

MIDOCEAN UNIVERSITY
COLLAGE OF MANAGEMENT
MASTER OF PROJECT MANAGMENT



**Impact of Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction on Project Success: The
Mediating Role of Employee Engagement**

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1. Introduction

Leadership is a key factor in defining organizational performance especially in a project based which requires effective coordination, motivation, and making strategic decisions (Cai, 2023). In the present management literature, the concept of leadership can be divided into various styles that have been classified as transformational and transactional leadership as the most influential to determine the behavior of employees and other organizational outcomes (Naeem & Nawaz, 2017). Transformational leaders are able to inspire, motivate, as well as intellectually stimulate their teams that creates a sense of purpose among employees, commitment, and creativity (Ismail et al., 2010). On the contrary, transactional leaders are more oriented to systematic work, systems of rewards, and adherence, oriented on the achievement of a set of predetermined goals in the most efficient manner (Dong, 2023). It is important to know the effects that these leadership styles have on employee attitudes to maximize the performance of organizations.

Job satisfaction is the other critical element that determines the performance and the interaction of the workers with their activity. Satisfied workers are more likely to demonstrate a level of commitment, motivation as well as discretionary effort, which are very essential in the realization of the project goals (Ajzen, 2011). Nevertheless, the connection between the leadership style and project outcomes is not ever direct. Studies indicate that the engagement of the employees or the extent of commitment, enthusiasm and immersion by the employees in their job can be a mediating factor and convert leadership activities and job satisfaction into a reality of the success of the project (Ajzen, 2011; Scholar, 2025). The engaged employees will tend to think outside the box, work together, and be flexible to change, which are critical in ensuring that the project results are of high quality.

The measurement of project success has grown to include more than the conventional measures of time, cost, and quality and includes stakeholder satisfaction, cohesion of a team and sustainable performance results (Tseladikae et al., 2025). Therefore, uncovering the drivers that contribute to successful project implementation is important in organizations that are trying to gain competitive edge in the ever changing business conditions (Ujam, 2025). The research paper focuses on exploring the joint effect of transformational and transactional leadership types and job satisfaction on project success with a focus on the mediation effect of employee engagement. This study will offer insightful communication on how human factors are the

drivers of project outcomes, and it also offers practical implications of the study to managers and team leaders by incorporating leadership theory, organizational behaviour, and project management perspectives.

2. Research Problem

Although the body of research regarding leadership and job satisfaction is large, there is still a serious gap in comprehending how the two variables interactively affect the success of the project, and, in particular, the employee engagement (Kauppila, 2025). Leadership development and employee satisfaction programs are often heavily invested in by many organizations and however, they often fail to achieve their goals because there is lack of congruency between management strategies and employee motivation (Bukhari et al., 2025). The traditional research has focused either on leadership styles, job satisfaction or engagement independently, without paying much attention to the dynamics that are intertwined to promote or inhibit project outcomes (Nechouani & Machrafi, 2025).

The transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style can have different effects to the motivation and the performance of the team (Sheena et al., 2025). It is believed that transformational leadership can improve creativity and discretionary effort but on the other hand transactional leadership can be used to ensure clarity, discipline and adherence to the goals (Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025). At the same time, the levels of engagement could be influenced by the job satisfaction of employees, who would be more committed to the tasks of the project and be willing to go extra mile. Nevertheless, the mediating effect of employee engagement is under researched, which restricts the possibility of managers to apply evidence-based practices that can lead to high morale and efficiency of the projects.

The gap is specifically applicable in industries that are based on projects and where the inability to maximize human capital could lead to cost increase, deadline slippage, and dissatisfaction among stakeholders. The interaction between leadership styles and job satisfaction along with the mediating role of engagement is the key to organizations that seek to enhance the results of a project in an organized manner. A solution to such an issue does not only advance the field of leadership and project management but also provides a realistic base of building self-motivated and engaged teams, which are in a position to attain sustainable project success.

3. Significance of the Study

The theoretical and practical implications of this study are related to the concept of interdependence of leadership styles, job satisfaction, the level of engagement of the staff and the success of projects. In theory, it contributes to the existing body of research on organizational behavior and project management since it examines the influence of transformational and transactional leadership, job satisfaction on the project outcome with the mediating role of employee engagement. Even though previous studies have been inclined to consider these variables on various occasions, this study attempts to integrate them into a comprehensive system, which contributes more knowledge on the processes that constitute project effectiveness.

In practice, the results can be applied to managerial practices of project-based organizations. Realizing the effect of leadership styles and employee satisfaction on engagement can assist managers to develop interventions, which would lead to team motivation, teamwork, and team performance. As an example, creativity and discretionary effort can be motivated by focusing on transformational leadership practices, whereas goal clarity and accountability can be observed and enforced by transactional leadership. Moreover, job satisfaction can be increased to increase employee involvement which eventually raises the rates of project success.

This study can offer practical solutions to organizations aiming to maximize the results of human and project performance by referring to the mediating importance of employee engagement. It can help organizations to provide the HR professionals, project managers, and organizational leaders to identify the policies, training programs, and leadership development programs that will support motivated, dedicated, and high performing project teams.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of transformational leadership on project success.
2. To assess the effect of transactional leadership on project success.
3. To evaluate the influence of job satisfaction on project success.
4. To investigate the role of employee engagement as a mediator between leadership styles and project success.
5. To explore the mediating effect of employee engagement between job satisfaction and project success.

5. Research Questions

1. How does transformational leadership affect project success?
2. How does transactional leadership influence project success?
3. What is the impact of job satisfaction on project success?
4. Does employee engagement mediate the relationship between leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and project success?
5. Does employee engagement mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and project success?

6. Previous Studies and Research Hypotheses

6.1. Transformational leadership and project success

Transformational leadership is considered to be one of the most successful leadership approaches in improving team performance and project results (Fareed et al., 2023). Transformational leadership is the process of motivating and inspiring employees through a shared vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Han et al., 2025). Transformational leaders promote innovation, proactivity, and voluntary effort, which are essential in a project setting. Empirical research has found that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on team cohesion, commitment, and flexibility, resulting in improved project efficiency and quality performance (Raza et al., 2024). In project work, leaders with vision and guidance not only motivate employees but also integrate personal goals with organizational goals, which leads to improved project performance and success.

H1: Transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on project success.

6.2. Transactional leadership and project success

Transactional leadership is known to rely on structure, policies, and a reward and punishment system to guarantee the completion of the task (Ansari et al., 2024). This particular type of leadership is centered on discipline, compliance with standards, and the efficient accomplishment of predetermined objectives. Transactional leaders are known to create clarity with regard to roles and responsibilities, which in turn helps to keep the workers accountable. Research has shown that transactional leadership is most effective in projects where there are tight deadlines, budgets, and deliverables (Fareed et al., 2022; Olasunkanmi et al., 2024).

Transactional leadership, therefore, helps to provide the stability required for project success in a structured environment.

H2: Transactional leadership has a positive and significant impact on project success.

6.3. Job Satisfaction and Project success

Job satisfaction is defined as the positive emotions that result from employees' assessment of their work experiences, such as recognition, work environment, and rewards (Arokiasamy et al., 2025). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be motivated, productive, and committed to their organization. Studies have shown that job satisfaction is closely related to performance, which affects project success (Rezvani et al., 2016). In a project environment, employees who are more satisfied with their jobs are more likely to participate in collective problem-solving, produce quality work, and help complete projects on time. Hence, improving job satisfaction can increase the chances of achieving project success (Hussain, 2022). Thus,

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on project success.

6.4. Mediation of employee engagement between leadership styles and project success

Employee engagement, which is a state of mind that is associated with energy, commitment, and occupation with work, is becoming a mediator between the leadership styles and the project success (Andrianto & Alsada, 2019). Involved employees are more assertive, dedicated and ready to go out of their line of duty. Transformational leadership boosts the involvement as it encourages workers, fuels cognitive advancement, and allows a favourable working environment (Bindel Sibassaha et al., 2025). On the same note, transactional leadership is capable of ensuring engagement through setting clear expectations, organized feedback, and rewards that are based on performance. Research proposes that leadership does not necessarily translate into project success except when the employees are interested in the work that they are doing (Nixon et al., 2012). Engagement is the tool by which leadership behaviours can be used to affect the motivation in teams, cooperation, and the effectiveness of the whole project.

H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.

H5: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and project success.

6.5. Mediation of employee engagement between job satisfaction and project success

Indirectly, job satisfaction would contribute to project success by engaging employees. The satisfied employees would get more motivated, committed, and invested in their work and, therefore, the engagement levels will rise (Waseem et al., 2025). Employees who are highly engaged are more persistent, detail-focused, and would like to take initiative. These are the attributes that are very important in ensuring that the project goals are attained. The existing research points out that engagement is a key channel linking job satisfaction to performance achievements, especially in the project-driven dynamic environment (Hagen et al., 2025; Li et al., 2025). Through its moderating role, employee engagement will guarantee the translation of positive intentions towards the project into actual contributions that will lead to its success.

H6: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and project success.

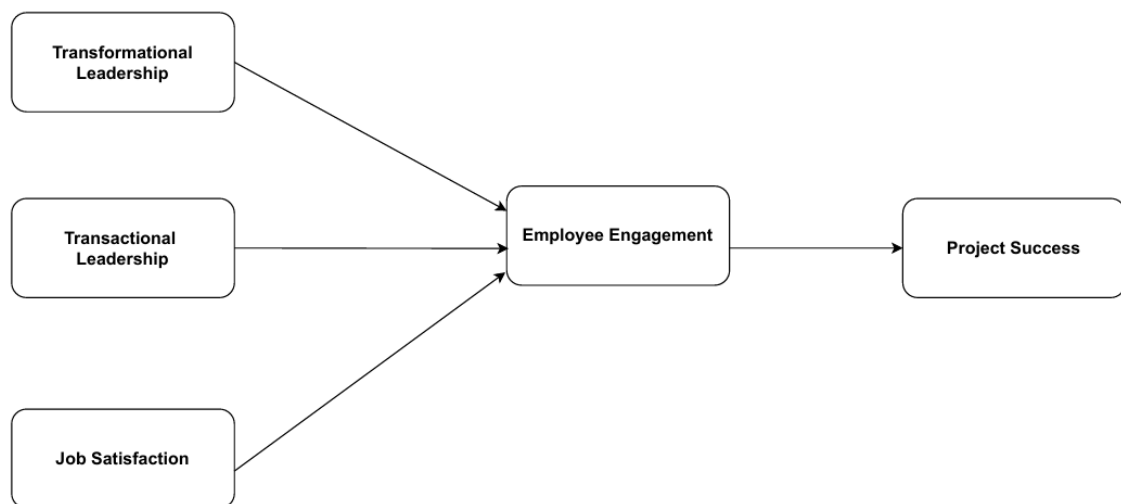


Figure 1: Research Model

Source: Author Generated

7. Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is theoretically underpinned by the Transformational Leadership Theory, created by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), that explains the mechanism through which leaders inspire and encourage the employees in an attempt to achieve excellent outcomes. Transformational leadership focuses on the ability to influence the employees with the help of vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration, not the power and rewards. The given theory is quite relevant in the project management context, where only teamwork, creativity, and additional effort would allow reaching success.

According to the Transformational Leadership Theory, the leaders who communicate their practical vision to the employees inspire them to pursue personal interests as they work towards the organizational objectives. Intellectual stimulation encourages employees to be creative and critical in thinking which is highly critical in surmounting complicated project-related tasks. Individualized consideration will make sure that leaders will satisfy the needs of employees and give them guidance and support, that positively affects the motivation and job satisfaction of employees.

The theory also provides a foundation on which the association of leadership style, job satisfaction, and engagement of employees can be explained. Transformational leaders also create a culture of satisfaction arising through recognition, development and purposeful work. The satisfied and motivated workers are enabled to be engaged, showing commitments, enthusiasm and engrossed with the job at hand. Such high extent of engagement also leads to improved performance, collaboration and finally success of projects.

In the framework of this study, Transformational Leadership Theory provides a view-point through which the direct correlation between leadership and project success and the indirect correlation between leadership and project success through employee engagement would be analyzed. The theory also provides a foundation on which hypotheses are formulated to identify the relationships between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and employee engagement on project success. With the use of this theory, this study provides a theoretical and practical framework of the connection between good leadership and the behaviour of employees and success of different projects.

Overall, a solid foundation of the relationship between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and project success can be provided by the Transformational Leadership Theory that highlights the significance of the employee engagement as a mediating variable in the relationship.

Table 1: Literature Summary

Author & Year	Key Findings	Research Gap	Implications / Hypotheses
Fareed et al., 2023; Han et al., 2025; Raza et al., 2024	Transformational leadership improves team performance, promotes innovation, motivation, and commitment, resulting in higher project success.	Limited evidence in Saudi Arabia context for direct impact of transformational leadership on project success.	H1: Transformational leadership positively impacts project success.
Ansari et al., 2024; Fareed et al., 2022; Olasunkanmi et al., 2024	Transactional leadership ensures task completion via structure, policies, and reward/punishment, effective in tight deadlines and budgeted projects.	Few studies examine transactional leadership in diverse project environments with variable timelines and deliverables.	H2: Transactional leadership positively impacts project success.
Arokiasamy et al., 2025; Rezvani et al., 2016; Hussain, 2022	Job satisfaction enhances motivation, productivity, and commitment, improving project outcomes.	Lack of research on how job satisfaction directly translates into project success in dynamic projects.	H3: Job satisfaction positively impacts project success.
Andrianto & Alsada, 2019; Bindel Sibassaha et al., 2025; Nixon et al., 2012	Employee engagement mediates leadership impact on project success; transformational leadership fosters engagement via motivation and intellectual stimulation.	Limited empirical studies linking engagement as a mediator between leadership styles and project success in project-driven environments.	H4: Employee engagement mediates transformational leadership → project success. H5: Employee engagement mediates transactional

			leadership → project success.
Waseem et al., 2025; Hagen et al., 2025; Li et al., 2025	Satisfied employees show higher engagement, persistence, and initiative, which indirectly improves project success.	Research on engagement as a channel between job satisfaction and project performance is scarce, particularly in Saudi projects.	H6: Employee engagement mediates job satisfaction → project success.

8. Methodology and Research Methods

The research methodology applied in this study is the quantitative research methodology. The study will be focused on examining how leadership styles and job satisfaction impact the success of projects with employee engagement as a mediator. The most suitable methodology to be applied in this research is quantitative research methodology due to the fact that the research will study the relationship between variables that are well defined.

8.1. Research Design

The research takes the cross-sectional survey design, in which the researcher will acquire the data at one time. The design is suitable in identifying the pattern and testing hypotheses of the relationship of the independent variables (transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and job satisfaction), the mediator (employee engagement), and the dependent variable (project success). The organized questionnaire will be used as the primary research instrument to be utilized in order to gather conventional responses.

8.2. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The probability sampling strategy that will be used in the research will be either simple random sampling or stratified sampling, which will provide a fair representation of employees who are in the project based organizations. The target population will include employees and members of project team of different department and level of an organization. It will be presumed that a sample size of 200-300 respondents will be enough to conduct statistical analysis and

regression analysis as well as mediation testing. This will be a good sample size in enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the findings as well as being time and cost effective.

8.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

A self-administered questionnaire will be used in the data collection wherein a questionnaire will be distributed physically or electronically via platforms like email or online survey links. The questionnaire shall consist of close-ended questions which shall be measured under a five-point Likert scale where the answer can be strongly disagree to strongly agree. To analyse the data, statistical software (SPSS or other software) will be applied. The summarization of the demographical data and general trends will be done using descriptive statistics, whereas inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression analysis will be used to test the direct relationship between the variables. Regression or structural equation modelling will be conducted to analyze the mediation analysis to determine whether the employee engagement has a major impact in mediating the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction as well as project success. Reliability and validity tests will be done also.

8.4. Ethical Considerations

The whole process of the research will be followed with ethical considerations. The respondents will be involved under voluntary basis and the objective of the research will be explained to them prior to the collection of data. An informed consent will be obtained, and the respondents will be at liberty to pull out of the research any time. Anonymity and confidentiality of the responses will be guaranteed and the research information will only be used in academic purposes. No personal identifiers will be provided.

9. Study Instruments

Table 2: Variable items and Sources

Variable Name	Number of Items	Source
Transformational Leadership	9 items	(Bagga et al., 2023)
Transactional Leadership	5 items	(Ismail et al., 2010)
Job Satisfaction	3 items	(Netemeyer et al., 2010)
Employee Engagement	11 items	(Gupta et al., 2021)

Project Success	7 items	(Al-Balawneh & Tarabieh, 2024)
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10. Limitations of the Study

Nevertheless, this research work can also have several limitations that should be taken into account despite the planning. First, the cross-sectional research can result in the inability to conclude on the causal relationship between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and employee engagement and project success. The data is gathered at one point in time so one cannot help but conclude that there is no way of knowing how perception of employees or styles of leadership change over time. This could be a drawback as a longitudinal study can probably offer more information, but it lacks time and cost. Second, the data utilized in the study is self-reported questionnaires, and it can be susceptible to social desirability bias, response bias, or self-perception bias. The respondents will be able to answer in ways that they believe are acceptable instead of giving the actual perceptions and experiences. Third, the research might be constrained by sample size and geographical/organizational location. In case the respondents are sampled out of a specific industry or region, one may not be able to extrapolate the outcomes to other regions or industries. Besides, the paper fails to incorporate other external forces like organizational culture, economic climate or management policies that can influence the success of a project.

Tasks	Month 1	Month 1	Month 2	Month 2	Month 3	Month 3
Literature search						
Research question refinement						
Development of interview guide						
Interpretation of interview questions						
Ethical approval						
Pilot test						
Data Collection						
Survey and Data Screening Finalization						
Result analysis & report writing						
Submission						

Figure 2: Gantt Chart

Source: Author Generated

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Questionnaire

Title: Impact of Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction on Project Success: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

Dear Participant,

You are welcome to participate in this research study on academia, aimed at exploring the influence of the leadership styles and job satisfaction in the project success, as well as the mediating effect of employee engagement in that process. The involvement in this project will assist the researchers in understanding workplace behavior better and enhance the practice in organizations within the project environment. Your involvement in this research is entirely voluntary and you can always drop out of the research without any consequences. The information you present will be held in the highest level of confidentiality and anonymity. No personal information like name, organization or contact details will be gathered. The information will be utilized in academic purposes, and it will be presented in aggregates. Honest answers to questions are highly appreciated because there are no correct or incorrect answers.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age

- 20 – 30
- 31 – 40
- 41 – 50
- 51 and above

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3. Work Experience

- Less than 1 year
- 1 – 5 years

- 6 – 10 years
- More than 10 years

4. Job Level

- Entry Level
- Middle Management
- Senior Management

5. Department

- HR
- Finance
- Marketing
- Operations
- Other: _____

Section B: Study Variables

Instructions:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Employee Engagement

Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
EE1	I concentrate on my job when I am at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE2	I give my job a lot of attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE3	At work, I am absorbed by my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE4	I am enthusiastic in my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

EE5	I am interested in my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE6	I am proud of my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE7	I am excited about my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE8	I exert my full effort to my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE9	I devote a lot of energy to my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE10	I strive as hard as I can to complete my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
EE11	I exert a lot of energy on my job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Job Satisfaction

Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
JS1	All in all, I am satisfied with my present job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
JS2	Considering pay, promotion, supervisors, co-workers, and benefits, I am satisfied with my present job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
JS3	Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my present job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Transformational Leadership

Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
TFL1	My leader talks about important values and beliefs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL2	My leader celebrates achievements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL3	My leader talks enthusiastically about goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL4	My leader creates a sense of priorities and purpose.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL5	My leader stimulates me to rethink the way I do things.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL6	My leader asks questions that make me think.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL7	My leader teaches and coaches me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL8	My leader helps me develop my strengths.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TFL9	My leader is an active listener.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Transactional Leadership

Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
TAL1	My leader makes clear expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TAL2	My leader takes action before problems become serious.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TAL3	My leader tells us the standards for carrying out work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TAL4	My leader works out agreements with me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
TAL5	My leader monitors my performance and keeps track of mistakes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Project Success

Item	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
PS1	Our project was completed on time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PS2	Our project was completed within budget.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PS3	Our project met scope as specified.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PS4	Our project met quality as specified.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PS5	Our project met expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PS6	Safety and environmental conditions of the project were satisfied.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PS7	Overall, the project was a success.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your valuable participation.