Kaban (2020) in Indonesia, confirms that job satisfaction fully mediates this relationship, strengthening the impact of transformational leadership on performance. Then the final hypothesis can be formulated as;

H4: There is a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership on job performance mediated by job satisfaction among teacher educators of the National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka.

Data Analysis

Out of 250 online questionnaires, 226 valid responses were obtained with no missing data. A Higher-Order Model represented the three main constructs, Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance as formative second-order constructs composed of first-order dimensions, capturing their complexity. Following Hair Jr. *et al.* (2021), PLS-SEM was applied in two steps: evaluating the measurement model for validity and reliability, and assessing the structural model to test hypothesized relationships, providing a robust analysis of the causal pathways in the conceptual framework.

Model Evaluation

The study first validated the measurement model to ensure reliable and consistent evaluation of latent constructs, assessing indicator reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, internal consistency, dimensional collinearity, and the relevance of formative second-order constructs. Following this, the structural model tested hypothesized relationships using path coefficients, (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and mediation analysis. Adopting formative second-order constructs improved parsimony, interpretability, and explanatory power, allowing a nuanced understanding of how first-order dimensions contribute to Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance, and how these constructs collectively influence structural relationships, in line with Hair Jr. *et al.* (2021).

Measurement Model Evaluation

Assessing the measurement model is a crucial initial step in PLS-SEM before looking at the structural links between the components. Indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are the four main criteria that are evaluated because this study uses a purely reflective measurement model, in which indicators are thought to be expressions of their underlying latent construct.

Validating the Measurement Model of the First-Order Constructs

The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity, with most indicator loadings above 0.70, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability exceeding 0.70, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity was supported through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, Fornell-Larcker, and cross-loadings. The dimensions of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and job performance all met reliability and validity criteria. Overall, the findings confirm that the constructs are conceptually sound and empirically distinct, providing a robust foundation for testing the hypothesized structural relationships.

Validating the Measurement Model of the Second-Order Constructs

The validation of second-order formative constructs, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and job performance was conducted using the disjoint two-stage approach suitable for hierarchical component models. All constructs demonstrated strong psychometric and theoretical validity through three key criteria: low multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) < 5.0), statistically significant and theoretically meaningful outer weights and loadings, and high convergent validity confirmed via redundancy analysis (path coefficients > 0.70). The components of transformational leadership, with the weaker yet conceptually essential intellectual stimulation, also showed



validity (path coefficient = 0.904). Job satisfaction was supported by its four dimensions, including a negative but theoretically justified contribution from altruism value, with a high convergent validity score (0.920). Job performance, though contextual performance showed a weak statistical contribution, was validated by its overall path coefficient of 0.916. Overall, all second-order constructs were confirmed to be both statistically sound and conceptually comprehensive, justifying their use in the structural model.

Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model evaluation involved the following key steps, assessment of collinearity among predictor constructs (VIF values), examination of path coefficients and their significance via bootstrapping, calculation of R^2 to evaluate explanatory power, analysis of f^2 to determine the relative impact of predictors, assessment of Q^2 using the blindfolding procedure and evaluation of model fit indices.

Assessment of Collinearity among Predictor Constructs

To assess multicollinearity among first-order latent variables, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were computed using bootstrapping to generate bias-corrected confidence intervals.

Table 1. Structural Model VIF

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
Altruism Value	1.247	1.268	0.021	1.134	1.362
Achievement Value	1.244	1.265	0.021	1.129	1.363
Contextual Performance	1.527	1.548	0.021	1.330	1.765
Comfort Value	1.199	1.221	0.022	1.083	1.331
Counterproductive Work Behaviour	1.014	1.024	0.010	1.000	1.051
Individualized Consideration	2.405	2.459	0.054	1.923	3.034
Idealized Influence	2.245	2.292	0.047	1.806	2.786
Inspirational Motivation	2.650	2.711	0.061	2.088	3.345
Intellectual Stimulation	1.101	1.117	0.016	1.030	1.198
Safety Value	1.277	1.300	0.023	1.142	1.423
Task Performance	1.526	1.549	0.023	1.328	1.767

Source: SmartPLS Output (2025)

Multicollinearity is not an issue, according to the findings (**Table 1**). The majority of categories, such as Altruism Value, Achievement Value, Comfort Value, Counterproductive Work Behaviour, and Safety Value, had low VIFs, much below 3.3. Contextual Performance and Task Performance were both within reasonable bounds. There was modest but acceptable collinearity among the Transformational Leadership dimensions of Individualized Consideration, Idealized Influence, and Intellectual Stimulation. The only one that needed further attention was Inspirational Motivation, which had a VIF of 2.650 and a confidence interval between 2.088 and 3.345, which at the highest limit was marginally higher than the cautious 3.3 benchmark. The mean and median VIFs stay within acceptable bounds, despite the fact that this indicates a slight collinearity in certain resamples.

Table 2. Inner Model VIF

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
Job Satisfaction -> Job Performance	1.371	1.413	0.042	1.210	1.522
Transformational Leadership -> Job Performance	1.203	1.222	0.019	1.078	1.346
Transformational Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	1.200	1.207	0.006	1.082	1.354

Source: SmartPLS Output (2025)



The VIF values for the inner model paths were assessed to check multicollinearity among latent predictors of endogenous constructs. Excessive multicollinearity inflates standard errors and weakens the validity of structural estimates. In PLS-SEM, VIF values below 3.3 are generally acceptable, with 5.0 sometimes used as a more liberal benchmark; this study applied the conservative threshold of 3.3.

All paths showed low VIFs (**Table 2**), confirming no multicollinearity concerns. Job Satisfaction → Job Performance recorded a VIF of 1.371 (95% Confidence Interval: 1.210–1.522), while Transformational Leadership → Job Performance had a VIF of 1.203 (CI: 1.078–1.346). Similarly, Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction reported a VIF of 1.200 (CI: 1.082–1.354). These consistently low values demonstrate that each predictor contributes unique explanatory power without problematic overlap.

Testing the Significance of the Path Coefficient

It highlights that Job Satisfaction positively and significantly influenced Job Performance ($\beta = 0.292$, $t = 3.750$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3 and aligning with Expectancy Theory and the Theory of Work Adjustment (**Table 3**). In contrast, Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction was not significant ($\beta = 0.046$, $t = 0.622$, $p = 0.534$), and Transformational Leadership → Job Performance was marginally significant ($\beta = 0.177$, $t = 1.907$, $p = 0.057$). Overall, two of the four direct paths were significant, highlighting the central role of Job Satisfaction in explaining Job Performance and providing a basis for further mediation analysis.

Table 3. Testing Statistical Significance of the Path Coefficient

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Job Satisfaction → Job Performance	0.292	0.294	0.078	3.750	0.000
Transformational Leadership → Job Performance	0.177	0.175	0.093	1.907	0.057
Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction	0.046	0.077	0.073	0.622	0.534

Source: SmartPLS Output (2025)

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis using bootstrapping showed that Job Satisfaction does not mediate the effect of Transformational Leadership on Job Performance ($\beta = 0.013$, $t = 0.596$, $p = 0.551$), indicating that H4 is not supported. This suggests that, in this context, leadership may influence performance through other mechanisms, rather than through job satisfaction. To capture the combined direct and indirect impact of exogenous variables on outcomes, total effects (**Table 4**) were analyzed. Job satisfaction itself had a significant total effect on Job Performance ($\beta = 0.292$, $t = 3.750$, $p < 0.001$). Even while Transformational Leadership had a small direct influence on job performance ($p = 0.057$), its overall effect was substantial ($\beta = 0.191$, $t = 2.021$, $p = 0.043$), indicating that there are other channels outside job satisfaction that contribute to its overall impact. This modest impact on satisfaction was confirmed by the non-significant overall effect of Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.046$, $t = 0.622$, $p = 0.534$).

Table 4. Total Effect analysis

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Job Satisfaction → Job Performance	0.292	0.294	0.078	3.750	0.000
Transformational Leadership → Job Performance	0.191	0.197	0.094	2.021	0.043
Transformational Leadership → Job Satisfaction	0.046	0.077	0.073	0.622	0.534

Source: SmartPLS Output (2025)

Hypothesis Testing

The results, summarized in **Table 4**, revealed that two out of the four hypothesized relationships were statistically supported. In support of H3, the analysis found that job satisfaction significantly and positively affects job performance ($t = 0.292$, $p < 0.001$), lending credence to the theoretical assumptions of Expectancy Theory and the Theory of Work Adjustment. H1, which hypothesized a direct effect of transformational leadership on job performance, was also supported ($t = 0.191$, $p = 0.043$), though the effect size was comparatively moderate. Conversely, H2, which anticipated a positive influence of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, was not supported ($t = 0.046$, $p = 0.534$), suggesting that leadership behaviours alone may not be sufficient to enhance satisfaction levels among teacher educators. Finally, H4, which posited that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance, was also not supported ($t = 0.013$, $p = 0.551$), indicating the absence of a meaningful indirect effect in this path (**Table 5**).

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
H1	0.191	0.043	Supported
H2	0.046	0.534	Not Supported
H3	0.292	0.000	Supported
H4	0.013	0.551	Not Supported

Source: SmartPLS Output (2025)

Model Evaluation Summary

The model demonstrated moderate to substantial explanatory power (R^2), meaningful effect sizes (f^2), and moderate to strong predictive relevance (Q^2), underscoring the significance of Job Satisfaction in performance. The model explained 49% of the variance in Job Performance and 27% in Job Satisfaction, reflecting moderate to substantial explanatory power. Job Satisfaction had a meaningful effect on Job Performance, while Transformational Leadership showed a weak influence on both constructs. Predictive assessment (PLSPredict) confirmed moderate to strong predictive relevance, particularly for Job Performance. Overall, the findings highlight Job Satisfaction as a key driver of performance, whereas Transformational Leadership exerted limited direct effects, suggesting the need to examine indirect or context-specific pathways.



Results and Discussion

The structural model examined the relationships between Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance in NCoEs in Sri Lanka, drawing on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, the Theory of Work Adjustment, and Social Exchange Theory. Transformational leadership demonstrated a significant direct effect on job performance (H1: $\beta = 0.191$, $p = 0.043$), highlighting its role in motivating employees through vision, inspiration, and support, consistent with findings by Nurfaizi and Muafi (2022), Anggiani (2022), Junaedy *et al.* (2022), Balasuriya and Perera, (2021), Raveendran (2021), Thebo *et al.* (2021), Lai *et al.* (2020), and Chandrasekara (2019).

Job satisfaction also showed a strong positive effect on performance (H3: $\beta = 0.292$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Expectancy Theory and McClelland's theory, as satisfied employees are more motivated and perceive a clear link between effort and rewards, aligning with prior studies by Assiddiki (2023), Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023), Rodrigo *et al.* (2022), Wickramaaratchi and Perera (2020), and Omar *et al.* (2020).

However, in line with Wahyuni *et al.* (2022), the direct effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction (H2: $\beta = 0.046$, $p = 0.534$) was not substantiated. This could be because of contextual limitations, including out-of-date curricula, scarce resources, and insufficient incentives. According to Nasution and Mujiatun (2024), the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the leadership–performance relationship (H4: $\beta = 0.013$, $p = 0.551$) was also not significant, indicating that transformational leadership primarily affects performance through direct mechanisms rather than indirectly through satisfaction.

This highlights that, within the NCoEs in Sri Lanka, job satisfaction is a key driver of performance, while transformational leadership mainly exerts direct effects.

Conclusion

The structural model testing confirmed two of the four proposed hypotheses. These findings emphasize that job satisfaction is a more powerful driver of performance than transformational leadership within the NCoE context in Sri Lanka.

Consequently, policymakers and administrators should prioritize initiatives that enhance job performance, such as providing adequate resources, updating curricula, and implementing effective incentive mechanisms. Furthermore, leadership training programs and professional development programmes should be designed to strengthen the direct impact of transformational leadership on performance, while also addressing organizational constraints that may limit its influence on job satisfaction among teacher educators.

Limitations and Dimensions for Future Research

This study has several limitations. It focused solely on transformational leadership, excluding other styles such as transactional, servant, or distributed leadership that may also affect job satisfaction and performance. Examining a wider range of leadership approaches in future research could clarify which styles are most effective and whether hybrid approaches enhance outcomes among teacher educators in NCoEs. Additionally, the study was confined to National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or international contexts. Future research should explore diverse leadership styles and potential mediators beyond job satisfaction, such as work engagement, motivation, or organizational commitment, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how leadership influences the job performance of teacher educators locally and globally.

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