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REVISITING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT, AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATION REPUTATION: A MORE HOLISTIC VIEW EMPLOYING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and perceived organizational reputation, focusing on the mediating role of employee empowerment and the moderating role of organizational culture. Further, it examines how organizational culture influences both the link between transformational leadership and employee empowerment, and the connection between employee empowerment and perceived organizational reputation. The findings indicate that transformational leaders tend to delegate authority and encourage employees to involve in decision-making, which enhances their perception of organizational reputation. Additionally, organizational culture strengthens the relationships among transformational leadership and employee empowerment, and employee empowerment and perceived organizational reputation.

INTRODUCTION

The banking sector is widely regarded as a crucial component of the economy, often described as its backbone, as it plays a fundamental role in supporting a country's economic activities. A positive relationship exists between the strength of the banking sector and economic growth, highlighting its crucial role in promoting economic expansion and improving commodity prices. Furthermore several regulatory measures are essential for maintaining the sustainability of the banking sector and avoiding financial crises. (Hamdaoui & Cancelo, 2024).

Similar to other sectors, several factors contribute to success in the banking sector, one of which is employees' perception of organizational reputation. When employees perceive their organization positively, it strengthens their commitment to their organization values, beliefs, mission, and objectives. Employees' internal perceptions are therefore extremely important; if they do not hold a positive view of the organization, it becomes difficult for them to communicate a favorable reputation to external stakeholders (Özbağ & Çekmecelioğlu, 2022). It is significant for organizations to generate positive perception of the organization in employees. In previous studies, many researchers focused that effective management competence and leadership behaviors can influence how the

organization's reputation is perceived (Men & Stacks, 2013).

According to Bass (2003), transformational leaders are capable of influencing and reshaping the value systems of their subordinates to achieve organizational goals by developing one or more dimensions of transformational leadership. These dimensions include charisma later redefined as idealized influence along with intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. Followers of transformation leaders understand acknowledge the leader's cooperation and efforts through intellectual conceptualization of empowerment (Laschinger et al., 2001). An empowerment climate significantly enhances both corporate reputation and overall firm performance. A positive perception of corporate reputation is closely linked to improvements in both financial and non-financial performance (Özbağ & Çekmecelioğlu, 2022).

Furthermore, culture of organization boost affectedness of transformational leadership, enhance employee empowerment as well as perceived organization reputation. Organizational culture reflects the internal environment and the manner in which activities are carried out within the organization. Organizations that uphold appropriate ethics, values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms create a supportive environment where transformational leaders can empower employees to carry out their responsibilities with autonomy, trust, confidence, and a strong sense of accountability (Helalat et al, 2023). According to Ali et al. (2023), company culture and identity, staff interactions, and the physical environment significantly shape perceptions of organizational reputation. Workplaces with an adhocracy culture are entrepreneurial and innovative (Misigo et al., 2019; Noone et al., 2022).

Empirical research examining the link between transformational leadership and perceived organizational reputation remains limited. By connecting perceived organizational reputation with transformational leadership through the mechanism of employee empowerment, this study offers new evidence on how transformational leaders contribute to shaping organizational reputation by empowering their employees. Unlike much of the existing research that focuses on a single aspect of empowerment, this study also incorporates psychological empowerment. Furthermore, notable gap in the prior literature exist regarding the interactive role of organizational culture in strengthening employee empowerment and perceived organizational reputation, as well as their contribution to organizational success. Therefore, this study explores the relationship of transformational leadership to perceived organizational reputation through employee empowerment, as well as, considers the moderating effect of organizational culture which contributes to increase empowerment feelings and perception of organizational reputation.

Literature Review:

Transformational Leadership:

The success of an organization in accomplishing its goals largely depends on the effectiveness of its leadership. When leaders perform their leadership roles effectively, it significantly influences the organization's capacity to accomplish its goals (Irnawati & Prasetyo, 2020; Naidu & Walt, 2005).

Bass, (1985) described Transformational leadership as it involves setting strong ethical standards, inspiring followers toward shared goals, encouraging creativity and critical thinking, and giving individual attention to support followers' personal growth and development. While emphasizing on its strategic aspect Al Draj & Al Saed, (2023) define Transformational leadership as a "manager's ability to encourage creativity and communicate the organization's vision and mission to employees through the leader's practice of highly ethical behaviors to build trust and respect between the two parties and work to develop them among subordinates". Transformational leaders create and implement new strategies, motivate employees to take initiative and risks, and align them with organizational goals, thereby enhancing commitment (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003; Bass & Avolio, 2000). Research shows that transformational leadership positively influences

employee behavior and improves the overall workplace environment (Orabi, T. 2016).

Employee empowerment:

Employee empowerment "refers back to the delegation of strength and responsibility from better stages within the business enterprise hierarchy to lower stages in personnel particularly the power to make decisions" (Baird & Wang, 2010). Spreitzer (1995) defined psychological empowerment as "increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact."

Empowerment through commitment involves initiatives aimed at strengthening employees' dedication to delivering high-quality service and satisfying customers, without necessarily emphasizing direct involvement of employees in decision-making or authority. Followers of transformational leaders understand their leaders and, in turn, recognize the organization and its objectives through the intellectual empowerment conceptualization (Laschinger et al., 2001). Empowerment refers to enhancing the ability of individuals or organizations to perform tasks effectively and efficiently. In management, it involves developing employees' skills, encouraging independent decision-making, and fostering participation and motivation, which strengthens employer–employee relationships. (Zraiqat & Al Saed, 2019). Previous scholars have found improvement in work attitude and performance due to employee empowerment (Laschinger et. al, 2001).

Perceived Organizational Reputation:

Perceived organizational reputation is a significant concept that has captured the interest of considerable scholars. According to Hutton et al, (2001), reputation management, as an important business function, is fundamentally rooted in the traditional field of public relations. Similarly, Stacks et al, (2010) emphasized that reputation is a major outcome of public relations and interacts with other factors such as trust, credibility, and relationships, thereby influencing the return on expectation and return on investment of public relations activities for organizations.

Ewing et al, (2010) defined this concept as "a set of organization judgment's which are obtain primarily based on person evaluations from social, financial and environmental impacts of the organization". Employees' perceptions of their organization play a crucial role in shaping what they communicate publicly. Their views often influence how other stakeholders and shareholders perceive the organization's reputation, since statements made by employees are generally regarded as more credible and authentic than those from senior management or public relations departments (Kim & Rhee, 2021). Furthermore, employees' family members and friends can also act as informal third-party supporters who help strengthen the organization's reputation (Stacks, 2010).

Organizational culture:

In words of Schein, (2004) Organizational culture "consist of values, believes and norms as a combination they impact the way employees behave, think and feel in business enterprise" According to Wirawan (2008), organizational culture "refers to the pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by members of an organization. These beliefs and expectations create strong values that influence and shape the behavior of individuals and groups within the organization". Furthermore, organizational culture is considered one of the most complex aspects of change management, consisting of both formal and informal elements. It is also important to recognize that organizational culture is not fixed or uniform; rather, it evolves over time as circumstances and environments change (Al-Shibami et al., 2019). Significant relationship between organizational culture play significant role in increasing organizational performance (umar et. al, 2018).

Transformational Leadership and Employee Empowerment:

Beliefs are formed in individuals' minds and reflect how they perceive and value the organization. By empowering employees,

transformational leaders can foster a sense of trust among staff, making them feel that they are valued and taken seriously. As a result, employees become more attentive to their job performance and view themselves as important members of the organization (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Barroso et al., 2008). "Followers' psychological empowerment comprising competence, impact, meaning, and self-determination partially mediates the relationship between transformational and active transactional leadership and followers' organizational identification" (Zhu et al., 2012). Transformational leaders are more inclined than transactional leaders in delegating authority and involving employees in decision-making processes. Empowered employees , particularly in terms of competence and control, tend to evaluate their organization's reputation more positively (Men, 2010).Research also indicates that weak interest and lack of respect from leaders toward subordinates can negatively affect employees. Therefore, it is recommended that organizations adopt transformational leadership and support employees through empowerment while encouraging further research on transformational leadership and empowerment (Al Draj & Al Saed, 2023).

Employee Empowerment and Organization Reputation:

An empowerment-focused environment improves both corporate reputation and overall performance, with positive reputation perceptions linked to better financial and non-financial outcomes (Özbağ & Çekmecelioğlu, 2022). Practices like participative decision-making and power-sharing build trust, enhance employee confidence, and foster positive attitudes, especially when strong supervisor–subordinate relationships exist (Men, 2011). According to Maden et al. (2012), studies show that companies perceiving transformational leadership practices often exhibit stronger corporate reputations. Empowered employees demonstrate greater knowledge, positive attitudes, and effective behaviors in performing organizational tasks compared to non-empowered employees. These improvements translate into the adoption of new methods that enhance efficiency and effectiveness, contributing to superior performance and a stronger organizational reputation (Umar et al., 2018).

Relationship of Organization culture to Transformational leadership, Employee Empowerment and Organization Reputation:

Organizational culture especially power distance significantly influences the relationship between transformational leadership and internal processes, but not learning and growth (Al-Shibami et al., 2019). Additionally, an adhocracy culture strengthens the link between transformational leadership and employees' creative performance (Golden & Shriner, 2019). Organizational culture can be measured across four dimensions: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. The involvement dimension reflects the extent of employee participation in decision-making process, with subordinates empowerment, capability development, and team orientation (Denison & Haaland, 2003). Organizational culture also affects different dimensions of corporate social responsibility. Hotels that implement practices focused on employees and customers can strengthen their reputation, which in turn positively impacts overall firm performance (González-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

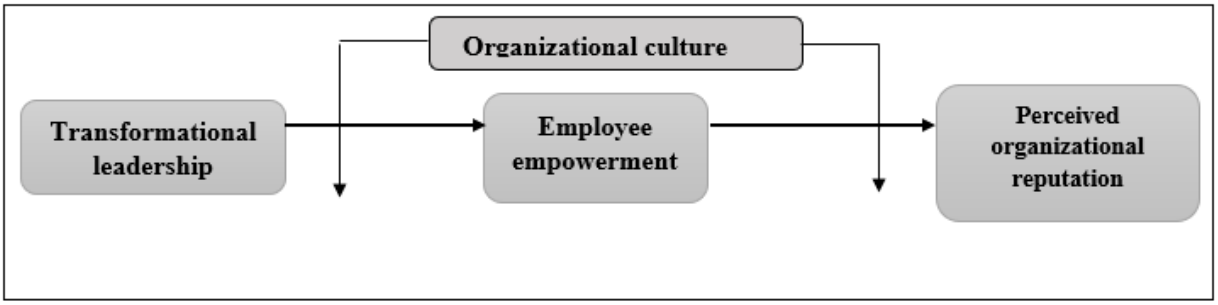
Study by Siyal et al., (2022) on Pakistani hotels revealed that Pakistani hotels have the potential to make a greater impact if their operations are managed more efficiently, which could enhance their sustainability internationally and boost their contribution to the country's social and economic development. Based on these insights, it is further recommended that hotel managers and owners formulate effective strategies to strengthen reputation and corporate social responsibility via employing organizational culture.

The theoretical literature review directed to develop following hypotheses.

H1: Transformational leadership would positively effect on employee empowerment.

H2: Employee empowerment would positively effect on perceived organizational reputation.
H3: Employee empowerment would act as mediator in the relationship of transformational leadership to perceived organizational reputation.
H4: Organizational culture would act as moderator in the relationship of transformational leadership to employee empowerment.
H5: Organizational culture would act as moderator in the relationship of employee empowerment to perceived organizational reputation

Theoretical Model:



Research Methodology:
The study focuses on employees of public and private banks in Quetta who can understand and respond to the questionnaire, with a sample size of 400 selected (Men, 2013). Using convenience sampling technique, data will be collected through four well established instruments: the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass and Avolio (1992) for transformational leadership, Harrison and Stokes' (2012) scale for organizational culture, the Harris–Fombrun Corporate Reputation Quotient (Fombrun et al., 2000) for perceived organizational reputation, and empowerment scales by Chiles and Zorn (1995) and Spreitzer (1995).

All questionnaires use a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' opinions. Data will be analyzed using SPSS (version 28), applying tests such as normality, regression, mediation, and moderation to evaluate the study's hypotheses.

Results:
Out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 320 were properly completed, resulting in an 80% response rate. Reliability analysis, which assesses the consistency of the measurement instruments, showed acceptable results, as Cronbach's alpha values were close to 1. This indicates that all instruments used in the study are reliable and appropriate for further analysis.

Table 1 showing Cronbach's Alpha's Reliability test for instruments

S. No	Variable/ Instrument	Cronbach's alpha Value	No. of items in instrument
1	**Transformational leadership**	0.845	12
2	**Employee empowerment**	0.876	12
3	**Organizational culture**	0.966	17
4	**Perceived organizational reputation**	0.87	20

Table 2 showing Pearson Correlation results

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4
Transformational leadership	3.9978	.10446	1			
Employee empowerment	3.9406	.58271	.584**	1		
Organizational culture	3.6710	.86843	.212**	.276**	1	
Perceived organizational reputation	3.8562	.55509	.546**	.523**	.521**	1
** Indicates Correlation significance at 1% level						

Table 3 showing Regression test result

Model	Standardized co-efficient Beta	T	R^2	Sig
Transformational leadership ⟶ Employee empowerment	0.623	14.210	0.388	0.000
Employee empowerment ⟶ Perceived organizational reputation	0.521	10.885	0.271	0.000

The results indicate that transformational leadership significantly positively affects employee empowerment (β = 0.623, p < 0.01). Employee empowerment significantly positively affects perceived organizational reputation (β = 0.521, p < 0.01). In addition, transformational leadership brings 39% variance in employee empowerment and employee empowerment brings 27% variance in perceived organizational reputation. Results support regression hypotheses.

Table 4 showing Mediation test result

Model	Standardized co-efficient Beta	T	R^2	Sig
Transformational leadership ⟶ Perceived organization reputation	0.638	11.658	0.40	0.000
Transformational leadership ⟶ Employee empowerment	0.471	8.619	0.22	0.000
Employee empowerment ⟶ Perceived organizational reputation	0.219	4.001	0.05	0.000

The transformational leadership has significantly direct positive impact on perceived organizational reputation (β = 0.638, p < 0.01). The transformational leadership indirect effect on perceived organizational reputation is also significant which shows partial mediation: the effect of transformational leadership on employee empowerment (β = 0.392, p < 0.01) and employee empowerment effect on perceived organizational reputation (β = 0.382, p < 0.01).

Table 5 showing Moderating effect of Organizational Culture in between Transformational leadership and Employee empowerment

Model	Standardized estimate Beta	F	R^2	R^2 change	F change	Sig
Transformational leadership ⟶ Employee empowerment	0.75	146.19	.561			0.00
Organization culture ⟶ Employee empowerment	0/77	85.38	.592	.031	17.15	0.00
Transformational leadership * Organization culture ⟶ Employee empowerment	0.78	59.16	.600	.008	4.72	0.00

Table 5 shows that organizational culture has a significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.78$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that a strong organizational culture strengthens this relationship. Additionally, the interaction between organizational culture and transformational leadership accounts for a significant portion of the variance in employee empowerment ($\Delta R^2 = 0.008$, $\Delta F = 4.72$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6 showing Moderating effect of Organizational Culture in between Employee empowerment and Perceived organization reputation

Model	Standardized estimate Beta	F	R^2	R^2 change	F change	Sig
Employee Empowerment ⟶ Perceived organization reputation	0.592	634.95				0.00
Organization Culture ⟶ Perceived organization reputation	0.541	325.17	0.29	0.06	8.275	0.04
Organization Culture * Employee Empowerment ⟶ Perceived organization reputation	0.615	306.82	0.37	0.08	12.64	0.00

Organization Culture has significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship of employee empowerment to perceived organization reputation ($\beta = -0.615$, $p < 0.05$) and accounted for significant proportion of variance in perceived organization reputation with employee empowerment interaction ($\Delta R2 = .008$, $\Delta F = 12.64$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that in the presences of higher positive organization culture, when empowered employees perceived organization reputation escalates

Discussion:

This study identifies employee empowerment as a mediator between transformational leadership and perceived organizational reputation, and organizational culture as a moderator influencing the relationships between transformational leadership, employee empowerment, and perceived organizational reputation.

The first hypothesis confirms that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on employee empowerment. This aligns with Jin (2010), who highlights that transformational leadership through implying

environment of compassion, empathy, sensitivity, relationship building, and innovation creates a climate of trust, boosts employee confidence, and supports development.

The second hypothesis demonstrates that employee empowerment positively affects perceived organizational reputation. Empowered employees, being more competent and having greater control over their work, show higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn enhances the organization's reputation. An evident positive relationship between employee empowerment and perceived organizational reputation is supported by research (Men & Stacks, 2013).

Hypothesis three narrates that employee empowerment intervene the relationship of transformational leadership to perceived organizational reputation. The transformational leadership has significantly positive direct and indirect (through employee empowerment) impact on perceived organizational reputation. Empowerment is seen as a proactive and strategic approach within organizations that fosters strong commitment through effective human resource practices (Menon, 2001). Implementation of Transformational leadership, trust on organization, and employee empowerment can influence corporate performance through innovation and ultimately enhance organizational reputation (Umar et al., 2018). Moreover, transformational leadership enhances employees' perceptions of organizational reputation both directly and indirectly via employee empowerment, while transactional leadership negatively impacts these perceptions. Employees with greater competence and decision-making autonomy tend to have a more positive view of their organization's reputation. (Men, 2013). Reputation should be regarded as a key outcome of transformational leadership (Garberg & Fombrun, 2006).

The current study finds the intervening role of organizational culture on transformational leadership and employee empowerment and on employee empowerment and perceived organization reputation which support hypothesis four and five respectively. in other words, the interaction of organization culture with transformational leadership boost empowerment in employees as well as interaction of organization culture with employee empowerment boost the perception of organization reputation in employees. The findings are aligned with previous studies where impact of organization culture on transformational leadership, employee empowerment, and perceived organization reputation has been investigated, Organizational culture enhances management performance through larders who can leverage it to mobilize employees, enhance teamwork, and motivate members to achieve organizational goals. (Hasan et al., 2020). All dimensions of structural empowerment including supportive, accountable, and decision making environment and organizational identification generate employees' perceptions of corporate reputation (Erkul et al, 2018). Conclusively, organizational culture strengthens the positive impact of employee empowerment on perceived organizational reputation. Moreover, effective leadership can empower employees to perform their tasks and responsibilities, leading to achieve business outcomes (Castro et. al, 2008).

Conclusion:

Current Study is conducted in public and private banks in Quetta, Pakistan and highlights the positive effect of transformational leadership on employee empowerment and positive effect of employee empowerment on perceived organization reputation along the mediating role of employee empowerment, Furthermore, a moderating role of organization culture has been found. This means in the presence of organization culture, transformational leadership most likely to higher empowerment in employees, furthermore, In the presence of organization culture, empowered employees most likely to perceive organization reputation.

Implications of the study

The present study has significant implications for human resource, organization behaviour, and public relations scholars, top management, and

leaders. Theoretically, it broadens the research by investigating potential internal factors that influence organizational reputation perception, revealing that organizations should concentrate on transformational leadership as It reflects compassion, empathy, sensitivity, and power-sharing.

By demonstrating the role of employee empowerment, study emphasize that through transformational leadership , organization can exert efforts to develop employee empowerment as the empowered employees are more competent give favourable outcomes to organization and perceive positive towards organization. In other words, Employee empowerment has been shown to act as a key mediator in the influence of transformational leadership on employees' perceptions of organizational reputation.

The present study also provides pragmatic implications of organization culture by suggesting formulating strategy for promoting positive organization culture and its interaction with transformational leadership and employee empowerment to intensify the perception of organization reputation.

Limitations and future recommendations:

Although this study provides valuable initial insights, it has several limitations that should be considered in future research. One limitation is that the convenience sampling technique was applied which limits broad generalization of results. Another limitation is that data was collected from one city of Pakistan. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of how transformational leadership influence perceived organization reputation, further studies should incorporate the views of public relations professionals, top management and organizational leaders. In addition, researchers should use broader samples along mix research methodology approach from different organizations to test the proposed model and to provide deeper insight on diverse perspective and enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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