

# Impact of Transformational Leadership in Attainment of Project Success: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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## Abstract

*Even though transformational leadership effect on project success is experimentally supported but less is identified regarding the method which explain this outcome. To address this gap, this study recommends the mediating role of job satisfaction as a probable explanation of the association between transformational leadership and project success. Based on survey of 152 employees in the banking sector at Rawalpindi, the findings of this study indicate that job satisfaction partially mediates the effect of transformational leadership on project success. Practical implications of the results are discussed in this paper.*

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, Job satisfaction, Project success.

## 1. Introduction

The present globalization leading to speedy expansion of industry in various fields has increased the requirements of complex projects. The challenges linked to such complex projects are significant. In fact, all complex projects apparently initial in nature and planned to deliver new capabilities or complex infrastructures (Rezvani, Chang, Wiewiora, Ashkanasy, Jordan, & Zolin, 2016; Justin, Mbabazize & Zenon, 2016). Complex projects are likely to be distinguished by huge budgets and problems linked with complex systems. Furthermore, these complex projects normally draw attention of public and political importance as an outcome of considerable national, international repercussions being attached with achievement and failure of such mega projects (Kujala, Brady & Putila, 2014; Rezvani et al., 2016). Generally the results of such complex projects are not meeting the desired standards. Normally such complex projects face challenges in attaining of their objectives due to over budgeting and failure in completion with in specified time frame (Chang, Chih, Chew, & Pisarski, 2013; Othman & Ahmed, 2013; Williams & Samset, 2010).

Researchers like (Brady & Davies. 2013; Ahmadi & Golabchi. 2013) have established that mostly managerial related issues are the challenges in such complex projects and not the technical issues. To overcome these challenges and to ensure successful accomplishment of such complex projects, leadership and project management skills are the most vital determinants (Ahmad, Younis, Ahmad & Anwar, 2015; Muller & Jugdev, 2012). Leadership plays a critical role in organizing such complex projects and also had a direct influence on successful accomplishment of such projects (Galloway & Haniff, 2015). Leadership is a link due to which people work together. Now a day's organizations are more interested to understand, enhance, expand, develop and improve the leadership skills of their leaders. Leadership has different approaches but transformational leadership is considered to be the modern approach. Transformational leadership is defined as method to change and transform people (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016). To create positive effect on workers, groups and organization, leaders must adopt friendly and modern approach of leadership rather than aged inflexible dictatorial style (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler & Frey, 2013). In project management literature, theme of critical success factors is widely discussed by the researchers (Ika, Diallo, & Thuillier, 2012; Nauman, Mansur Khan, & Ehsan, 2010). Literature of this branch has enhanced the understanding regarding those problem areas which seriously effect project success.

Leadership approach in particular positive influence of transformational leadership approach which any project manager adopts is considered to be one of the critical success factors (Anantatmula, 2010; Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011). Prior work highlights that transformational leadership significantly effects project success but still there is inadequate work highlighting the essential methods among project success and transformational leadership (Joslin & Müller, 2015; Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011).

Essential processes by which transformational leadership exercises its control on project achievement are not discussed effectively in literature of project management (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016). Doeleman, Have, and Ahaus (2012), Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barrionuevo, and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012) and Mujkic, Sehic, Rahimic, and Jusic (2014) highlighted that transformational leadership behavior in background of project is not discussed in that detail in which its relationship with line managers has been discussed. More serious endeavor is required to discover the procedures of transformational leadership leading to useful work attitude and project success (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016). More research is required for better understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and project success using a mediator (Gundersen, Hellesøy & Raeder, 2012)

The research aims to enhance awareness of the methods by which project success is influenced by the project manager's transformational leadership. In study it is assumed that transformational leadership assists job satisfaction, which resultantly is replicated in project success. By knowing the methods that basis the causes of transformational leadership on success of any project, assist us to develop clear academic understanding of this connection. Moreover, understating the results of this relationship can give practical assistance to those organizations which are project based and desire to harvest the results of transformational leadership to the maximum for accomplishment of projects.

## 2. Literature Review

All over the world researches continued to talk about leadership and for several decades this topic remained under academic discussion, but still in the background of project management there is a shortage of pragmatic work on this topic (Soderlund, 2011; Turner & Muller, 2005; Tyssen, Wald, & Heidenreich, 2014). The most commonly accredited theory in leadership theories is the Full-range leadership theory and it covers transformational, transactional and laissez-faire methods of leadership (Sohmen, 2013). In our study, focus will be on transformational leadership since studies have highlighted its high significance for the project based organizations (Gundersen, Hellesoy & Raeder, 2012).

In literature it seems to be general consensus on four extents that formulate transformational leadership: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. In *idealized influence*, leaders present themselves as role models to whom their followers extremely trust, admire and appreciate. Leaders having immense idealized influence are reliable and ready for taking risks (Long, Yusof, Kowang, & Heng, 2014; Voon, Lo, Ngui, & Ayob, 2011; Mujkic et al., 2014). *Inspirational motivation* concerns the method by which followers are encouraged and motivated to obligate organizational visualization by their leaders. Inspirational motivated leaders encourage high team spirit as a way to lead other members of the team towards attaining preferred results (Long, Yusof, Kowang, & Heng, 2014; Voon et al., 2011; Mujkic et al., 2014). *Intellectual stimulation* refers to the leader's role in inspiring novelty and originality in their admirers by inquiring theories and solving old issues by innovative approach. They all the times promote their followers to attempt new ways or techniques to work out the old problems. *Individualized* consideration is concerned with role of leaders to pay particular attention on requirements of each follower by performing as a trainer or counselor for accomplishment of desired goals (Long, Yusof, Kowang, & Heng, 2014; Voon et al., 2011; Mujkic et al., 2014).

Usually, project management has been linked with construction and engineering related work, where the project achievement criteria are objective, well-acknowledged, and quantifiable in terms of time, cost, and quality or customer's terms of reference. At the present Project management is everywhere in the regions like social work projects, service sector and capacity building (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016; Ahmadi & Golabchi, 2013). According to Project Management Institute (PMI) project achievement is defined as balancing the challenging demands for project quality, budget, scope, time and also addressing stake holder's different concerns and expectation (PMI, 2008, p. 9). Ika (2015) highlighted that from 1960s to 1980s 'iron triangle' (i.e., quality, cost and time) remained dominant in the criteria of project accomplishment but many other criteria like benefit to the organization and project personnel, organization strategic objectives, end user satisfaction.

Stakeholder's benefit and business achievement were added lately. Although in project management literature there is no agreement on criteria of project success, but still wide-ranging research work by Ika, Diallo and Thuillier (2012) and Aga, Noorderhaven and Vallejo (2016) is pertinent to projects development. In view of these authors important criteria factors for project success are efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability.

### **2.1 Relation between Transformational Leadership and Project Success**

Studies of various researchers elaborate that transformational leadership has a considerable effect on project success (Anantatmula, 2010; Yang, Huang & Wu, 2011). Though, in the background of project, work on leadership remains comparatively insufficient (Amin, Kamal, & Sohail 2016). In the frame work of project, transformational leadership may have different angle than in the perspective of permanent organizations (Braun et al., 2013). The literature indicates that project manager's appropriate behavior play a vital role in achieving larger project success (Zwikael & Unger-Aviram, 2010). Consequently transformational leaders motivate and encourage followers to perform beyond their potentials. They also promote healthy working relationships (Sohmen, 2013). Project managers with transformational leadership augment team unity, common understanding, assist the views, new ideas, discussions and methodical point of view by project teams. They also give emphasis on the growth of follower self- leadership and management abilities, which resultantly can generate an atmosphere where workers exert continuous endeavor for successful accomplishment of the project (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016). Thereby, we recommend the following research hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 1. Transformational leadership positively influences project success.***

### **2.2 Relation between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction**

Voon et al., (2011) described job satisfaction is one's mind-set towards work. Job satisfaction is a enjoyable or optimistic emotional condition which fallouts from the evaluation of one's work or professional experience (Bushra, Ahmad, & Naveed, 2011). Voon et al., (2011) described that employees seem to be more contented with their work if they discover their job satisfying and gratifying. Satisfaction of employee is normally considered as a vital component of organizational success. Job satisfaction eventually results into job performance and organizational obligations which guarantees success of organization (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Job satisfaction is positive or pleasant emotional condition from the assessment of one's work or experience (Rezvani et al., 2016).

To explain job satisfaction, the work associated characteristics are not sufficient to understand rather we require understanding the individual personality as well (Bushra, Ahmad, & Naveed, 2011; Rezvani et al., 2016). Bushra, Ahmad and Naveed (2011) and Belias and Koustelios (2014) explained five angles of work satisfaction: coworkers, promotion, pay, supervision and job itself. Successful organizations usually have contented employees whereas poor work satisfaction can result in failure of an organization (Emmanuel, & Hassan, 2015). Rezvani et al., (2016) explained that in complex, projects project manager's performance is related to job satisfaction.

#### **Relation between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction**

Mujkic et al., (2014) argued that style of leadership adopted by the leader performs a significant role in influencing staff job satisfaction. Few researchers revealed that various leadership styles can create different working atmosphere which may directly influence the staff job satisfaction (Mangkunegara, 2016; Voon et al., 2011; Mujkic et al., 2014). Voon et al., (2011) suggested that transformational leadership may inherently supplement the cultivation of job satisfaction, being its capability to communicate a sense of mission and intellectual motivation. Normally transformational leaders have a tendency to give confidence and inspire their workers to be more independent and responsible (Long, Yusof, Kowang, & Heng, 2014) thus increasing employees' sense of achievement and job satisfaction. Transformational and transactional leadership styles have been broadly associated with optimistic personality and groups (Gundersen, Hellesøy, & Raeder, 2012). These leadership methods seem to associate positively with staff & worker's job opinion, manager and organizational gratification (Cavazotte, Moreno, & Bernardo, 2013). Belias and Koustelios (2014) highlighted when employees see their managers displaying task-oriented performance, they feel more contented.

***Hypothesis 2. Transformational leadership positively influences job satisfaction.***

### **2.3 Relation between Job Satisfaction and Project Success**

Rezvani et al., (2016) explained that job satisfaction may enhance both the expectation that a worker's energy will guide to higher efficiency and the trust that continued struggle will be able to achieve the preferred performance results. In an addition to this knowledge, Mujkic et al., (2014) and Mangkunegara (2016) recommended that when staffs are more satisfied with their job, their enthusiasm to perform to the mutual interest of the framework in which they accomplish their effort also enhances. Therefore, satisfied project managers are likely to respond more positively to others, look for social connections, have larger contribution in accomplishments and also carry out additional communication with their project partners because such exchanges, communications are likely to be seen as amusing and satisfying by them (Long, Yusof, Kowang, & Heng, 2014).

Rezvani et al., (2016) argued, when project managers are satisfied with their jobs, they are expected to carry out problem solving, trouble shooting and decision making more efficiently, and have clarity towards their objective and inspire workers to accept the new objectives which are still to be achieved by them (Maylor, Vidgen, & Carver, 2008). Supplementing this indication, Fisher (2003) highlighted that if job satisfaction is low then it will likely increase the chances of project failure, because dissatisfied managers are less interested in their jobs and resultantly they do not struggle for attainment of project objectives. Moreover, if job satisfaction will be low then likely the assigned responsibilities will also be handled with less interest (Judge, Thoresen, Bono & Patton, 2001). Pheng and Chuan (2006) argued that unsatisfied project managers show less enthusiasm in interacting with stakeholders that may result it non alignment with organizational strategies and objectives. .

***Hypothesis 3. Job satisfaction positively influences project success.***

### **2.4 Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction between Transformational Leadership and Project Success**

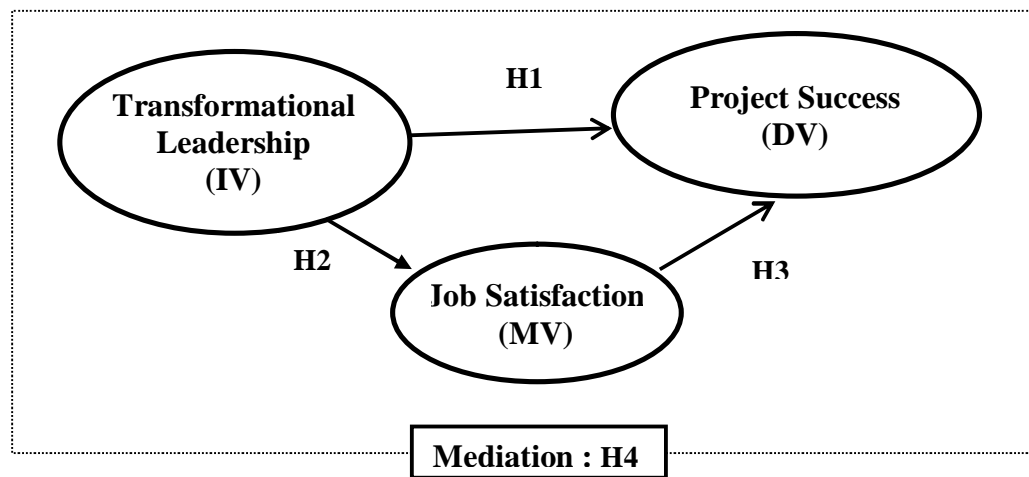
Leadership style adopted by managers' play a vital role in achieving project objectives and its success. By adopting suitable leadership approach, managers can influence worker's dedication, efficiency, productivity and job satisfaction. Leadership approach can be observed as a chain of supervisory attitude, conduct, characteristics and talent based on individual as well as organizational standards (Voon et al., 2011; Bushra, Ahmad, & Naveed, 2011). One of the leader's ability is to motivate his staff to perform according to best of their abilities. This aspect highlights the degree to which organization respects employees, works with sincerity and honesty, encourages competency, and welcomes the views and suggestions by employees (Braun et al., 2013).

Leadership is a key factor and performs central role in achievement of job satisfaction. Leadership is considered as management function, which is generally focused towards people, public relations and methods to motivate people for achievement of organizational objectives (Mangkunegara, 2016 ; Voon et al., 2011). Several researches conducted in different countries highlighted that there is a positive correlation between leadership and the job satisfaction which ultimately results in project success and achievement of organizational goals (Seo, Ko, & Price, 2004; Berson & Linton, 2005).

On the foundation of the arguments argued above, study proposes that transformational leadership assist to enhance job satisfaction, which resultantly would positively influence project success. Job satisfaction therefore may play a mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). It is important to investigate this link, as relatively little empirical research has focused on the mediating role of team processes such a steam-building in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success (Chou, Lin, Chang, & Chuang, 2013). Hence, we offer the following hypothesis:

***Hypothesis 4. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.***

The above research model is showing relationship between independent variable (IV), dependent variable (DV) and mediating variable (MV). Here, transformational leadership is working as IV, project success as DV and Job satisfaction as MV. The model is showing that transformational leadership is positively influencing project success and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is positively influencing project success, on this basis H1, H2 and H3 are derived.



### 3. Research Methodology

The objective of the study is to determine the impact of transformational leadership on project success mediated by job satisfaction of employees working in banking sector of Rawalpindi. Questionnaire method was used for collection of data. The questionnaire of transformational leadership (IV) was adopted from Wang, Hui, Kenneth S. Law, and Rick D. Hackett (2005). Questionnaire of transformational leadership was comprised of 6 items and five point Likert scale from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree was used to measure this variable. The questionnaire of job satisfaction (Mediating Variable) was adopted from Judge, Timothy A. (2000). Questionnaire of job satisfaction was comprised of 5 items and same five point Likert scale from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree was used to measure this variable. The questionnaire of project success (DV) was adopted from Robey, Daniel, Larry A. Smith, and Leo R. Vijayarathay (1993). Questionnaire of project success was comprised of 6 items and five point Likert scale from 1= Worst to 5 = Excellent was used to measure this variable.

To check the reliability & validity of questionnaire initially 30 questionnaires were distributed for pilot testing. The reliability scores after pilot testing reported against each variable is as given in table 1.

**Table -1**

Variable		Cronbach Alpha
Transformational Leadership	(TL)	.877
Job Satisfaction	(JS)	.620
Project Success	(PS)	.733

Keeping the objective of the study in view, banks located in Rawalpindi were selected as population of the study. Due to the time and budget constraints, convenient sampling technique was used and three banks; Askari (ABL), Habib (HBL) and United (UBL) were selected. Within these banks, the employees were approached on basis of personal contact and relevancy to the topic. Most of the respondents are working in form of teams. Personally administered questionnaire were distributed among 250 employees in Askari, Habib and United banks out of which 174 were returned back and only 152 usable. The response rate was 60.8%.

**Table – 2 . Demographic Analysis**

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	113	74.3 %
	Female	39	25.7 %
Qualification	Graduation	63	41.4 %
	Masters	84	55.3 %
	Others	5	3.3 %
Age	20 - 30	86	56.6 %
	31- 40	54	35.5 %
	41 - 50	10	6.6 %
	51 - 60	2	1.3 %
Experience	0 - 2 yrs	51	33.6 %
	3 – 5 yrs	74	48.7 %
	6 – 10	11	7.2 %
	Above 10 yrs	16	10.5 %
Bank Name	Askari Bank	88	57.9 %
	Habib Bank	27	17.8 %
	United Bank	37	27.3 %

To test the research model, a survey was conducted, identified from a list of participants selected, table 2. The sample size was 152. 74.3% of the respondents of this research were male, while 25.7% were female. Furthermore, 56.6% of the respondents were between age group of 20-30 years, 35.5% were between 31-40 years, 6.6% were between 41-50 years and 1.3 % was between 51-60 years. With regard to qualification of respondents 41.4% respondents were graduated, 55.3% respondents were master degree holders and 3.3% of the respondents belonged to others category.

Respondents having experience 0-2 years comprised 33.6% of the sample, 3-5 years experienced respondents were 48.7%, 6-10 years experienced respondents comprised 7.2%, whereas, 10.5% of the sample showed respondents having experience above 10 years. Moreover, 57.9% of the respondents were from Askari bank, 17.8% of the respondents were from Habib bank and 27.3% of the respondents were from United bank.

**Table – 3 . Correlation Analysis**

Variables	1	2	3
Transformational Leadership	1		
Job Satisfaction	.234**	1	
Project Success	.593**	.350**	1

\* $p=0.05$ , \*\* $p= 0.01$

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table – 4. Mediated Regression Analysis**

Predictor	Outcome Project Success		
	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
Step I			
Control Variables		.036	.036**
Step II			
Job Satisfaction	.223	.148	.112**
Step III			
Transformational Leadership	.541	.413	.265**

a. Predictors: (Constant), Bank, Age, Experience, Gender, Qualification

b. Predictors: (Constant), Bank, Age, Experience, Gender, Qualification, JSM

c. Predictors: (Constant), Bank, Age, Experience, Gender, Qualification, JSM, TLM

#### 4. Results

Results and findings of research study are discussed as under. Moreover, in analysis part correlation and regression analysis were conducted (table 3). Correlation analysis shows the relationship between variables transformational leadership, job satisfaction and project success. The correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction is .234\*\*, which indicates significant and positive correlation between both variables. The correlation between transformational leadership and project success is .593\*\*, which mean there is significance and positive correlation between both variables. Similarly, the correlation between job satisfaction and project success is 350\*\*, which ascertains significance as well as positive correlation between both variables. Table (4) indicates the results of Barron & Kenny mediated aggression analysis. The result shows the significance between direct relationship between transformational leadership and project success. After incorporating the mediator, i.e. job satisfaction, the change in  $R^2$  occurs at .112\*\*, which is significant, thus showing that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis 4.

**Table – 5 . Mediation**

	$\beta$	t
TL to JS (a) (IV to Mediator)	.1684**	3.0616
JS to PS (b) (Mediator to DV)	.3137**	3.0898
TL to PS (c) (IV to DV)	.6125**	8.8532
TL to PS (c') (IV to DV)	.5597**	8.0681

\* $p=0.05$ , \*\* $p= 0.01$

Table (5) shows the results of Hayes (2013) indirect process analysis. The result indicates job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between transformation leadership and project success, leading to acceptance of hypothesis 4.

#### 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find the linkage between transformational leadership and project success through mediation of job satisfaction. As anticipated, it was found that project manager's transformational leadership plays a significant role in project success. A manger with transformational leadership qualities inspires influences and motivates team members towards project success, through effectiveness, efficacy, efficiency and satisfaction of stakeholders. This finding of current study supports and concur the previous literature that transformational leadership is positively related to project success (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016; Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011; Anantatmula, 2010; Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011; Zwikael & Unger-Aviram,2010; Scott-Young & Samson, 2008; Sohmen, 2013) which leads to acceptance of Hypothesis 1. The finding of this study replies the question raised by Turner and Muller (2005), that leadership style and project manager proficiency have no impact on the success of project. According to the study, reasons for accepting the H1 are that if project manager uses his transformational leadership qualities, they will enhance the worker efficiency which results in project success.

Hypothesis 2 tested that transformational leadership is positively related to job satisfaction, which was accepted. This result not only supports but is also aligned with previous research work and literature. The reasons being that transformational leadership will help to ensure employee job satisfaction which resultantly ensures project success. After this study it can be enlightened that worker job satisfaction will took place if project manager is successful in applying the concept of transformational leadership. This finding supports the earlier researches which also reported that transformational leadership contributes in job satisfaction (Voon et al., 2011; Mujkic et al., 2014; Mangkunegara, 2016; Long et al., 2014; Cavazotte, Moreno, & Bernardo, 2013; Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Felfe & Schyns, 2006; Niehoff, Enz, & Grover, 1990). Moreover, rests of the results of this study are also aligned and supports previous literature, job satisfaction has a positive influence on project success. The employees which will be more satisfied with their job, they are going to perform with more enthusiasm and dedication to ensure successful accomplishment of the project (Rezvani et al., 2016, Mujkic et al., 2014; Mangkunegara, 2016; Cheung, Ng, Wong and Suen, 2003; Fisher, 2003). Mediation hypothesis proposed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. The results not only lead to the acceptance of hypothesis but also supported by previous literature.

As existing literature established that job satisfaction is observed as the key to enhance the efficiency and efficacy of manager and his transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction of the worker as well as his efficiency towards his work which leads to project success (Voon et al., 2011 ; Bushra, Ahmad, & Naveed, 2011; Braun et al., 2013; Mangkunegara, 2016; Chou et al., 2013; Skansi, 2000; Seo, Ko, & Price, 2004; Vance & Larson, 2002; ChiokFoongLoke, 2001; Martin, 1990; Berson & Linton, 2005; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006)

### **6. Theoretical and practical Implications**

This study contributes in the literature of project management by integrating transformational leadership and job satisfaction model. The results of this study indicate that job satisfaction interferences link the association between transformational leadership and project success. This enhances our understanding regarding transformational leadership and job satisfaction in jeopardizing project success. As anticipated, transformational leadership was significant statistically in enlightening project success, both with and without the mediating role of job satisfaction. This research assists to unearth how transformational leadership qualities can supplement the project success, by displaying the important role of job satisfaction. Transformational leadership is helpful to develop job satisfaction among employees, which results in successful accomplishment of project. This means that positive effects of transformational leadership on project success will be more strengthen if organization also assists in promoting job satisfaction among their employees. Finding of this study highlights that the mediation effect of job satisfaction is only partial, which indicate that there are other variables working behind the relationship among transformational leadership and project success. Quite a few implications can also be extracted from the findings such as that transformational leadership quality of project manager augments project success through job satisfaction. This finding is similar to earlier research indicating positive relation between transformational leadership and project success (Anantatmula, 2010; Yang, Huang, & Wu, 2011, Zwikael & Unger-Aviram, 2010; Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2016).

Another practical implication of this study is that project managers should be give transformational leadership training (Gundersen, Hellesøy & Raeder, 2012) which can enhance the performance of project based organizations. This is includes that transformational leadership training should focus on how to develop job satisfaction among workers for gaining maximum benefits.

### **7. Limitations and Directions for Future Research Directions**

This study has several limitations which must be given due consideration when interpreting the findings. First due to time constraint relatively small sample was collected from the banks located at Rawalpindi only, therefore collecting data all over the country with a larger sample will not only overcome the above mentioned limitation, but will also provide a detailed and comprehensive picture. The second limitation concerns to data collection mechanism. Since data was collected by using questionnaire method only. Therefore, it is recommended that for future research, data should be collected by using multiple methods. The third limitation of the study is that due to time constraint, cross sectional data was collected using convenience sampling method. It is recommended that for future study, data must be collected using time lag.

Although, the objectives of this study have been achieved but in future by incorporating more relevant variables related to project success and evaluation of the results of project success on overall performance of worker and the organization can further elaborate the relationship.

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