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## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT SUCCESS: THE ROLES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SELF-EFFICACY

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### ABSTRACT

Transformational leaders must constantly monitor their environments to identify and develop significant internal and external exposure to multiple points of view. Transformational leaders serve as role models for bridging organizational boundaries and proactive outreach to external stakeholders to communicate information, develop inter-organizational cooperation, establish coalitions, and harness resources. The major goal of this article is to examine the dynamics that drive organizational project success, specifically the impact of transformational leadership on external and internal social capital

in management teams. This research analyzed transformational leadership and project success relationships in Pakistan's construction industry setting along with the moderating role of the project manager subordinate's social capital and the mediating role of the project manager subordinate's self-efficacy. The data were collected from 196 subordinates of project managers of different private organizations. Data were examined through correlation, regression, and the Hayes model through SPSS. According to the results, transformational leadership is positively associated with project success and substantially associated with social capital. Additionally, self-efficacy is positively associated with transformational leadership and project success, and it mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. Social capital moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, according to additional findings. This study sheds light on the relationship between transformational leadership and self-efficacy in the context of project success.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, project success, social capital, self-efficacy, Pakistan.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a term widely used in organizations. It is the word that can divert our minds toward two or more different images; one is political and the other is organizational. Leadership can be stated as terminology that represents the set of traits and competencies. These traits and competencies can be developed and exercised to attain shared goals; one who has these competencies is called a leader (Adair, 2005). It is the leader who can set the goals and steer toward a common vision with persistent motivation and encouragement so that all the team members can move in the same direction and consistently (Adair, 2005). It is commonly understood that from the inception of each project, the success or the failure of the project entirely depends on the selection of an effective project leader. Leadership is a practice and series of actions by which a person can create influence over a team to attain a collective objective (Indvik & Northouse, 2004).

Moreover, project teams and management interpret the accomplishment of a project in a variety of ways. The completion of a project on time and within budget, as well as the short-term success of a company,

are typically regarded as indicators of project success. Another author examined and concluded that consumer satisfaction and well-being are necessary for project success. He also emphasizes that there are two types of projects: operationally managed projects and strategically managed projects (Prabhakar, 2005). The first focuses on concluding the project on time and within budget, whereas the second prioritizes business success and market share. This article's primary objective is to examine the connection between the factors and the effect of leadership on project success. Some researchers who examined the contribution of project manager competency and leadership style to project success concluded that the literature had neglected the role of leadership in project success. In addition, the paper intends to underscore and clarify the importance of operations efficiency to project success, as the majority of organizations do not prioritize it (Aga et al., 2016). The question of how to quantitatively evaluate a project's success is crucial (Wateridge, 1998). The Project Management Body of Knowledge frequently mentions project success without providing a definition; instead, it emphasizes that the project charter should establish the success criteria and objectives of the project. Establishing success criteria during the planning phase, and by extension, failure if those criteria are not met, is a widely acknowledged practice, according to the research. As an example, "those participating in a project typically view project success as the accomplishment of predetermined project objectives" (Lim & Mohamed, 1999). Lim and Mohamed (1999) argued that project performance must be evaluated from the perspectives of stakeholders and distinguish two perspectives: a macro perspective, which examines all stakeholders, and a micro perspective, which includes only those actively involved in the execution of the project.

The Sydney Opera House, as discussed by Thomsett (2002), serves as an illustrative case of a project that had significant cost overruns and time delays, surpassing its initial budget and timeline by a factor of sixteen and four, respectively. This project exemplifies the existence of several perspectives and interpretations. The Opera House is now seen as a triumph for the country; however, it is deemed a failure in terms of project management. On the contrary, the Millennium Dome located in London was successfully finished according to the predetermined timeline and financial allocation. However, the perception of the British populace towards its outcome was negative,

as it failed to evoke the desired sense of wonder and aesthetic appeal (Cooke-Davies, 2002). During the 1980s, there was a notable increase in the studies conducted on the factors contributing to the success of projects. Several authors have identified several success factors for projects, including functionality (performance), project management (adherence to schedule and budget), commercial success, termination efficiency, and customer satisfaction (Baker et al., 1988; Pinto & Slevin, 1988).

Nevertheless, the performance of project managers, the combined skill set of the team, and the specific project execution environment are not explicitly addressed. Andersen et al. (1987) conducted an analysis of the potential hazards that might impede the achievement of project objectives and increase the probability of project failure. The issues include aspects related to the project's planning, organization, and management but fail to consider the performance expectations of the project team. According to the definition provided by Baker et al. (1988), 'perceived' project success encompasses the fulfilment of the project's technical specifications and/or purpose, as well as the attainment of a significant level of satisfaction among the client, user, and project team. In their study conducted in 1988, Pinto and Slevin examined the factors contributing to project success. They found a total of eleven indicators of success and underscored the criticality of establishing effective communication channels. It is noteworthy that the communication process did not include the identification of any performance objectives connected to success.

Transformational leadership promotes dialogue among the team members. Communication and clarity of goals are key elements in the success of a project. Transformational leadership believes in clear communication and sharing of vision with the team (Hinkin & Tracey, 1994). Open communication and vision sharing with team members enable project leaders to attain the objectives and targets of the organization and projects. It is found that transformational leadership is extremely relevant to project settings (Gundersen et al., 2012). Several studies were conducted to explore the reason and cause behind project failure and delays. Zimmerer and Yasin (1998) identified the core reason, among other causes of project failure, as ineffective and misdirected leadership. He also rated it as the top reason for project failure. Transformational leadership is also considered a motivational

process by which leaders take up and consequently, they influence the performance and mindset of the team members (Hammond et al., 2015). Transformational leadership directs and leads the team to elevated performance (Brouer et al., 2016; Ghadi et al., 2013). It is also observed that the core performing and prevailing mechanism by which transformational leadership influences performance remains ambiguous and unidentified (Henker et al., 2015).

While reviewing the literature on project management, the critical success factors are commonly treated as an essential root theme (Ika et al., 2012). The leadership style of project leaders is considered essential in critical success factors. Whereas due to its positive impact, transformational leadership is very important (Ahmed et al., 2013). There has been a consensus among researchers about transformational leadership that it increases project success. The mechanisms through which it works have not been identified and researched extensively (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Yang et al., 2011). Further research is required to identify moderating and mediating variables between transformational leadership and project success in the context of the project. According to Turner et al. (2009), the literature on project success factors is remarkably silent regarding the role of the project manager and the manager's leadership style and competence. Leadership style and competence are rarely identified as critical success factors in projects (Turner et al. 2009). The study shows that the leadership style of the project leadership plays an essential role in project success (Aga et al., 2016). Leadership has been discussed in many theories, whereas full-range leadership theory is the one that is widely accepted and it comprehends various leadership styles, including transformational leadership (Sohmen, 2013).

Considering project-oriented organizations, we focused on transformational leadership and the same has been found in various studies including the study by Gundersen et al. (2012). Robbins and Coulter (2007), stated that transformational leaders can develop and enhance the involvement of followers by explaining goals and requirements efficiently. Also, leaders can inspire devotion and have the ability to obtain remarkable outcomes through their employees. Additionally, Ergeneli et al. (2007) mentioned that transformational leadership theories have enlarged the extent of leadership theory by realizing the significance of emotional, symbolic, and very

strengthening behaviours that appeal directly to employee's minds and hearts, so these transformational leadership theories are regarded as the most advanced theories.

When looking at the research on what makes a project successful. Turner et al. (2009), found that project management literature widely ignores the leadership style and leadership role of the project manager. It is contrary to the prevailing literature of management sciences that recognizes that competent and efficient leadership are success indicators for organizations and has acknowledged that project success can be attained by the correct leadership style. Strangely, project management success factors literature ignores project manager performance, competency, and leadership style. Leadership style, skill, and attributes seldom affect project success (Turner et al. (2009),). Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can mobilize motivation, cognitive resources, and actions to satisfy situational demands. (Chen et al., 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Social capital refers to the segment of an individual's network connections that exhibit qualities of trustworthiness, reciprocity, and resource abundance (Putnam, 2000; Van Vegchel et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2014).

Studies show leadership as a major contributor to project success. It is not possible to ignore the role of a project leader. In order to achieve effective implementation, leadership utilizes social networks and proposes a novel paradigm for fostering team innovation (Turner et al., 2009). The concept of social capital was first articulated by Bourdieu (1986). Social capital refers to the collective resources, both tangible and intangible, that are acquired by a person or a community via the establishment of enduring networks characterized by varying degrees of institutionalized connections based on mutual familiarity and acknowledgement. Social capital facilitates an individual's ability to exercise influence on a group or an individual who organizes and utilizes available resources. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is not evenly distributed among individuals within a group or collective. Instead, it is accessible to those who actively strive to get it via the attainment of positions of authority and prestige, as well as the cultivation of goodwill. According to Bourdieu, social capital is inherently linked to social class and other types of stratification, which in turn is correlated with diverse advantages or opportunities for progress. Bourdieu further expounded on the concept, defining

‘social capital ‘as the accumulation of tangible or intangible assets obtained by individuals or collectives via the establishment of varying degrees of formalized connections based on mutual familiarity and acknowledgement(Bourdieu, 1986). Hence, social capital is inherent in an individual due to their own investment. Bourdieu’s conceptualization of social capital does not include traits related to communal property since he instead refers to these attributes as cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In Pakistan, project management practices are not implemented effectively. Consequently, we are facing many problems such as unsuccessful projects, not being completed in time, exceeding the allotted time and budget, poor quality of workmanship, lack of skilled workers, delay in completion of works and also lack of leadership. All these factors cause monetary damages to donors, sponsors, and investors. The same has been identified by various international organizations. According to the Asian Development Bank, annual evaluation report projects evaluated in Pakistan have consistently underperformed over the 2008–2016 review period (Asian Development Bank, 2017).

According to the findings of Chen’s (2016) research, inadequate leadership and ineffective team performance emerged as prominent factors contributing to the failure of building projects. He also emphasized the importance of effective and efficient leadership behaviour on the performance of the project manager. Farooqui and Ahmed (2008) also found a lack of leadership among the major obstacles to improving the performance of the Pakistan construction industry. Aga et al. (2016) called for research to identify underlying mechanisms and contextual conditions through which transformational leadership leads to project success. Researchers suggested the need for emphasis on the human side of project management to further explore the relationship between leadership and project success (Nauman et al., 2019). Most of the research works on transformational leadership have been done in the Western countries. Therefore, they cannot be applied directly in the Eastern cultures without further study (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). The primary aims of this study are to examine the correlation between transformational leadership and project success, to explore the potential mediating influence of self-efficacy on the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, and to investigate the potential moderating effect of

social capital on the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Transformational Leadership and Project Success**

The visionary leaders who help their followers to grow and become leaders themselves are called transformational leaders. They do so by catering to every follower's individual needs and by empowering them to take initiative. They create synergies by aligning the goals and objectives of individuals, leaders, groups, and the organization. More pieces of evidence supported the exhibit that transformational leaders influence their followers to surpass the expected performance. They also gain a high level of follower contentment and higher commitment levels to the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to this theory, the leader, with his abilities, tends to affect the employees and followers positively by bringing productive attitudes, perceptions, and expectations to their organizations (Bass, 1990). One thing that has been found common in the literature is what makes up transformational leadership, and the answer is generally the same. The phenomenon that elicits intense emotional responses from followers and fosters a sense of identification with the leader is commonly referred to as inspirational motivation. This entails the presentation of a compelling and appealing vision to team members, accompanied by the establishment of ambitious goals and the expectation of heightened performance. Moreover, a transformational leader places emphasis on individuals and their motivations, beliefs, and behaviours while offering them visions that fulfil their needs and aspirations (Lussier & Achua, 2009).

The influence of transformational leaders on organizational performance is noteworthy. However, it is crucial to effectively harness transformational leadership in initiatives, as it serves as a critical determinant of success (Raziq et al., 2018). Transformational leaders play a significant role in actively involving and communicating with stakeholders on the goals, results, and advancement of a project (Raziq et al., 2018; Aga et al., 2016). Transformational leadership



strengthens the dedication of followers, creates an inspiring future, and forges connections between pioneers and followers in exchange for something of greater value than performance incentives (Raziq et al., 2018). Transformational project executives endorse team-building interventions, which contribute to the success of the project (Aga et al., 2016).

Researchers have missed the multidimensional criteria of project success despite the abundance of leadership studies that have studied the role of leadership on project performance (Raziq et al., 2018; Maqbool et al., 2017; Aga et al., 2016). It is believed that project success and transformative leadership are closely linked; however, the process perspective of transformational leadership and project success is influenced by a number of mechanisms (Aga et al., 2016). Previous research analyzed the relationships between transformational leadership and project performance through behavioural mediators such as team building, collaboration, job satisfaction, and team interaction (Aga et al., 2016; Naeem & Khanzada, 2017; Yang et al., 2012). The moderating effect of 'project-specific variations,' namely project flexibility (Zailani et al., 2016) and project visibility (Wheatley, 2016), has been overlooked. In the field of project management, project success (PS) is a significant topic of discussion. Historically, the iron triangle's scope, cost, and duration have been regarded as crucial factors in determining PS. Unlike the PS evaluation, which takes into account additional factors such as customer and stakeholder approval, commercial viability, and future project feasibility, the PS evaluation focuses on customer and stakeholder approval, commercial viability, and future project feasibility (Imam & Zaheer, 2021; Khan, 2021). There comes a time in the life cycle of a project when things get uncertain and change is inevitable. According to transformational leadership is considered to be particularly effective in those times. According to Anantatmula (2010), transformational leadership has a profound impact on organizational performance, including project success, and has both direct and indirect effects on project success (Aga et al., 2016).

The literature demonstrates that the project manager's implementation of appropriate behavior throughout the duration of the project is essential to the project's success (Scott-Young & Samson, 2008). Transformational leaders, therefore, through their actions, can

inspire their team members extraordinarily and maintain a healthy environment and relationship (Sohmen, 2013). As a result, an atmosphere is a buildup where team members work hard and smart to achieve project success (Burke et al., 2006). Cavazotte et al. (2013) identified that transformational leadership appears to be linked with higher levels of performance. Therefore, we hypothesized as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Transformational leadership is positively related to project success.

### **Transformational Leadership and Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (2000) stated that efficacy influences self-motivation and an individual's actions through its impact on goals and ambitions. Based on partial beliefs in self-efficacy, generally, it is partially founded on self-efficacy. It is believed that individuals choose which objective challenges to confront, how much effort to put into a project, and how far to push forward despite obstacles. Upon coming across impediments, complications, and failures, those who are insecure about their competence slacken their endeavors and give up too soon. This makes them settle for inferior solutions. On the contrary, those individuals who have a strong belief in their competencies and skills enhance their efforts to overcome the challenge. Bandura (1997), emphasized that people can reshape their thinking and self-efficacy beliefs to overcome fatigue, anxiety, and stress.

According to House and Shamir (1993), the key motivating mechanism by which transformational and charismatic (or exceptional) leaders inspire their followers is through increasing followers' self-efficacy and self-worth. Transformational leadership actions and their impacts, particularly role-modelling, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal, resemble the self-efficacy determinants. According to Podsakoff et al. (1990), transformational leaders inspire their followers by demonstrating the necessary behaviours. Followers identify with role models who are, therefore, regarded in a good manner (Bandura, 1986). This enables them to attain the leader's objective by fostering self-efficacy and self-confidence (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; Yukl, 1998). Eden (1992) stated that leadership was the process through which managers raised performance expectations and improved self-efficacy, hence increasing performance. Frost et al. (1983) demonstrated that in both military conflict and firefighting

circumstances, the most successful leader was the one who set an example by accepting personal risks. Some other researchers also demonstrated that leader behavior that focuses on boosting follower self-efficacy leads to greater subordinate creativity in problem-solving circumstances. Therefore, it would be essential for transformational leaders to strengthen the beliefs of their followers so that they may discover a solution to the issue at hand. Once self-efficacy is developed, followers will develop trust in the leader, which will improve their dedication to the leader and the organization (Yukl, 1998). Thus, we propose that transformative leaders increase the self-efficacy of their followers, which leads to greater performance and commitment.

Self-efficacy affects creativity and also the reward that a teacher may offer if the manager is happy with the instructor's abilities. If there is a high level of invention, there is a high level of self-efficacy and performance (Muliati et al., 2022). Self-efficacy is described as an individual's conviction in their ability to execute tasks promptly. According to other research, those who possess the trait, are confident in their abilities to perform well on a task despite the presence of numerous obstacles compared to those who do not, where they will not be able to complete their tasks (Zainal & Mohd Matore, 2021).

Mulki et al. (2008) found that individuals who possess more self-efficacy exhibit competence to accomplish their goals more efficiently, which leads to a successful career. Self-efficacy develops the follower's willingness and readiness to contribute extra effort and master a challenge, and along these lines, assumes a huge job in expanding work viability, work fulfilment, and efficiency. Moreover, more than 30 years of research assert that expanding individuals' convictions in their abilities (self-efficacy) cultivates productive self-regulation and improves inspiration, determination even with challenges, and execution accomplishments (Bandura, 2012).

Transformational leadership is a successful leadership style for managing organizational transformation. Faupel and Süß (2019) asserted that transformational leadership has an effect on employee behaviour during the organizational transition. Additionally, the current research examines the link between transformational leadership and citizenship behavior in the context of organizational transformation. This study investigates the relationship between transformational

leadership and citizenship behavior from the standpoint of strong team cohesion. Strong bonding reduces the complexity of the organization. Employee deviance and bad dispositions may be minimized by nurturing a strong link between leaders and followers (Stollberger et al., 2022).

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs and notions about their competence and ability to control issues that affect their lives. This is the core belief responsible for emotional well-being, motivation, human functioning, and achievements. A person's belief that they will get to the desired outcome and they are competent to do so, plays a vital role in repeating a person's behavior (Bandura, 2010; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Black (2019), stated that the average level of self-efficacy in team members is positively related to team performance. Therefore, we hypothesized as follows:

H<sub>2a</sub>: Transformational leadership is positively related to self-efficacy.

### **Self-Efficacy and Project Success**

A solid feeling of self-efficacy drives people to set more significant standards and have a firmer duty toward accomplishing them (Wood & Bandura, 1989; Locke & Latham, 1990). Self-efficacy plays a critical role in controlling human outcomes and behaviour through self-motivation and self-influence (Locke & Latham, 2006; Locke et al., 1986; Lunenburg, 2011). The more confident a person is in his competency to achieve an outcome, the more chances there are that he will participate in that activity, set higher goals than average, be persistent in his actions and eventually be a success (Bandura, 2000; Miles & Maurer, 2012). Self-efficacy improves personal competencies, traits, and effectiveness. Research shows that the following competencies can be enhanced with self-efficacy such as emotional intelligence, consistency, adaptability, and resilience (Martins et al., 2021; Majeed et al., 2022). Finally, it is concluded that these competencies are core contributors and self-efficacy develops these competencies among the project managers. The impact of self-efficacy enhances the performance of project managers, therefore self-efficacy leads to project success (Kamohi & Jacobs, 2014).

Supposed a person understands that he is competent enough to achieve his goals and target, he will be bound to rehash or take part in the

conduct. The origin of self-efficacy incorporates real past execution, vicarious encounters and social learning, types of social influence, and mental and enthusiastic state (Zimmerman et al., 1992). Self-efficacy plays a critical role in controlling human outcomes and behaviour through self-motivation and self-influence (Locke & Latham, 2006; Lunenburg, 2011). This supports our hypothesis.

H<sub>2b</sub>: Self-efficacy is positively related to project success.

### **Self-Efficacy as Mediator**

This study investigated the role of self-efficacy as a mediator between variables and performance. Overall, this extensive literature strongly supports the mediation hypothesis of Locke and Latham (1990). It also provides a foundation for suggesting a variety of potentially theoretically illuminating and practically useful future directions (Heslin & Caprar, 2013). The studies acknowledged the significance of project leadership as instrumental for project success, particularly considering the current complexity and progressive nature of the business world. In addition, it has been added to recent debates on project success, particularly the core success components and factors of projects. The conclusion is that there is a strong and positive relationship between self-efficacy and project success (Lemboye, 2019).

Self-efficacy improves personal competencies, traits, and effectiveness. Research shows that the following competencies can be enhanced with self-efficacy such as emotional intelligence, consistency, adaptability, and resilience. Finally, it is concluded that these competencies are core contributors and self-efficacy develops these competencies among the project managers. The impact of self-efficacy enhances the performance of project managers (Kamohi & Jacobs, 2014). Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and team cohesion (Black, 2019). Other researchers discovered that the permissible actions of project administrators have a significant impact on increasing project success. Therefore, transformational leaders inspire followers to surpass expectations (Scott-Young & Samson, 2008; Zwikael & Unger-Aviram, 2010). In addition, they foster positive relationships in the workplace (Sohmen, 2013). These types of project managers enhance team cohesion and mutual comprehension, facilitate the open flow of

ideas and analytical perspectives across project teams, and emphasize the growth of followers' self-management or self-leadership skills. In turn, this can foster an environment where team members invest sustained effort to ensure the success of the project. Self-efficacy, according to Appelbaum and Hare (1996), acts as a mediator between objectives and performance. In their study, researchers concluded that self-efficacy mediates the effect of transformational leaders on performance; therefore, it appears that self-efficacy is one of several mechanisms by which transformational behaviours enhance subordinate performance (Cavazotte et al., 2013). A recent study finds that leadership is positively correlated with project success and in the same study, it is also found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between leadership and project success (Rehman, 2020). Therefore, we hypothesized as follows:

H<sub>3</sub>: Self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.

### **Social Capital as a Moderator**

The current study's results indicate that transformational leadership has some positively significant effects on performance. Meanwhile, seeing different layers of social capital, we can say that transformational leadership is likely to have a significant positive effect on performance through knowledge sharing. The conclusion ascertains the finest comprehension of the function of leadership and social capital in the process of construction projects. Therefore, project managers must develop a better input of leadership behaviour and build social capital, thus improving the performance of construction projects (Zheng et al., 2017). Social capital is found to be a good moderator of performance and group communication, and it is a debate that social capital would enhance the understanding and improve the performance of functional teams (Evans & Carson, 2005).

Another study examines 61 samples and determined that the correlation between social capital and performance was extremely positive and statistically significant. Results also indicated that the relationship between social capital and performance is contingent on the longevity of small businesses, the context of their industry, their institution, and the performance measures utilized by a network. On the basis of these findings, research proposals on the contingent value

of social capital for small enterprises were formulated (Stam et al., 2014). Pratono and Mahmood (2014) stated that social capital acts as an essential element in an organization's performance. From Chen et al. (2018), it was stated that leadership business connections and affiliation are positively related to outcomes.

Social capital is comparatively related to the presence of trust in relationships. Whenever these relationships are positive and build trust, the individuals associated with these relationships feel good about working with each other towards a collective goal, and all members of the network or team achieve the attribute of integrity and associated with trust among each other, and this relationship becomes stronger over the time (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Generally, individuals and groups establish some expectations and commitments of mutual exchange, and rules and sanctions emerge gradually as consequences of these relationships (King, 2004). Figure 1 represents the framework of this study. The rule of exchange may be the leading impression in relationships among groups. The groups or network members can reciprocate the favours and assistance. It would create a sense of trust and create norms of reciprocity (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Awe, 2016). Social capital has been found to benefit projects and project teams in organizations (Awe, 2016).

A social capital viewpoint extends our thinking beyond the bounds of an organisation to take into account the 'bonding' (collaboration, cooperation, and trust) that occurs inside groups as well as the 'bridging' ties that exist across groups (Hsu & Fang, 2009). Investigating the role of social capital as a mediator fills the gap in the research that confines the effects of transformational leadership to the borders of individual organizations (Bontis et al., 2000). Transformational leaders are required to conduct an environmental scan and make great efforts both internally and externally to expose themselves to a variety of perspectives (Akhmetshin et al., 2018). Transformational leaders become role models by transcending corporate borders and proactively reaching out to actors from the outside world in order to share knowledge, encourage inter-organizational cooperation, establish coalitions, and harness resources. As a result, transformational leadership may significantly push its adherents to build external social capital that generates and maintains project success.

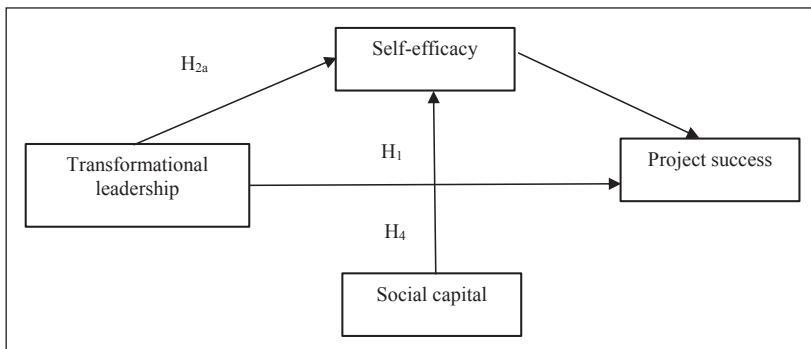
The idea of social capital refers to the accumulation of all of the information, skills, and expertise acquired by workers, all of which

significantly contribute to the achievement of competitive advantages. The knowledge assets that can be converted into value are what people mean when they talk about social capital. According to the findings of another research project, social capital is considered to include all of the organization's available knowledge resources, both inside and outside of the company (Mullen & Kelloway, 2009). Additionally, social capital is considered to include the level of expertise and dedication displayed by an organization's workforce. Therefore, this study suggested that:

H<sub>4</sub>: Social capital significantly moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, whereby the higher the social capital, the stronger the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.

**Figure 1**

*The Model Depicts the Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy and the Moderating Role of Social Capital between Transformational Leadership and Project Success*



## METHODOLOGY

The present study is quantitative research and a cross-sectional research design was used. The unit of analysis was individuals working on different projects from different organizations. The majority of those who answered the survey were project managers



working in architectural, engineering, and construction departments. The managers of three project management companies, architects, engineering, and construction were approached for data collection. The sample was selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. In this sampling technique, participants were selected at random from a pool of people who were relatively easy to contact. Samples were chosen based on some criteria. Age was restricted from 30 to 55. The sample size was calculated roughly with the help of items and variables. A total of 209 samples were approached but some of them refused to fill the forms and some forms were filled incompletely. The sample size was calculated roughly with the help of items and variables. This study used a questionnaire containing a list of items related to the study matter. A total of 209 samples were approached but some of them refused to fill the forms and some forms were filled incompletely. Therefore, 13 questionnaires were discarded and the final analysis was done with 196 samples. The response rate was 92.80 per cent.

The research sample for this study consisted of individuals employed in construction businesses and architects operating in the Punjab region of Pakistan. The population size was unknown, and the subject of investigation for the present research was a discrete-level entity. Data and information were collected from many personnel working in private companies located in Punjab. According to Pedhazur (1991), a predictor ratio of 30 to 1 is deemed sufficient for obtaining accurate outcomes. In accordance with the suggestion, the proposed method for ascertaining the population is by multiplying 30 by the variable  $n$ . This guideline suggests that a suitable sample size for this study might be equal to or more than 30 multiplied by the variable  $n$ . This study used four variables. In this research, the number of  $n$  was 4. By substituting this value into the calculation, we obtained a result of 120 based on the calculation ( $30 \times 4 = 120$ ). In accordance with the prescribed methodology, the present research used a sample size of 130, which exceeds the number of floated questionnaires, namely 120 out of a total of 240.

Distinctive scales according to the different variables were used. Aga et al. (2016), developed a transformational leadership scale and a scale to measure project success, which was used in the current study. Cronbach's alpha of transformational leadership is 0.69 and for the project, success is 0.92. Wang et al. (2014) created a scale to measure

social capital with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92, and Chen et al. created a scale to measure self-efficacy. For self-efficacy, the Cronbach's alpha stands around 0.95. For data analysis purpose and to check the mediation, SPSS v21 and Hayes' PROCESS v3.0 (Model - 4) were used.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Variables

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics*

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	169	86.2
Female	27	13.7
Age (years)		
30-35	72	36.7
36-40	45	22.9
41-45	43	21.9
46-50	13	6.6
51-55	23	11.9
Qualification		
Graduates	115	58.6
Masters	81	41.3
Organizations		
Construction industry	34	17.3
Architects	60	30.6
Project manager organizations	38	19.3
Experience (years)		
5-10	70	35.7
11-15	46	23.5
16-20	42	21.4
21-25	17	8.6
26-30	21	10.7
Complexity level		
Low	0	0
Medium	114	58
High	82	42

The genders of participants were males and females. The age was distributed into five categories: 30–35, 36–40, 41–45, 46–50, and 51–55 years. Qualification was generally categorized into master and graduate respondents. Job experience was categorized into five sections of experience period: 5–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–20 years, 21–25 years and 26–30 years. Project complexity level was also asked of participants who were categorized as medium and high. The demographic information pertaining to the participants is presented in Table 1. To test the reliabilities, values of Cronbach’s alpha and the number of items of each scale are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Cronbach’s Alpha for Each Measure used in this Research*

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach’s alpha
Transformational leadership	14	0.94
Self-efficacy	08	0.92
Social capital	12	0.79
Project success	14	0.95

Correlation analysis was performed in SPSS between transformational leadership, project success, social capital, and self-efficacy in project managers. The result is displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Correlation Analysis Results*

Variables	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	TL	SE	SC	PS
TL	2.62	0.491	0.94			
SE	2.69	0.999	0.492**	0.95		
SC	3.67	0.521	0.059	0.044	0.79	
PS	2,02	0.846	0.427**	0.900**	0.050	0.95

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ , TL: Transformational Leadership; SE: Self-efficacy; SC: Social Capital, PS: Project Success ( $N=196$ )

Results illustrate transformational leadership has a mean of 2.62 and a standard deviation of 0.491. Self-efficacy (M=2.69)(SD=0.999), social capital (M=3.67)(SD=0.521), and project success (M=2.02) (SD=0.846). Reported results in Table 3 show that the transformational leadership style has a significant and positive effect on project success ( $r=0.427, p<0.01$ ). Similarly, findings show that the transformational leadership style has a positive and significant relationship with SE ( $r=0.492, p<0.01$ ). Results are highly significant and self-efficacy has a positive effect on project success ( $r=0.900, p<0.01$ ). Moreover, results show that social capital is non-significantly related to transformational leadership ( $r = 0.059, p > 0.01$ ), Self-efficacy ( $r = 0.44, p < 0.01$ ) and project success ( $r = 0.50, p > 0.05$ ). The correlation between self-efficacy and project success was unexpectedly high ( $r = 0.900, p < 0.01$ ). To kill the doubt of multi-collinearity, a multi-collinearity test was run for confirmation, and the test results revealed the value of VIF (VIF = 1), VIF value < 3 is acceptable.

### **Regression Analysis**

To assess the relationship between variables, the first hypothesis was tested. Linear regression analysis was used. Results are shown in Table 4 using the software SPSS 21. To test the hypothesis, the results of linear regression are represented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

#### *Results of Linear Regression*

Variable	Project success			
	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
Transformational Leadership	0.736	0.112	0.427	0.00

*Note:*  $R = 0.427$ , Adjusted R-squared = 0.178

The correlation between transformational leadership and project success was analyzed by means of a regression analysis conducted in SPSS. Transformational leadership was found to have a positive association with project success, indicating a significant impact ( $\beta = 0.427, p<0.05$ ). Hence, results for hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> are supported.

Regression analysis was performed using SPSS to test the association of transformational leadership with project success. The findings indicated that transformational leadership (TL) has a favorable correlation with the completion of successful projects ( $\beta = 0.492, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, results for hypothesis H<sub>2a</sub> are supported.

**Table 5**

*Linear Regression Results*

Variable	Self-Efficacy			
	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
Transformational leadership	1.00	0.127	0.492	0.000

*Note:* R = 0.492

Regression analysis was performed using SPSS to measure the association of transformational leadership with project success. The findings indicated that self-efficacy (SE) has a favourable correlation with the completion of successful projects ( $\beta = 0.900, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, results for hypothesis H<sub>2b</sub> are supported.

**Table 6**

*Linear Regression Results*

Variable	Project Success			
	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
Self-Efficacy	0.762	0.027	0.900	0.000

*Note:* R = 0.968

**Mediation Analysis**

SPSS v21 and Hayes' PROCESS v3.0 (Model - 4) were used to analyze the data (196 random samples) and check for the presence of mediation. Following the directions of the preacher and Hayes (2008), the current study used the bootstrapping method to analyze the mediation. The confidence interval for the indirect effect of transformational leadership on project success via SE did not include 0 (LLCI = 0.570; ULCI = 0.979), but the direct effect included 0 (LLCI

= -0.157; ULCI = 0.087), suggesting the presence of full mediation. Results explaining direct effect proposed that transformational leadership has no significant relation with project success (-0.031, NS) while total effect and an indirect effect via SE are significant (0.805,  $p < 0.05$ ) and (0.835,  $p < 0.05$ ) respectively. Table 7 represents the mediation analysis of the study.

**Table 7**

*Mediation Analysis*

TL → SE → PS	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCL
Total effect	0.735	0.111	0.515	0.956
Direct effect	-0.034	0.062	-0.157	0.087
Indirect effect	0.770	0.105	0.570	0.979

The mediator is the variable that, when attached to the independent variable, changes its relationship with the dependent variable. In the present study, self-efficacy is considered a mediator between transformational leadership and project success. By using the Hayes PROCESS model, mediation analysis was run and the results are shown in Table 5. Results of Table 5 show the total effect of variables is significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; therefore, self-efficacy is found to be a significant mediator of transformational leadership and project success (Putnam, 1993).

**Moderation Analysis**

The results of the moderation analysis are reported in Table 8. The available data were analyzed to examine the existence of moderation using SPSS v21 with Hayes’ PROCESS v3.0 (Model-1). Moderation results are shown in Table 8 ( $\beta = 0.0018, p < 0.05$ ) which shows a moderation of social capital in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. Therefore,  $H_4$  is accepted.

Interaction graphs were plotted for high and low moderator values for transformational leadership and project success. Figure 2 represents the interaction graph. According to these results, when

transformational leadership is low, individuals with low social capital show lower project success as compared to the case with high transformational leadership with higher social capital, which shows more project success.

**Table 8**

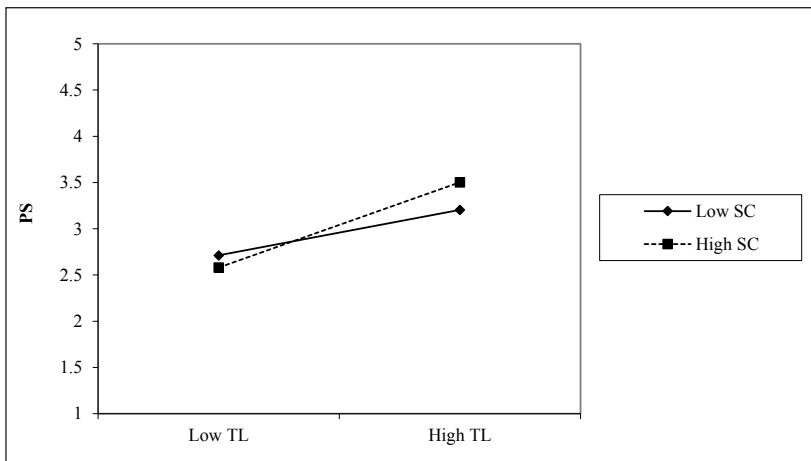
*Moderation Result of Social Capital*

		Project success			
		B	SE	T	p-value
Step 1	Transformational leadership	-0.830	0.725	0.146	0.253
	Social capital	-1.008	0.491	-0.2.05	0.041
Step 2	Transformational leadership * Social Capital	0.442	0.193	2.181	0.030

Note :N = 196, \*\*p < 0.01, \*p < 0.05

**Figure 2**

*Interaction Graphs Plotted for High and Low Moderator Values*



## **Summary of Accepted/Rejected Hypothesis**

The summary of the hypothesis acceptance is shown in Table 9.

**Table 9**

### *Summary of Hypotheses Testing*

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Statements	Results
H <sub>1</sub>	Transformational leadership is positively related to project success.	Accepted
H <sub>2a</sub>	Transformational leadership is positively related to self-efficacy.	Accepted
H <sub>2b</sub>	Self-efficacy is positively related to project success.	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	Self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	Social capital significantly moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.	Accepted

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The primary aim of this study was to examine the impact of transformational leadership on the achievement of project targets. The primary objective of this research was to examine the impact of transformational leadership on project performance within the construction industry sector. Specifically, the study aimed to explore the mediating function of the project manager's self-efficacy and the moderating influence of social capital in this relationship. Research has shown a favourable correlation between transformational leadership and project success. However, it has been observed that the link between transformational leadership and project success is mediated by self-efficacy. In contrast, the presence of social capital has noteworthy outcomes and functions as a moderator between transformative leadership and the achievement of project success. The primary objective of the present research was to ascertain the impact of transformational leadership on the achievement of projects within the construction sector in the region of Punjab, Pakistan. Therefore, this research was to examine the relationship between



transformational leadership and project success, with a focus on the mediating effects of self-efficacy and the moderating effects of social capital. Hypothesis<sub>1</sub> was to identify the effect of transformational leadership and project success. As per the prediction, it is found that transformative leadership has a favourable correlation with the completion of successful projects. According to this finding, leadership has a key role to play in the success of any project. With the help of this study, the researcher was able to get the results that support this hypothesis. As stated, the result of our study shows that transformational behaviours adopted by leaders impacted project success. These results are in line with research conducted by prior researchers (Aga et al., 2016; Anantmula, 2010; Scott-Young & Samson, 2008; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2019).

Hypothesis<sub>2a</sub> was to identify the effect of transformational leadership and self-efficacy. In support of the hypothesis, the results showed that the self-efficacy of subordinates makes project leadership more effective than transformational leadership. It can be said that self-efficacy strengthens transformational leadership. Transformational leaders use various practices such as target setting, relations with team members, role clarity, and the use of various techniques for problem-solving which altogether help the project team to achieve a successful project. This finding is in line with previous research by Mittal (2015) and Pillai and Williams (2004). Hypothesis<sub>2b</sub> was to identify the effect of self-efficacy and project success. It was observed that self-efficacy is positively related to project success, which is in line with Prussia et al. (1998) and there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and performance; we can extend this to project success.

The third hypothesis<sub>3</sub> was to examine the mediating role of self-efficacy in the association between transformational leadership and project success. Our research revealed that self-efficacy indeed acts as a mediator in the transformational leadership-project success relationship. This study represents a pioneering effort to clearly examine the mediating role of self-efficacy in the link between transformational leadership and project performance. The researcher discovered that there is a partial mediation of self-efficacy in the association between transformational leadership and project success. Previous studies have provided evidence suggesting that self-efficacy plays a mediating role in the association between goal setting and performance (Appelbaum & Hare, 1996). It indirectly supports our

finding in a way that transformational leader applies goal-setting practice to improve the performance of the team for the success of the project. It is in line with previous research that says self-efficacy mediated leadership project success (Rehman, 2020).

In testing our fourth hypothesis<sub>4</sub> about the role of social capital in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, we discovered that social capital moderates this relationship in the construction industry of Punjab, Pakistan. It accepts our hypothesis that social capital moderates the transformative leadership-project success relationship. Social capital was found to be significant in transformational leadership and project success. CEO and project managers of the organizations use the social capital for project success and are in line with Zheng et al. (2017). Current results have proven that when transformational leaders provide guidance and motivate team members, they increase the effectiveness of team performance to achieve project success. The abilities that transformational leaders possess assist them to assess the shortage of skills in their team members and provide ways to improve those skills and acquire new skills.

## **THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The results elevate the understanding of the underlying mechanism of transformational leaders to achieve project success. The study explains transformational behaviours that help in achieving project success by demonstrating the importance and roles of self-efficacy and social capital. In order to maximize transformational leadership and its effects on project success, the organizational context must facilitate self-efficacy and social capital, according to the findings of this study. Since the study found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, it suggests that additional mechanisms also contribute to project success. We can draw several practical implications from our findings, such as self-efficacy, which could increase the effectiveness and performance of project leadership.

Secondly, the transformational leadership style is best to achieve project success. People with strong leadership self-efficacy are more resilient in the face of obstacles and resistance. Even in extremely stressful

situations, they exhibit composure and self-control. In addition, they are more eager to exert the work required to lead effectively and meet the demands of their group. One more implication is that project leaders shall be given transformational leadership coaching and training before the start and during the projects, especially by using action learning to increase organizational performance. This implication is supported by Gundersen et al. (2012) and Leonard and Lang (2010).

This also implies that to increase benefits from conventional leadership training programs. The focus should be on how to overcome the challenges, how to deploy the techniques for creating self-efficacy and how to utilize social capital for project success. Various activities other than conventional training shall be planned by the organization to enhance transformational leadership in project-based organizations (Mullen & Kelloway, 2009). These training activities must be in the shape of an experiential learning workshop (Dvir et al., 2002), coaching (Kombarakaran et al., 2008), or the use of both (Kelloway et al., 2000). These workshops and coaching sessions shall be designed to bring changes in project managers so that these activities influence the mindsets, approaches, and performance of their team members towards work (Kelloway et al., 2000). Since leaders are not always aware of how followers perceive their behaviours, it will be a good procedure if followers are allowed to provide feedback about their leaders (Breevaart et al., 2014). Human resource practitioners targeting the effective and efficient role of transformational among construction industry professionals can also benefit from this study by utilizing sound selection techniques along with training modules to assist the leadership. In addition to this, it is equally important to assess self-efficacy. The findings in this study show self-efficacy as an important mechanism through which transformational leadership can achieve project success and organizational goals. This finding proposes that leaders need to establish that they must have a high perception of their self-efficacy.

## **CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

We have successfully determined the characteristics that contribute to the success of a project and are of vital relevance to project-

based businesses. In our study, which is based on the construction industry, we have succeeded in demonstrating that transformational leadership influences project success both directly and indirectly through other variables. Also, we found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. Therefore, business organizations working on construction projects need to encourage the style of transformational leadership for project managers through conducting leadership development practices such as workshops and programs. This, as a result, would lead to an environment where all team members can perform according to their best abilities and skills and thereby contribute to project success. This research study is based on a particular population and environment, which may not be typical of other populations or contexts. The results of this study may thus be quite challenging to extrapolate to other settings or demographics. The study setting is a cross-sectional design. The study's time frame restriction may limit its ability to pinpoint the long-term influences of transformational leadership on project performance. Other factors, including finance or market demand, that could affect a project's success may not have been taken into consideration in the study. Participants have been self-selected into the study, which could bias the results towards individuals who are already interested in transformational leadership or project success.

The suggested model might be tested in future research in various organizational and cultural contexts to see if the linkages between transformational leadership, social capital, self-efficacy, and project success remain true in diverse circumstances. The impact of additional variables, such as work difficulty or team cohesiveness, on the relation between transformational leadership, social capital, self-efficacy, and project success should be studied by researchers. Future studies might contrast transactional and servant leadership with transformational leadership to investigate how each affects project performance. Similarly, we conclude that future research could test the model with larger and more diverse samples to increase the generalizability of the findings.

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