

## Impact of Project Management Practices on Project Performance, Mediating Role of Transformational Leadership

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords:

*Transformational Leadership, Project Performance, non-profit Governmental Organization & Project Monitoring & Evaluation.*

The aim of this research is to assess how project management methods impact educational programs of non-governmental organizations, with a focus on the mediating influence of transformational leadership style. The research collected data from non-governmental organizations in Lahore and Multan that provide elementary education in various areas of these cities. Information was gathered using a standardized questionnaire from staff of educational institutions. This research reveals a significant relationship between Project Management Practice (PMP) and Project Performance (PP) in project-based organizations. Transformational Leadership (TL) plays a significant role in influencing this relationship. Employee satisfaction with a leader's leadership style leads to better service delivery. The study suggests that a strong TL and PMP can improve project performance and employee satisfaction. It emphasizes the importance of training employees in TL to ensure successful project management practices. The findings suggest that organizations should cooperate and motivate their employees to achieve organizational goals.

## INTRODUCTION

Project success has received significant attention as a result of the swift and innovative technological advancements reshaping economies. Project success (PS), with an estimated \$48 trillion invested yearly, is a crucial component in the quickly changing economies. Nevertheless, even if there are more and more projects across a range of industries, just 35 percent of them are deemed successful. It is anticipated that the global project-oriented economy will increase in value from \$12 trillion in 2013 to \$20 trillion by 2027 (Doan, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Business, 2020). The construction sector, capacity development, and social initiatives have all seen a rise in the use of project management in recent years. In order to fulfill the ever-evolving expectations of stakeholders, projects must successfully navigate the complex interplay of opposing demands on scope, time, money, and quality. This multi-dimensional idea was first proposed in the 1960s.

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Gains for the organization, contented users, project staff, long-term viability, and the bottom line are all components of a successful project, according to the Project Management Institute. Due to uneven criteria and prolonged review timeframes, stakeholders have not developed a cohesive perspective on the success of the project (Abbas & Ali, 2023). Project managers are faced with increased hurdles in finishing projects as there is a growing need for better, more profitable, and efficient projects. Some variables that have a direct bearing on project success; great leaders are those who manage projects well. Systems and procedures are secondary to people, and projects can only be successfully completed by adaptable and driven individuals. Eighty percent of projects fail due to ineffective leadership, and transformational leadership (TL) is a key success factor (CSF) in project management (Zaman & Management, 2020). Transformational leadership (TL) is a leadership style where a leader inspires trust and emphasizes the significance of their subordinates' work through both words and actions. The four pillars of transformational leadership are leader charisma, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized concern. Cooperation within the team, dependability, discussion involvement, and the development of self-organization and leadership skills are all improved by transformational leadership. In order to effectively implement transformational leadership behavior in innovative behavior and performance, psychological empowerment is a prerequisite. Successful projects are ensured by competent project managers who inspire and enable their team members to give their best work (Al-Husseini, El Beltagi, & Moizer, 2021).

Research demonstrates that Leadership (TL) has a crucial role in enhancing project success by positively influencing follower attitudes, effort, and performance. Transformational leadership inspires team members to surpass expectations and may impact project success via subordinate leaders. Leaders exhibiting transformational leadership may quickly attract followers and feel more self-assured in experimenting with new approaches. Project managers' personalized attention and exemplary leadership are crucial for ensuring project success. Nevertheless, the diversity of independent research may lead to various control factors influencing the correlation between TL and project success. Mediating factors consist of cognitive trust, collective effectiveness, organizational learning, team development, and leadership abilities. This research suggests that these factors might influence the correlation between TL and project success (Gerards, van Wetten, & van Sambeek, 2021). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are philanthropic groups that operate independently of official control, aiming to achieve social or political objectives like humanitarian issues or

environmental concerns. They can be local, national, or international, and can be run by volunteers or paid staff. NGOs manage complex projects, including product development, policy application, outsourcing, and proper implementation. As states outsourcing public activities due to the global recession, educational NGOs are taking on some obligations. Slovenia still controls most public education facilities, and NGOs in informal education may take over a significant portion of these facilities (Nurjanah, Pebianti, Handaru, & Management, 2020). Academic studies have improved non-profit organization efficiency by focusing on people resources, financial resources, company culture, networking, and strategic leadership. Today, business studies emphasize the need for skilled communicators to balance trading leaders and workforces, promoting change and employee engagement. This research explores the impact of transformative leadership (TL) on project performance in Pakistan's public sector, focusing on educational non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Despite high failure rates in development projects, the competencies of project managers, particularly leadership, have not been thoroughly studied in the context of NGOs. The education sector employs nearly 71% of projected non-profit workers in Pakistan, but faces challenges due to leadership challenges. The Pakistani government typically supports NGOs, but many are not registered or pay attention to monitoring and evaluation. The study aims to examine the government's strategy of monitoring NGOs, the dynamics of inadequate execution, and the consequences of bad monitoring in Pakistan.

***Problem Statement:***

Economic disasters and occurrences like financial and social disasters, which create an undue pressure on achieving objectives and sustaining levels of accountability, are particularly sensitive in Pakistan's NGO sector (Yogarajah, 2017).

The current climate is a challenge to NGOs, and traditional performance management systems are ill-suited to the wide mix of activities currently grouped under certain Objectives. As a result, despite investing significant funds in traditional capacity-building measures, NGO programs have a high failure rate. Different variables were used in this study, such as impact of project management approaches on the performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in the education segment. This investigation looks into how monitoring and assessment on the performance of educational non-governmental organizations, as well as the influence of sponsors on NGOs' performance. It will also look into the impact of leadership style on educational NGOs' project success (Hassan et al., 2017).

Organizations now a days work in a highly complex, demanding, and altering atmosphere, necessitating the development of a successful and compatible strategy. To reach the organization's ultimate goal, this approach requires the integration of all human abilities, skills and resources with the resources of organization, as well as the dangers that may arise during execution. However, many of those strategic activities fail during implementation, and most businesses consider this to be their greatest difficulty. Most businesses place a lot of emphasis and effort on planning, creating timetables, looking for alternatives, expending a lot of time, energy, and according to the rules, but they eventually fail to transfer this strategy into actions. As a result, the most challenging and time-consuming problem in the strategic management process is strategy execution. Only around half of the strategies that are developed are successfully implemented (ABUJARAD, 2020).

### ***Research Gap:***

Several academics have conducted studies in the past to improve the efficiency of non-profit organizations. They focused on people resources, financial resources, company culture, networking, and strategic leadership's interactions with the external environment (Yogarajah, 2017).

Today's business studies are increasingly considering the requirement for leaders who are skilled communicators. There needs to be a balance between trading leaders and workforces because new personnel with greater education and intellect in the use of technological gear are driving change. By engaging employee interests and communicating effectively, leaders may persuade people to adopt their vision (Udin et al., 2019).

Moreover, the leaders who demonstrate TL can gain their immediate followers and are increasingly confident in trying new methods to complete projects with the support of their managers (Na Zhao et al., 2021). Transformational leaders are critical in involving and informing key stakeholders about project objectives, success and deliverables. Furthermore, Project Success is facilitated by transformational project leaders who promote team building interventions (Noreen et al., 2022).

### ***Objectives of the Study:***

The objective of this research is to explore or scrutinize the following:

- To explore the impact of project planning on the performances of NGOs.
- To investigate the impact of Project Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) on Educational NGOs performance.

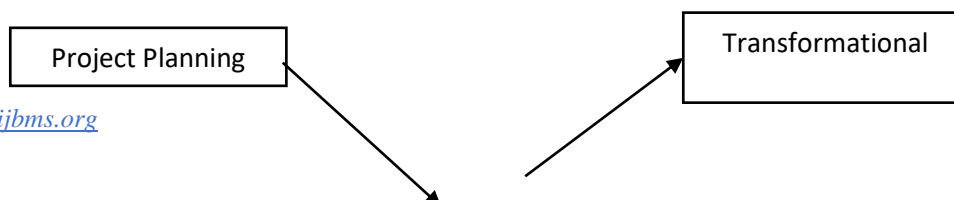
- To investigate the impact of Project Communication of leaders/managers on NGOs performance.
- To assess the impact of stakeholders, influence on performances of NGOs
- Transformational leadership of NGOs leaders positively mediate the relationship between project management practices and performances of NGO.

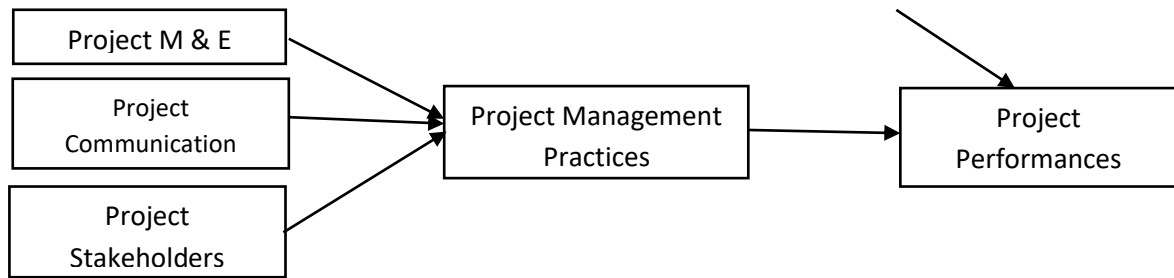
**Research Questions:**

- Does project planning impact on the performances of NGOs?
- Does Project Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) impact on NGOs performance?
- Does Project Communication impact on NGOs performance?
- Does a stakeholder impact on performances of NGOs?
- Does transformational leadership positively mediate among the relationship between project management practices and performances of NGO?

**Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development:**

The conceptual framework and problem description are based on existing theories and models from literature, influenced by social theory. The theory of change is a methodology that focuses on the small steps that lead to long-term goals and the connections between program events and outcomes (Nuel, Ifechi, Emmanuelle, & Business, 2021). It was first introduced by Carol Weiss in 1995 and is a rigorous yet participatory technique that helps organizations and stakeholders define their long-term goals and the circumstances necessary for them to be met. The theory helps identify the "missing middle" between what a program accomplishes and how they help achieve desired results. It is a quantitative concept used to plan, implement, and evaluate change. The theory can be applied to planning, framing concerns, monitoring, and evaluation. The data obtained can be used as an assessment tool to analyze progress toward stated goals and the effectiveness of treatments in producing outcomes. Thus, it provides a workable model for a project that can be reviewed and developed through monitoring and evaluation (Purwanto, Purba, Bernarto, & Sijabat, 2021). Impact of project management practices on project performance, the mediating role of transformational leadership.





Source: Author Development

## Hypothesis

**H-1:** *There is a significant relationship between Projects planning and Educational NGOs performance.*

**H-2:** *There is a significant relationship between Project Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) and NGOs performance.*

**H-3:** *There is a significant relationship between Project Communication and NGOs performance.*

**H-4:** *There is a significant relationship between project stakeholders and NGOs performance.*

**H-5:** *Transformational leadership significantly mediates among the relationship between project planning and performances of NGO.*

**H-6:** *Transformational leadership significantly mediates among the relationship between Project Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) and NGOs performance.*

**H-7:** *Transformational leadership positively mediates among the relationship between Project Communication and NGOs performance.*

**H-8:** *Transformational leadership positively mediates among the relationship between project stakeholders and performances of NGOs.*

## METHODOLOGY

### **Purpose of Research:**

The purpose of this research was explanatory. Explanation reports and defines relationships among various aspects of a phenomenon (Babbie, 1986, p. 91). The ambition of explanatory research is to ascertain the social phenomenon operating in the organizations and populations (Babbie, 2010, p. 100). Explanatory studies give reasons for the phenomenon that descriptive studies observe (Cooper, 2014, p. 22). Explanatory surveys test a theory by pulling the rationality of the experiment from the laboratory to the field (Gill & Johnson, 2002, p. 98). In this research, influence of transformational leadership style on project performance and to

examine the effect of the Project Management Practices on project success of educational projects in NGOs in Lahore is described. The variables of this study were Transformational leadership style and project performance in NGOs. The IV was Project Management Practices and DV was project performance with the mediating variable which was Transformational leadership style and this variable strengthens the relationship between Project Management Practices and project performance.

***Data Collection Method:***

A survey research technique is used in this research. In research study, the goal was to identify the traits of the population being studied. The results of this study are used by researchers to generalize on the population under study (Kothari, 2004, p. 5).

***Sample Selection:***

According to the item, a sample size of 300+ employees (administrative and faculty) was chosen as a rule of thumb sampling size at Educational NGOs and 300 forms received back. These staff will be drawn from the different schools of this NGOs and its employees. All respondents had varying degrees of education and had distinct perspectives on organizational success. These survey takers replied with their best efforts.

***Instrument Development:***

A questionnaire has been proposed as an effective technique for getting data from selected respondents as a survey tool. The goal of this project was to create a new questionnaire that could be used as a survey instrument to collect data. This questionnaire covers demographic data as well as other pertinent questions, all of can range from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a five point Likert scale.

***Measures:***

The methodologies of project performance, transformational leadership, and Project management practices used in this study were all accessible and validated.

The below table shows the questionnaires items and authors.

***Data Collection Procedures:***

Structured (Adapted) data selection toll applied. Survey participants visiting selected CARE Foundation 599-A, Shadman 1 Shadman, Lahore, Punjab 54000, Pakistan after receiving verbal consent, participants are prompted to complete a research survey that includes personal information such as age, gender, education, income, and experience, as well as work exposure. Survey forms was be distributed to directed employees with instructions on how to

complete them. After the time frame was determined, questionnaires were collected, and the replies were entered into SPSS-25 for use in research-related statistical tests.

### **Data Analysis Technique:**

The analysis was done on a per-unit basis (SPSS version 25) used to record survey responses. After entering the data into SPSS, it was subjected to a reliability test to ensure that the tool used in the survey's pilot testing was internally consistent. A full survey was undertaken after the consistency was confirmed. For quantifying the respondent's information, a test of frequency distribution was used.

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Overview of the Organization</b>	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Participants Educational Background Referring Their Takings</b>
CARE Foundation	CARE Foundation is a welfare trust founded in Pakistan in 1988 by Ms. Seema Aziz.(it covers multiple government schools projects)	Creativity, Culture And Education (CCE)	21 July, 2021	31 August,2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Admin Staff</li> <li>• Accounts</li> </ul>

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Demographic characteristics**

In Table 1 the sample's gender composition was 58.4% female and 41.6% male. The proportion of men in this study was lower than that of women. 4.4% of respondent's age was under 20 years. 38.8% of respondent's age was 21-25 years. 24.4% of respondent's age was 26-30 years. 26.4% of respondent's age was 31-35 years and 6.0% of respondent's age was 36-40 years. In this study, the percentage of 21-25 years of respondents was high. The Matric or less qualified respondents were 10.8%, Inter respondents were 47.6%, Graduation qualified respondents were 40.4%, and Master & above qualified respondents were 12.0%. It reveals that 30.4% of respondents were employees, 38.4% were teachers, and 22.8% were administrative staff and 8.4% of respondents were accounts. It reveals that 3.6% of respondents had no prior work experience, 13.6% had 1-2 years of work experience, 21.6% had 2-3 years of work experience, 28.4% had 3-4 years of work experience, and 32.8% had more than 4 years of work experience. The percentage of respondents with 3-4 years of work experience was high in this study.

### **Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**



Descriptive Statistics						
Variables	R	Min	Max.	Mean	SD	Variance
P_Pla	3.00	2.00	5.00	3.8984	.67216	.452
P_M&E	3.00	2.00	5.00	3.9088	.67449	.455
P_Comuni	3.00	2.00	5.00	3.9080	.68404	.468
Trans_Ld	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.8192	.71200	.507
P_St	3.00	2.00	5.00	3.8984	.67216	.452
P_Perfo	4.00	1.00	5.00	3.8313	.67142	.451

**Table 2: Reliability Testing**

Reliability Testing		
Variable	No. of Items	Reliability
Project Performance (DV)	6	0.839
Transformational Leadership	5	0.848
Project management practices (IV):		
P_Pla	5	.872
P_M&E	5	.869
P_Comuni	4	.824
P_St	5	.872

Existing literature suggests that the Cronbach's alpha value should be greater than or equal to 0.7 (Owusu-Manu et al., 2020b). In table 2 All the reliability values of variables if exceed the specified criteria, it is safe to continue the analysis.

### Table 3: KMO Test

The method used to define the data is KMO test mentioned in table 3. KMO is the index which compares adequacy of sample requirement, the dimensions of the measured coefficients of correlation and the dimensions of the partial coefficients of correlation. The rate of KMO must be above 0.50. The greater this %, the more suitable the data for factor analysis.

Terms of KMO Values		KMO Test							
		KMO Index of Questions:				KMO Index of PMP dimension's Questions:			
KMO Index	Comment	Project performance	Transformational Leadership		P_Pla	P_M&E	P_Co muni	P_St	
0.90	Exceptional	KMO Index	0.839	0.848	KMO Index	.872	.869	.824	.872
0.80	Very Good	Sig.	0.000	0.000	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000
0.70	Good	The KMO index of the project performance and transformational leadership are 0.848 and significant value is p which is less than 0.05 which shows that the outcomes are "Very Good" as mentioned in Table 3.9.				The KMO indexes of PMP dimensions questions are given. The KMO index of project planning is 0.872 which is "Very Good" and p value is significant. The KMO index of project monitoring & Evaluation is 0.869 which is "Very Good" and p value is significant. The KMO index of project communication is 0.824 which is "Very Good" and p value is significant. And finally, the KMO index of project stakeholders is 0.872 which is "Very Good" and p value is significant.			
0.60	Moderate								
0.50	Weak	The KMO index of project performance is 0.839 and p value is less than 0.05 which is again shows that the results are "Very Good".							
< 0.50	Not Acceptable								

### Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Variables	PP	P_M&E	PC	TL	PS	PP
<b>Project Planning</b>	1					
<b>Project Planning, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	.996**	1				
<b>Project communication, transformational leadership</b>	.984**	.989**	1			
<b>Project stakeholders</b>	.552**	.547**	.546**	1		
<b>Performance</b>	1.000**	.996**	.984**	.552**	1	
	.562**	.556**	.552**	.956**	.562**	1

Correlation analysis reveals a significant relationship between project management practices (PP) and project performance (DV) with transformational leadership (TL), with a significant 2-tailed level of 56.2%.

**Table 5: Hierarchical Analysis of Regression**

Variables	$\beta$	R Square	$\Delta R^2$	F value	Durbin-Watson
<b>Project Planning</b>	.561	.315	.313	.000	1.809
<b>Project Planning, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	.553	.309	.306	.000	1.821
<b>Project communication,</b>	.541	.304	.301	.000	1.824
<b>Project stakeholders</b>	.561	.315	.313	.000	1.809

The table 5 shows that the relationship between the DV and IV has a negligible impact on project performance, with a 31.5% variation due to project planning, 30.9% due to monitoring and evaluation, 30.4% due to communication, and 31.5% due to stakeholders. The R-square value of 0.315 indicates that these factors have a minimal effect on project performance.

**Table 6: Mediation Analysis**

Y : perfo  
 X :p st  
 M: trans Ld

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	LL	UL	P
Without Mediator	.30155	114.2872	.5610	.4577	.6644	.0000
With Mediator	.3046	109.6257	.5846	.4741	.6951	.0000
Model	EFFECT	SE	T	P	LL	
Direct Effect of X on Y	0.486	.0220	2.2039	.0285	.0052	
Indirect Effect of X on Y	0.5124	.0630			.3878	

Y : perfo  
 X :p M&E  
 M: trans Ld

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	LL	UL	P
Without Mediator	.3090	110.9255	.5534	.4499	.6569	.0000
With Mediator	.2991	105.8303	.5773	.4668	.6878	.0000
Model	EFFECT	SE	T	P	LL	
Direct Effect of X on Y	0.467	.0219	2.1320	.0340	.0036	
Indirect Effect of X on Y	0.5067	.0627			.3855	

Y : perfo  
 X :p Plan  
 M: trans Ld

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	LL	UL	P
Without Mediator	.3042	108.4488	.5414	.4390	.6428	.0000
With Mediator	.2984	105.4598	.5686	.4595	.6776	.0000
Model	EFFECT	SE	T	P	LL	
Direct Effect of X on Y	0.0408	216	1.8878	.0602	-.0018	
Indirect Effect of X on Y	0.5006	.0649			.3789	

## DISCUSSION

This research investigates the impact of project management practices (PMP) on project performance (PP) in educational NGOs in Lahore, Pakistan. The study involved 240 respondents, including principals, vice principals, teachers, and administrative employees. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire survey, focusing on project planning, project management and communication, and project performance. The study found that PMP dimensions, such as PMP, were reliable and positively influenced project performance. The coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha for project performance was 0.839, and the PMP dimensions were 0.848. The model of product interaction between PMP and TL showed a positive significant interaction impact on PP in educational NGOs. The stronger role of transformational leadership was confirmed by the interaction model's higher value of  $\Delta R^2$ , indicating an improvement in project performance. This research highlights the importance of PMP in enhancing project performance in educational NGOs.

**H-1:** The results of the first hypothesis in this study's model 4 regression analysis between the IV and DV, which correspond to Project Planning and PP, suggested that Project Planning is not significant (as the R value is less than 0.5) ( $\beta = 0.5610$ , significant value (p) =  $.000 < .05$ ) effect on project performance of educational NGOs. But in contrast, the current study supports earlier research that suggests the improved planning at the start of the project life cycle has a beneficial influence on the end project outcome.

**H-2:** The results of the first hypothesis in this study's model 4 regression analysis between the IV and DV, or Project M & E and PP, respectively, suggest that Project M & E has a

negligible (as the R value is less than 0.5) ( $\beta = 0.5534$ , significant value ( $p = .000.05$ ) impact on the project performance of educational NGOs.

**H-3:** The results of the first hypothesis in this study's model 4 regression analysis between the IV and DV, which are Project Communication and PP, respectively, suggested that Project Communication has insignificant (as the R value is less than 0.5) ( $\beta = 0.3042$ , significant value ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) effect on project performance of educational NGO.

**H-4:** The results of the first hypothesis in this study's model 4 regression analysis between the IV and DV, which represent Project stakeholders and PP, respectively, suggested that Project stakeholders have insignificant (as the R value is less than 0.5) ( $\beta = 0.3155$ , significant value ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) effect on project performance of educational NGOs.

**H-5:** While model 4 regression analysis with mediator which shows hypothesis, suggested that Transformational leadership significantly mediates ( $\beta = 0.5846$ , significant value ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) among the relationship between project planning and project performance.

**H-6:** While model 4 regression analysis with mediator which shows hypothesis, suggested that Transformational leadership significantly mediates ( $\beta = 0.5773$ , significant value ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) among the relationship between Project (M & E) and project performance.

**H-7:** Transformational leadership positively mediates among the relationship between Project Communication and NGOs performance. While model 4 regression analysis with mediator which shows hypothesis, suggested that Transformational leadership significantly mediates ( $\beta = 0.5686$ , significant value ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) among the relationship between Project Communication and project performance.

**H-8:** While model 4 regression analysis with mediator which shows hypothesis, suggested that Transformational leadership significantly mediates ( $\beta = 0.5846$ , significant value ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) among the relationship between Project stakeholders and project performance.

## CONCLUSION

This research reveals a significant relationship between Project Management Practice (PMP) and Project Performance (PP) in project-based organizations. Transformational Leadership (TL) plays a significant role in influencing this relationship. Employee satisfaction with a leader's leadership style leads to better service delivery. The study suggests that a strong TL and PMP can improve project performance and employee satisfaction. It emphasizes the importance of training employees in TL to ensure successful project management practices. The findings suggest that organizations should cooperate and motivate their employees to achieve organizational goals.

**Practical implication**

The study contributes to the project management level of PMP and PP, filling the study gap and confirming the high influence of transformational leadership on the relationship between PMP and PP. It also helps NGOs understand the assessment factors for PP and their interrelationships, facilitating the growth of systems for performance measurement. The findings have practical implications for Pakistani project-based organizations, offering guidance for implementing effective projects and eliminating uncertainty that contributes to project failure. Managers who demonstrate transformational leadership encourage their staff and pass on their aspirations to their followers.

**Limitation and Future Research Direction**

This study explores the relationship between project performance and transformational leadership style (TL) in educational NGOs. It is the first to use TL as a mediator in the relationship between PMP and PP, and can be conducted in different parts of the world due to limited resources. The study is quantitative, but future research could be qualitative, considering other factors like job satisfaction, personality traits, and team cohesion. The study used one independent variable, PMP, but could be expanded to include more variables like transactional leadership. Future research should also consider multiple industry investigations and a larger sample size for more in-depth results. The study also focuses on managerial and non-managerial staff and their impact on project success. The study suggests replicating the study in various parts of the world with identical factors or variables.

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