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# Elevating Workplace Employee Wellbeing through Transformational Leadership and Organisational Support: Lessons from Tanzania's Higher Learning Institutions

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## Abstract

*This study examines the influence of transformational leadership and organisational support in elevating workplace employee wellbeing. A total of 467 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to Tanzanian public higher-learning institution employees. The findings from partial least squares structural equation modelling demonstrated that transformational leadership directly influences employee wellbeing at the workplace. The study's results further demonstrate that the impact of transformational leadership on workplace employee wellbeing is partially mediated by perceived organisational support. These findings provide insights that may serve as a foundation for managers and policymakers when developing policies and programmes to enhance employee wellbeing. The study provides more empirical evidence on the applicability of the affective event theory and organisational support theory in higher learning institutions. It makes a distinctive contribution to the theory by revealing the mediation role of perceived organisational support on the influence of transformational leadership on workplace employee wellbeing. Thus, public higher learning institutions' managers should use transformational leadership and perceived organisational support to improve workplace employee wellbeing.*

**Keywords:** *Workplace Employee Wellbeing, Transformational Leadership, Perceived Organization Support, Public Higher Learning Institutions.*

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## **Introduction**

Employee wellbeing is the essential variable that impacts an organisation's success or failure and affects employees' overall happiness, attitudes, and performance (Adams, 2019; Jaiswal & Dyaram, 2019; Krekel, Ward, & De Neve, 2019). The literature indicates that productive employees have high levels of employee wellbeing (Nielsen *et al.*, 2017). Many organisations regard improving employee wellbeing as a crucial human resources issue. Surprisingly, many organisations view employee wellbeing as an incidental component of organisational output rather than a part of the organisation's mission (Inceoglu, Thomas, Chu, Plans, & Gerbasi, 2018). Consequently, employees may experience job overload and psychological anxiety, damaging the organisation's effectiveness.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), 6000 people die daily from work-related diseases and accidents (ILO, 2023). Higher learning institutions (HLIs) are not exempted from occupational dangers impairing employee wellbeing. Employees in many HLIs around the world are confronted with difficulties such as increasing demands on teaching and research, lack of resources, unfavourable working conditions, unequal pay, poor leadership and administration, and low participation in decision-making (Faisal, Noor, & Khair, 2019; Kinman & Johnson, 2019; Tquabo *et al.*, 2021). Likewise, employees in Tanzania HLIs encounter various challenges. For instance, public HLIs confront challenges related to increased student enrolment, inadequate academic staff, and teaching infrastructures (National Audit Office, 2021, 2023). Moreover, employees within public higher learning institutions (HLIs) experience stress due to various factors, including insufficient involvement and assistance from management, excessive workload, inadequate facilities, and a sense of undervaluation of their work (Komba, 2020; Mkumbo, 2014). All these challenges, employees in public HLIs must deal with, have a detrimental effect on their wellbeing. Thus, it is critical to investigate how employee wellbeing can be improved in public HLIs.

Improving employee wellbeing would lessen the detrimental impact of deficient employee wellbeing. These impacts include costs related to illness, absenteeism, turnover, poor job performance, stress, and anxiety (Atilola, 2012; Avramchuk, 2017; Oswald, Proto, & Sgroi, 2015). Based on these findings, researchers have been interested in the factors influencing employee wellbeing. Several factors have been established, including organisational fairness, leadership style, human resource management practices, job demand and characteristics (Huong, Zheng, & Fujimoto, 2016; Johari, Shamsudin, Yean, Yahya, & Adnan, 2019; Nauman, Raja, Haq, & Bilal, 2019; Samad, Muchiri, & Shahid, 2021; Zhang, Lin, Liu, Chen, & Liu, 2020). Among all these factors, constructive leadership behaviours, specifically transformational behaviours, have drawn the most attention from scholars as the most effective way to increase subordinates' commitment, trust, and employee wellbeing (Inceoglu *et al.*, 2018; Liu, Siu, & Shi, 2010).

Employees benefit from transformational leadership (TRL) based on interactions between leaders and followers in various work situations (Samad *et al.*, 2021). TRL serves as a catalyst for building relationships of trust between followers and their leaders. Extant studies have proven that transformational leadership is linked to employee wellbeing. However, many of these studies conceptualised employee wellbeing mainly as job satisfaction (Inceoglu *et al.*,

2018), and other studies concentrate on employee psychological wellbeing (Arnold, 2017; Tripathi & Bharadwaja, 2020; Yousaf, Abid, Butt, Ilyas, & Ahmed, 2019). Yet, employee wellbeing is conceptualised across the literature to include social, psychological, subjective, life, and workplace wellbeing dimensions (Pradhan & Hati, 2022; Zheng, Zhu, Zhao, & Zhang, 2015). Therefore, there is a paucity of studies that examined the influence of TRL on the workplace wellbeing dimension of employee wellbeing.

This study aims to examine the mechanism through which TRL influences workplace employee wellbeing (WWB) dimension of employee wellbeing. As Arnold (2017) confirms, in many instances, the influence of TRL on employee wellbeing is not straightforward; it is mediated or moderated by other factors. Some of the factors that have been used as mediators are such as meaningful work, job demand and resources, employee motivation, organisation commitment, quality of work life, work-life conflict, self-efficacy, and trust in leadership (Arnold, 2017; Kara, Uysal, Sirgy, & Lee, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2010; Munir, Nielsen, Garde, Albertsen, & Carneiro, 2012). Based on the recommendation given by Jery and Souaï (2014), consideration should be given to the involvement of actors outside the human resources management system when determining how human resource conditions affect employee outcomes. Thus, perceived organisational support (POS) is used as an intervening variable in the present study.

Perceived organisational support is a frequently used mediator in studies associating organisational environments and workers' outcomes. Some of these studies include TRL and employee creativity (Suifan, Abdallah, & Al Janini, 2018), inclusive leadership and innovative behaviour (Qi, Liu, Wei, & Hu, 2019), psychological contract and organisational citizenship (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018), counter-productive workplace behaviours and high-performing (Vatankhah, Javid, & Raoofi, 2017). However, the question of how POS influences the effect of TRL on workplace employee wellbeing (WWB) remains unanswered. As a result, POS is the primary focus of this study as a separate potential mediating variable, reflecting how highly an organisation appreciates the contributions of its employees and how it is concerned with their welfare (Lei & Chen, 2020). Studies indicate that TRL significantly influences perceived organisational support (Stinglhamber, Marique, Caesens, Hanin, & De Zanet, 2015; Suifan *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, POS significantly influences employee wellbeing (Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2022; Roemer & Harris, 2018; Wattoo, Zhao, & Xi, 2018). So, the influence of transformational leadership on employee wellbeing is assumed to be mediated by POS. Considering the lack of research of this kind, the present study aims at understanding the mediating role of POS on the influence of TRL on WWB in Tanzania's public HLIs.

## **Literature**

### ***Theoretical Framework***

This study is guided by the Affective Event Theory and Organizational Support Theory. The Affective Event Theory describes the relationship between employees' internal reactions (emotions and feelings) and the events that take place in their workplace and how such events affect their job performance, commitment, and satisfaction (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This implies that activities that take place in organisations are what cause an employee's emotional response. Basch and Fisher (1998) state that affective events cause continuing job-

related occurrences to be evaluated and emotionally reacted to. Affective response to work experience greatly influences an individual's attitude and behaviour. Affective Event Theory further contends that a stable workplace environment influences the existence of a particular category of affect-producing events. For instance, to produce good emotions like enjoyment, pride, and enthusiasm, and job enrichment may need to be connected to specific behaviours like feedback, job accomplishment, and maximum challenge. The affective events in this study are viewed as thoughts and feelings that subordinates experience when working with a supervisor. The supervisor's behaviours and actions significantly impact how their subordinates feel emotionally. When supervisors motivate employees to go above and beyond expectations, they experience happiness and enthusiastic sensations that improve their employee wellbeing. In this study, Affective Event Theory helps to describe how TRL can influence WWB, but it falls short in explaining the mediating role of POS. Since Affective Event Theory emphasises the form, sources, and consequences of affective events at work, employees' perception issues are not adequately addressed (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This fact led this study to use organisation support theory to explain the mediating function of POS.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) developed the organisation support theory with a primary emphasis on perceived organisational support. The concept of POS pertains to an employee's perception of the organisation's appreciation of their work and concern for their wellness. Organisation support theory proposes that people exchange their time and effort at work for valuable results. The company expresses its appreciation for employees' participation by providing a range of incentives and benefits (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Additionally, organisations show concern for their employees' socio-emotional wellbeing by establishing policies and processes that permit workers to take time off for social and other reasons. Given that the supervisor represents the organisation, the proper treatment subordinates receive from their supervisor ought to increase POS. Employees respond favourably to supervisors' good treatment by feeling supported by their organisations, which can lead to employee workplace wellbeing and other positive behaviours (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). So, it makes sense to assume that POS acts as a conduit through which the supervisor's transformational behaviour affects workplace employee wellbeing.

### ***The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Workplace employee wellbeing***

Employee wellbeing is described by Jaiswal and Dyaram (2019) as an employee's overall fitness as a result of workplace and work-related interventions. It is also known as employees' subjective and psychological reactions to work and personal environments (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). Employee wellbeing can be considered from the perspectives of hedonism and eudemonism. Hedonism emphasises happiness based on pursuing pleasure and avoiding suffering (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). Hedonia at work measures how much fun and enjoyment employees derive from their jobs (Turban & Yan, 2016). Eudemonism values people's unique potential (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). Eudemonia at work is the subjective experience of an individual's personal development, sense of direction, and social importance (Turban & Yan, 2016). Employee wellbeing can also be thought of as context-free and domain-specific employee wellbeing. Context-free employee wellbeing is a person's overall health, contributing to life satisfaction and happiness. Domain-specific employee wellbeing is concerned with employee wellbeing that derives from a particular area of life (Pradhan &

Hati, 2022). Likewise, employee wellbeing can be interpreted as both positive and negative employee wellbeing. While stress, overload, strain, and burnout are associated with negative employee wellbeing, satisfaction, and happiness are related to positive employee wellbeing (Huhtala & Parzefall, 2007). Some studies have developed several employee wellbeing variables using these approaches, including psychological, subjective, life, social, and workplace employee wellbeing (Pradhan & Hati, 2022; Zheng *et al.*, 2015). This study focuses on workplace employee wellbeing (domain-specific employee wellbeing). Workplace employee wellbeing (WWB) is the general living standard during employment. It includes all areas of the working environment, such as employee safety, employee development, work environment infrastructure, setting, work atmosphere, management style, reward, and benefits (Pradhan & Hati, 2022).

Transformational leadership is the capacity of a leader to change and motivate subordinates toward accomplishing organisational goals (Jensen *et al.*, 2019). TRL encompasses various characteristics, including idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Idealised influence happens when transformative leaders try to garner followers' respect and trust by becoming role models and adopting high work ethics. Inspirational motivation involves how often transformational leaders inspire their followers by giving them values and a vision of the goals to be reached. Intellectual stimulation involves how often transformational leaders tell their people to think outside the box and help them be more creative and independent. Individualised consideration refers to how often transformative leaders listen to and support their followers' needs.

Several studies have linked transformation leadership to several elements of employee wellbeing. Some researchers have found a positive link between positive employee wellbeing measurements and a negative relationship with negative ones. For instance, TRL improves employee satisfaction, affective employee wellbeing, and psychological employee wellbeing (Arnold, 2017; Bryant, Butcher, & O'Connor, 2018; Kim & Cruz, 2022; Klačić, Burtscher, & Jonas, 2018; Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010). Transformational leadership is inversely related to employee burnout and stress (Kanste, 2008; Lyons & Schneider, 2009). Moreover, Munir, Nielsen, and Carneiro (2010) discovered, in a longitudinal study, that TRL is linked cross-sectionally and prospectively to reduced self-reported depression symptoms. Despite the contribution of these studies, the research on the relationship between transformational leadership and workplace employee wellbeing is still limited.

A transformational leader gives followers the confidence to dream bigger and achieve their aspirations. Transformational leaders can increase their team members' productivity, self-actualisation, and employee wellbeing (Arnold, 2017). TRL is regarded as a leader-follower, interaction-based, and encouraging leadership style for employees in various professional contexts (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013; Jin, Seo, & Shapiro, 2016). It is regarded as a catalyst for establishing trusting bonds between leaders and subordinates, frequently influencing how well-equipped employees meet individual and the organisation's objectives (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005). Transformational leaders affect the wellness of their subordinates by altering the work environment. Based on the research of these scholars and following Affective Event Theory, this study assumes that when subordinates are led by leaders who consider their needs and communicate the organisation's mission, the employee

has a positive affective response. This response produces a positive attitude and mood that promotes employee wellbeing at the workplace. It is therefore hypothesised that:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on workplace employee wellbeing.*

### ***The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Perceived Organisational Support***

Employee awareness of the organisation's concern for their employee wellbeing and appreciation of their contributions is known as the perceived organisation support (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986; Lei & Chen, 2020). POS discusses how employees work to achieve organisational goals and how the organisation responds by rewarding them and developing policies to improve their employee wellbeing (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The provision of POS is known to fulfil the socioemotional needs of employees leading to the development of identification with the organisation, affective commitment, and a positive effect (Caesens, Stinglhamber, Demoulin, & De Wilde, 2017; Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017). POS is influenced by the factors such as the supervisor's behaviour, the quality of employee and organisation relationship, and employee management practices.

Numerous researchers have demonstrated that POS and TRL have a substantial and strong relationship (Asgari, Mezginejad, & Taherpour, 2020; Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019; Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2015; Suifan *et al.*, 2018). However, little is known about the relationship between TRL and POS in Sub-Saharan African public HLIs. A transformational leader encourages followers to exceed what is anticipated and supports them to act under their expectations (Nasiri & Emadi, 2016). They also coach their followers, consider their particular requirements, and allow them to thrive in a nurturing environment (Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2015). Based on perceived organisation support theory, employees see the leader's discretion as a sign of organisational support because the leader evaluates an employee's performance and decides on rewards on behalf of the organisation (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). So, a transformational leader may positively impact how followers view the organisation's support because they enable followers to identify with their leaders, set work goals and objectives, and offer followers customised services (Asgari *et al.*, 2020). Thus, this study hypothesises that

*H<sub>2</sub>: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on perceived organisational support.*

### ***The Influence of Perceived Organisation Support on Workplace Employee Wellbeing***

Previous studies demonstrate that POS leads to positive outcomes in the organisation. For instance, Prysmakova and Lallatin (2023) and Kurtessis *et al.* (2017) argue that POS exhibits consistent and positive associations with commitment, intention to stay, motivation, contentment with work and tasks, employee wellbeing, empowerment, decreased stress, work-family balance, and individual development. Specifically, some studies have shown that POS significantly affects employee wellbeing (Roemer & Harris, 2018; Wattoo *et al.*, 2018). Likewise, POS enhances employees' quality of work life and lessens burnout and stress (Altinoz, Cop, Cakiroglu, & Altinoz, 2016; Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2022). This argument is in line with Aselage and Eisenberger (2003) findings that when employees are treated properly, their level of POS increases, improving their employee wellbeing. Based on these findings and organisation support theory, POS is based on how well or poorly employees feel the organisation treats them. Employees will put in the effort with the

expectation of receiving something positive when they feel their employer is treating them well. Additionally, when an organisation creates policies and procedures accommodating to employees, their socioemotional needs will be better met. Consequently, this study suggests that

*H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived organisational support has a positive influence on workplace employee wellbeing.*

### ***The Mediating Role of Perceived Organisation Support***

Employees are more productive, more devoted to their jobs, more satisfied with their work, and have more favourable opinions and feelings about the organisation when they are treated well by the organisation (Kaffashpor, Shojaean, & Alaghebandi, 2017; Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2015). These findings might clarify the indirect link between TRL and WWB stemming from a sense of POS. Previous studies have demonstrated an association between TRL and POS (Arnold, 2017; Asgari *et al.*, 2020; Engelbrecht & Samuel, 2019; Klaic *et al.*, 2018) and POS and employee wellbeing (Roemer & Harris, 2018; Wattoo *et al.*, 2018). Nonetheless, it is noteworthy saying that, so far, no study has considered POS as a mediator in the link between TRL and workplace employee wellbeing in higher learning institutions. Thus, this study's hypothesis is that

*H<sub>4</sub>: Perceived organisational support mediates the influence of Transformational leadership on workplace employee wellbeing.*

## **Methodology**

Based on the objective of this study of testing the causal relationship among TRL, POS, and WWB, this study adopted an explanatory cross sectional research design. Due to budgetary and time constraints, a cross-sectional design was utilised since data were collected only once. The population was 14,343 employees working in Public HLIs, as obtained from the Office of the Treasury Registrar (TR) and Tanzania Commission for Universities report (TCU, 2019). A sample size of 467 was obtained using Yamane's formula and a 20% buffer for non-response risk in Tanzania for management studies (Urassa, 2009; Yamane, 1967). The study employed simple random sampling to ensure equal participation opportunities for all respondents. A spreadsheet was used to generate random numbers and count respondents from a sample frame from selected public HLIs.

Data were collected from February to July 2022 using a self-administered questionnaire through a drop-off and pick-up approach. The questionnaire was chosen because it is an excellent data collection tool that analyses many people's behaviour, attitudes, feelings, preferences, and intentions quickly and cheaply (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Self-reported measurements were best for our constructs because we were interested in employees' perceptions. We further addressed technique bias by guaranteeing participants' anonymity, reversing code items, scaling item clarity, and clearly defining the study goal and instructions. The drop-off and pick-up methods were favoured since they save time and provide reasonable response rates (Jackson-Smith *et al.*, 2016). A total of 467 questionnaires were given out to the respondents; 415 (88.9%) of them were returned, 21 were omitted, and 394 were therefore eligible for analysis.



This study used descriptive statistics to determine respondent characteristics' frequency and percentage distribution. PLS-SEM (Smart PLS 3) was used to test the hypothesis and the relationship between study variables due to its methodological strength of testing a theoretically and logically developed model (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2021). Although PLS-SEM does not account for model fit, it was deemed appropriate for this study due to its predictive nature.

## **Measures**

The measurement variables transformational leadership behaviour, perceived organisational support, and workplace employee wellbeing were derived from prior research. These variables were moulded as reflective latent variables and have been transformed into quantifiable items, allowing them to be employed in data collection. The items for the variables were rated on a five-point Likert Scale (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). All constructs were assessed through multi-item indicators based on the available literature. Transformational leadership was conceptualised as a supervisor motivating subordinates to contribute to accomplishing organisational objectives by creating, sharing, and sustaining vision. The items used to measure TRL was adopted with minor modifications from Jensen *et al.* (2019)'s scale with seven items. This scale was chosen because it distinguishes between leadership behaviours and the results of leadership action. An example of the item question is "My Supervisor's continuous effort to generate interest in the organisation's vision."

Perceived organisation support was conceptualised as employees' belief that their employer values their work and is concerned with their employee wellbeing. POS was measured using Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), a condensed version of Eisenberger *et al.* (1986). This eight items scale was used since research has shown that it is more efficient than one with thirty-six items (Worley, Fuqua, & Hellman, 2009). An example of an item is "My organisation would consider any complaint from me."

Workplace employee wellbeing was conceptualised as an employee's attitude towards their job and work environment. A nine-items scale created by Pradhan and Hati (2022) was used to measure workplace employee wellbeing. This scale was chosen because it was recently made and verified by academics and human resource professionals. An example of the item is "My workplace is very conducive." These variables' items were discussed with human resource management and leadership experts to check for internal accuracy and relevancy, and a consensus was reached on the items included in the final instrument to ensure validity. Furthermore, validity and reliability were statistically tested in the measurement model.

## **Results**

### ***Respondents' Profile***

According to this study, male respondents were 218 (55.3%) compared to 176 (44.7%) female respondents. It means that male workers predominate among those working for public HLIs. Employees in the study ranged in age from the following age groups: 22-29 years were represented by 55 (14%), 30-39 years by 162 (41.1%), 40-49 years by 133 (33.8%), 50-59 years by 42 (10.7%), while 60 years and older were represented by 2 (0.5%). These results suggest that young people comprise most of the working crew. Regarding the education levels, most respondents 135(34%) had a bachelor's degree, 108 (27%) had a master's degree, 103(26%)

had a doctoral degree, and 48(12%) had an ordinary diploma or certificate. The findings also indicate that 205 (52%) of respondents were academic, and 189 (48%) were non-academic. Most academic employees, 77 (37.6%), were Assistant Lecturers, followed by Lecturers 52 (25.4%), Tutorial Assistants 42 (20.5%), and 34 (16.6%) Senior Lecturers and Professors. Most non-academic employees were Mid-Level Officers 71 (37.6%), Junior Officers 62 (32.3%), and Senior Officers 56 (29.6%). Regarding the number of years that respondents had spent working for the organisation, 132 (33.6%) had worked for more than ten years, 130 (33%) for one to five years, 121 (30.7%) for six to ten years, and 11 (2.8%) had done so for less than a year. These demographic characteristics were tested further as control variables and did not significantly impact the study model.

### ***Hypotheses Test Results***

Subsequently, the study path mode was computed using SmartPLS 3 and carried out parameter estimation using the path weighting technique. Prior to analysing the structural (inner) model, the measurement (outer) model was evaluated. The relevance of the path coefficients was tested using the bootstrapping approach with a 5,000 replications (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

### ***Measurement Model Evaluation Results***

This study measurement model involved TRL, POS, and WWB variables. Each variable has multiple indicators that were reflectively measured. Following Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2021)'s guidelines, composite reliability (internal consistency) and the indicators' outer loading (indicator reliability) were employed to examine the study reliability. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio and the average value extracted (AVE) were utilised to assess discriminant and convergent validity, respectively. When a variable's indicator has an outer loading of at least 0.70, it is considered that the indicator's reliability is satisfactory. Indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 are thus only considered for removal if doing so improves composite reliability and raises the average value extracted over the suggested threshold value for AVE, which is 0.5 (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). The 24 reflecting indicators used in this study fulfilled the criterion (Table 1). This means all the indicators' outer loadings were above 0.7 (except for POS\_7 with loading 0.613), which was retained as its deletion did not significantly impact composite reliability and AVE.

Internal consistency was evaluated using composite reliability. This is because composite reliability is more reliable and has higher coefficients than Cronbach's alpha (Sarstedt, Ringle, Smith, Reams, & Hair, 2014). A composite reliability rating of over 0.70 indicates that the instrument has an internal consistency (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, et al., 2021; Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchell, & Gudergan, 2020). The findings in Table 1 suggest that all the constructs exceeded the minimal necessary threshold of composite reliability, demonstrating construct measures' internal consistency reliability. Convergent validity was tested using AVE with minimum threshold values of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017). Given that all AVE values for the variables in Table 1 are over the minimum threshold value, the findings constitute vital evidence for the measurement model's convergent validity.

**Table 1: Evaluation Results for the Measurement Model**

Code	Measurement scales	Loading	CR	AVE
<b>TRL</b>	<b><i>Transformational Leadership</i></b>		<b>0.911</b>	<b>0.594</b>
TRL_1	My supervisor specifies a clear vision for the organisation's future.	0.806		
TRL_2	My supervisor communicates a clear vision of the organisation's future.	0.808		
TRL_3	My supervisor makes a continuous effort to generate interest in the organisation's vision.	0.799		
TRL_4	My supervisor has a clear sense of where they believe the organisation should be in 5 years.	0.769		
TRL_5	My supervisor seeks to make employees accept common goals for the organisation.	0.792		
TRL_6	My supervisor strives to get the organisation to work together in the direction of the vision.	0.791		
TRL_7	My supervisor strives to clarify how the employees can contribute to achieving the organisation's goals.	0.613		
<b>POS</b>	<b><i>Perceived Organisation Support</i></b>		<b>0.934</b>	<b>0.641</b>
POS_1	My organisation values my contribution to its employee wellbeing.	0.785		
POS_2	My organisation appreciates any extra effort from me.	0.828		
POS_3	My organisation considers any complaint from me.	0.790		
POS_4	My organisation cares about my employee wellbeing.	0.828		
POS_5	My organisation noticed if I did the best job possible.	0.810		
POS_6	My organisation cares about my general satisfaction at work.	0.856		
POS_7	My organisation shows very much concern for me.	0.777		
POS_8	My organisation takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	0.722		
<b>WWB</b>	<b><i>Workplace Employee Wellbeing</i></b>		<b>0.937</b>	<b>0.622</b>
WWB_1	In general, I feel fairly satisfied with my present job.	0.820		
WWB_2	I find real enjoyment in my work.	0.849		
WWB_3	I feel that work is a meaningful experience for me.	0.814		
WWB_4	My work achievement often acts as a source of motivation.	0.826		
WWB_5	My workplace is very conducive.	0.768		
WWB_6	My job enables me to grow in my career.	0.808		
WWB_7	My job provides a balance between work and home life.	0.740		
WWB_8	I feel am cared enough by my employer.	0.733		
WWB_9	My work offers challenges to advance my skills.	0.729		

*Notes: CR = Composite reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted*

The discriminant validity of this study was examined using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation. HTMT is a more conservative measure than conventional Fornel-Lacker and cross-loading criteria (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The threshold value for HTMT is lower than 0.85 and 0.90 for conceptually distinct and similar concepts, respectively (Hair *et al.*, 2019). According to Table 2, all HTMT scores are lower than the 0.85 conservative cut-off point. Additionally, the outcomes of the bootstrapping procedure show that none of the upper confidence interval boundaries includes 1. These findings suggest that all HTMT levels are fundamentally different from 1 in some way.

**Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Results**

Variable	TRL	POS	WWB
Transformational Leadership (TRL)			
Perceived Organisational Support (POS)	<b>0.829</b> CI <sub>0.5,0.95</sub> [0.783; 0.865]		
Workplace Employee Wellbeing (WWB)	<b>0.776</b> CI <sub>0.5,0.95</sub> [0.719; 0.822]	<b>0.846</b> CI <sub>0.5,0.95</sub> [0.784; 0.892]	

### ***The Structural Model Evaluation Results***

The guideline principles suggested by Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2021), Hair *et al.* (2019), and Shmueli *et al.* (2019) were used to evaluate the structural model. These principles include examining multicollinearity, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), blindfolding and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), statistical significance, and relevance of the path coefficients and predictive power ( $PLS_{predict}$ ). The process starts by ensuring that the regression findings of the structural model are not biased through testing the multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Henseler *et al.*, 2015). This study used the variance inflation factor (VIF) to measure the degree of multicollinearity. According to Table 3, all latent variable VIF values are below 3, as suggested by the conservative threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

**Table 3: Evaluation Results for Multicollinearity**

Independent variable	Dependent variables		Multicolleniaritiy problem VIF $\geq 3$
	POS	WWB	
Transformational Leadership (TRL)	1.000	2.295	No
Perceived Organisational Support (POS)		2.642	No

These findings imply that the predictor variables are free of multicollinearity issues and common method bias. The initial stage was followed by analysing the structural model path quality and significance. This required a bootstrapping technique employing 300 cases and 5,000 subsamples with no sign changes. The analysis tested the direct influence of TRL on WWB. The evaluation of the complete model that included POS as a mediation came next.

Based on the findings in Table 4, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the direct influence of TRL on WWB is 0.500, while it is 0.644 for the indirect relationship with POS acting as the mediator. Both results are satisfactory and they are regarded as moderate, supporting the predictive accuracy of the model (Chin, 1998; Ringle *et al.*, 2020). This analysis shows that TRL and POS account for 64.4% of the variance in WWB. Other factors not considered in this study account for the remaining 35.6%. Like these findings, statistical results from the blindfolding procedure show that the  $Q^2$  values of workplace employee wellbeing are 0.287 (for direct relationship) and 0.37 (for indirect relationship), which are both greater than zero.

These results demonstrate the predictive relevance of the PLS path mode (Chin, 1998; Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

**Table 4: Evaluation Results for Structural Model**

Path	Std. $\beta$	t-value	P-value	95% CI	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
TRL → WWB	0.707	21.536	0.000	[0.644;0.755]	0.500	0.287
TRL → POS → WWB	0.433	6.277	0.000	[0.348;0.511]	0.644	0.370
TRL → POS	0.751	27.339	0.000	[0.700;0.792]		
TRL → WWB	0.273	5.192	0.000	[0.189;0.361]		
POS → WWB	0.577	9.907	0.000	[0.472;0.664]		
VAF = (a.b / a.b + c) = 0.751*0.577/0.751*0.577+0.273 = 61.33						

*Notes:* TRL=Transformational leadership, POS=Perceived organization support, WWB=Workplace employee wellbeing, VAF=Variance accounted for

This study also employed PLS<sub>predict</sub> to measure the model's predictive power and focused on overfitting issues by producing holdout samples to carry out cross-validation. After applying the PLS-predict algorithm to all the data, the model's predictive ability was assessed using error metrics and the Q square root (Q<sup>2</sup>) (Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, *et al.*, 2021; Shmueli *et al.*, 2019). The endogenous variables (WWB and POS) prediction abilities were evaluated using root mean square error (RMSE). Table 5 demonstrates that the PLS section's RMSE values are lower than multiple linear regression (ML) values. Again, the Q<sup>2</sup> values for WWB and POS are positive, but the Q<sup>2</sup> values for the PLS section are greater than the equivalent ML values. These findings support the model's predictive validity and suggest that the model has more substantial predictive power without overfitting issues.

The significance of the path coefficients was also examined in this study. Table 4 demonstrates a significant positive link ( $\beta = 0.707$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) between TRL and WWB. Similarly, the outcomes of the bootstrapping study support this relationship because the confidence intervals [0.644; 0.755] do not contain 0, hence the acceptance of H<sub>1</sub>. After considering POS as a mediator, the first thing is to evaluate the significance of the indirect relationship between TRL and WWB (Carrión, Nitzl, & Roldán, 2017; Nitzl, Roldan, & Cepeda, 2016). According to Table 4 bootstrapping results, the indirect impact (TRL → POS → WWB) is significant and positive at  $\beta = 0.433$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , with matched confidence intervals of [0.348; 0.511], confirming the existence of a mediation effect.

Furthermore, the direct relationship between TRL → WWB is significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.273$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) CI [0.189; 0.361]. Likewise, the relationship between TRL → POS is significant at  $\beta = 0.751$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , with confidence intervals [0.700; 0.792] not including zero. Moreover, POS → WWB is significant at  $\beta = 0.577$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) CI [0.472; 0.664]. According to these findings, hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 are all supported. Additionally, to assess the strengths of the mediation, this study used variance accounted for (VAF). The VAF is a preferable alternative to the standard Sobel test for the mediation (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). According to Nitzl *et al.* (2016), VAF calculates the size of the indirect effect as a percentage of the total effect (VAF=a \*b/a\*b+c). The VAF data in Table 4 suggests that POS accounts for 61.33% of the impact of TRL on WWB. Given that the VAF is more than 20% but lower than 80%, this scenario can be classified as a partial mediation (Nitzl *et al.*, 2016; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Moreover, the product of direct and indirect paths ( $0.273 \times 0.433$ ) suggests the existence of a complementary partial mediation (Carrión *et al.*, 2017).

**Table 5: Partial Least Squares-Predict Results**

Indicators	PLS-SEM		LM		PLS-SEM -LM	
	RMSE	Q <sup>2</sup>	RMSE	Q <sup>2</sup>	RMSE	Q <sup>2</sup>
WWB_1	0.672	0.385	0.673	0.383	-0.001	0.002
WWB_2	0.714	0.342	0.722	0.327	-0.008	0.014
WWB_3	0.662	0.343	0.667	0.333	-0.005	0.010
WWB_4	0.736	0.308	0.742	0.297	-0.006	0.012
WWB_5	0.731	0.290	0.734	0.284	-0.003	0.006
WWB_6	0.759	0.291	0.763	0.283	-0.004	0.008
WWB_7	0.712	0.270	0.721	0.250	-0.009	0.019
WWB_8	0.692	0.306	0.700	0.291	-0.007	0.015
WWB_9	0.746	0.210	0.752	0.195	-0.007	0.015
POS_1	0.627	0.384	0.628	0.382	-0.001	0.002
POS_2	0.647	0.359	0.651	0.351	-0.004	0.008
POS_3	0.622	0.324	0.629	0.308	-0.007	0.016
POS_4	0.611	0.402	0.614	0.397	-0.002	0.004
POS_5	0.651	0.365	0.656	0.355	-0.005	0.010
POS_6	0.680	0.355	0.681	0.352	-0.001	0.003
POS_7	0.667	0.340	0.674	0.326	-0.007	0.014
POS_8	0.672	0.326	0.684	0.302	-0.012	0.024

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that transformational leadership, perceived organisational support, and workplace employee wellbeing (WWB) are significantly related. Specifically, the investigation found a positive relationship between TRL and WWB. These results entail that TRL enhances WWB as leaders practice it. The affective event theory, which guided the study's design, supports these findings. Subordinates respond positively when leaders use TRL because they understand their needs and know the organisation's mission and vision. According to AET, these responses cause the growth of a pleasant attitude and mood that supports employee motivation, satisfaction, and enjoyment in the workplace (Basch & Fisher, 1998; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Also, these study findings align with expectations, as suggested by researchers who discovered a positive relationship between TRL and employees' psychological and affective employee wellbeing (Arnold, 2017; Bryant *et al.*, 2018; Kim & Cruz, 2022; McCombs & Williams, 2021; Skakon *et al.*, 2010). However, the current study's findings are unique. They confirm a positive relationship between TRL and workplace employee wellbeing.

Furthermore, the study's findings show that POS mediates the influence of TRL on WWB. The justification stems from the fact that the direct relationship between TRL and WWB was significant after imposing the mediator POS. Again, TRL is positively and significantly

related to POS, as in the case of Asgari *et al.* (2020), Stinglhamber *et al.* (2015) and Suifan *et al.* (2018). Likewise, the results demonstrate a significant positive relationship between POS and WWB, as supported by Roemer and Harris (2018); Wattoo *et al.* (2018). These findings demonstrate that employees who perceive higher levels of organisational support are more likely to feel higher levels of workplace employee wellbeing. Despite all these findings, the current study is the first to confirm perceived organisational support as an essential mediator on the influence of TRL and WWB. Building on perceived organisational support theory, a transformational leader is viewed as the organisation's representative; thus, their conduct indicates POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The findings suggest that HLIs should encourage the deployment of transformational leadership, which will boost POS and enhance workplace employee wellbeing.

## **Conclusion**

Despite extensive research on TRL and POS, there is little empirical evidence that combining them improves employee wellbeing at workplaces in public HLIs. Furthermore, no comprehensive research framework has considered POS as an essential mediator in the TRL and WWB relationship. The current study results show that TRL significantly and positively impacts WWB. Furthermore, the influence of TRL on WWB is partially mediated by perceived organisational support. In theory, this study adds to general knowledge by demonstrating how transformational leadership and perceived organisational support relate to workplace employee wellbeing. It contributes significantly to the theory by illuminating the mediating effect of POS on the impact of TRL on workplace employee wellbeing. The study also confirmed the usage of affective event theory and organisational support theory in public HLIs. Following best practices, public HLIs should focus on policy interventions aimed at encouraging TRL and POS to improve workplace employee wellbeing. HLIs can benefit substantially from training supervisors and other managers on TRL to improve POS, which, in turn, improves WWB. To strengthen TRL more continuously, HLIs may employ goal-setting treatments to include a TRL component in leaders' annual developmental assessments.

Despite the study's potential value, some flaws require further investigation. The cross-sectional and quantitative approach of the study necessitates its extension using longitudinal and qualitative designs. These approaches are beneficial in obtaining further insights regarding the studies and establishing consistent causal inferences about the study variables. Future studies may gather data from diverse sources utilising various methods to avoid single-source bias. The study is conceptually limited to focusing on one type of leadership (TRL) and POS as mediation which together explains WWB by 64.4%. Future research may investigate the impact of other leadership behaviours, such as empowerment, ethics, and authenticity in fostering employee wellbeing in public HLIs. The studies may consider multiple mediations such as employee motivation and satisfaction, job demand and resources, or even use moderation. Similarly, since the present study was conducted in the education sector of a developing nation, future studies can concentrate on different industries and contrast the employee wellbeing of employees in developing economies to those of developed ones.

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