



## **The Role of Soft Skills and Organizational Unfairness between Leadership Style and Employee Performance: A Quantitative Study in Educational Institutes of Pakistan**

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### **ARTICLE INFO**

#### **Article History:**

Received: October 12, 2022  
Revised: December 15, 2022  
Accepted: December 18, 2022  
Available Online: December 18, 2022

#### **Keywords:**

Transactional & Transformational Leadership styles  
Soft skills  
Organizational unfairness  
Employee performance

#### **Funding:**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### **ABSTRACT**

Thoughts, strategies, beliefs, and philosophies are continually evolving and changing. In this era of change and growth, leaders have the greatest impact on the success and long-term viability of all organizations and institutions, as well as the formation and maintenance of organizational culture (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Furthermore, the same holds true for educational institutions. Therefore, this study is interested in identifying the effect of leadership styles on employee performance, focusing on the mediating role of soft skills and the moderating role of organizational unfairness. A quantitative method was adopted, and the data of 184 teachers was collected by a higher educational institute. The study has used a cross-sectional research design by using the convenience sampling technique. SMART PLS version 22 data analysis reveals that transactional and transformational leadership styles have a significant positive relationship with employee performance via the mediating role of soft skills. Further organizational unfairness has negatively moderated the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership styles and employee performance. The present study is useful for building employee performance by employing various soft skills and leadership styles and reducing the environment of organizational unfairness. This research could pave the way to improving employee and management readiness to face the 4.0 education era. Limitations and future recommendations are discussed.



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**Citation:** Khan, K., & Gul, M. (2022). The Role of Soft Skills and Organizational Unfairness between Leadership Style and Employee Performance: A Quantitative Study in Educational Institutes of Pakistan. *iRASD Journal of Management*, 4(4), 537-549. <https://doi.org/10.52131/jom.2022.0404.0097>

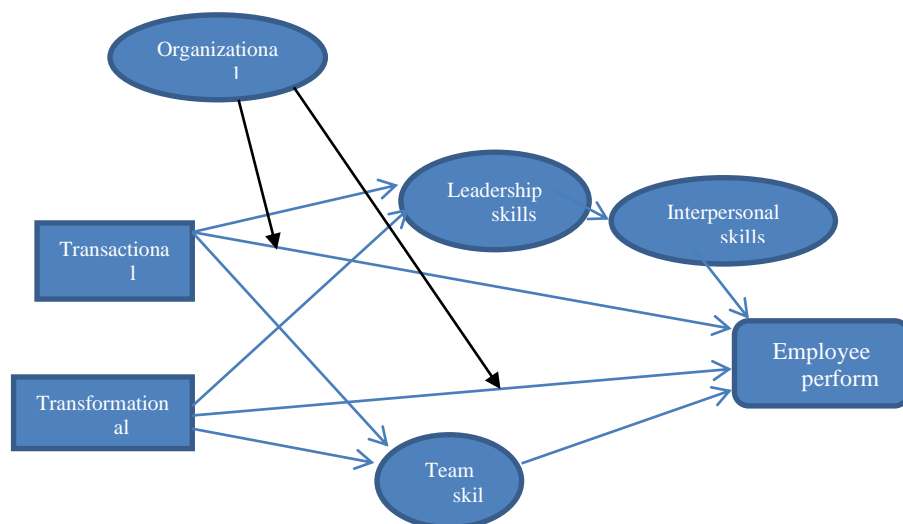
## **1. Introduction**

Education sector faces a new challenge as a result of the industrial revolution 4.0's radical transformations. This industrial revolution requires human resources that are qualified, agile, adaptable, and receptive to rapid change. Educational institute is undergoing rapid economic, social, political, and technological transformation. Therefore, the demand for skills, knowledge, and abilities in higher educational institutes is increasing day by day. Applications of skills and knowledge are likely to be possible with effective soft skills and communications. The

concept of "soft skills" has become vital over the last 20 years at the workplace, such as skills related to people, employability, social progress, and life events (Vasylenko et al., 2022). Soft skills relate to attitudes, habits, and traits of personalities that vary in every individual. These play a vital role in social and professional relations. Mainly skills related to communication, listening to others, sharing information, and solving work-related problems are included in this category (Singh Dubey, Paul, & Tewari, 2022). Soft skills are directly associated with people management, process management, and information analysis. Soft skills are interconnected with leadership style. Leadership practices and management of people with elements of soft skills bring innovations to the workplace (Akla & Indradewa, 2022). Before understanding an organization's leadership style and communication strategies, it is important to see the behaviors of individuals or members in particular. Employee productivity has been reduced as a result of ineffective leadership and unfair treatment (Putra & Ali, 2022). Some research directly associates organizational unfairness with management and leadership behavior, specifically, how they respond in relation to organizational unfair treatment and employee performance (Zhong, Peng, & Wang, 2022). Employees perceive, maintain, and react to social relations with the supervisors and organization at the workplace. They respond to supervisors and organizational culture with various productive as well as destructive behaviors (Mackey, McAllister, Ellen III, & Carson, 2021).

Previous studies have suggested that leadership characteristics and styles affect subordinates' performance behaviors, but the underlying mechanisms are still unclear in education sector (Jamali, Bhutto, Khaskhely, & Sethar, 2022). Leaders need to focus on motivation, skill developments, and a positive organizational culture and support environment. (Deshpande & Munshi, 2022). Researchers are not primarily interested in leadership styles and soft skills. It is necessitated that we work on the development of soft skills and implement these skills in organizations for better performance (Vasylenko et al., 2022). Universities and higher education institutes have to not only focus on delivering curriculum but also set an environment of soft skills between management and teachers for better understanding (Fernández-Arias, Antón-Sancho, Barrientos-Fernández, & Vergara-Rodríguez, 2022). Further, it is difficult to achieve better performance due to the high degree of differential treatment (De Clercq & Pereira, 2022). Perceptions of unfair organizational practices can increase employee failures and create an unsatisfactory work environment, both of which become reasons for poor performance (Faeq & Ismael, 2022). Because of organizational unfairness, the likelihood of poor outcomes has increased (Jiang, Clark, & Turban, 2023). In such an atmosphere, the commitment to achieve organizational goals and job outcomes might decrease. The performance of the work can be doubled by developing human resources. Organizational unfairness is still a reality in the present organization, which is underrepresented (Lee, 2022).

Role of educational leadership got importance in last decades, which highly effects the employee performance. Based on recent research gaps, the present research conducts more robust analysis in order to investigate the relationship of leadership style and employee performance by mediating role of soft skills and moderating effects of organizational unfairness in the educational institutes of Pakistan.



### **Figure 1: Theoretical Model**

In this study we investigate the effects of leadership styles on employee performance in education sector. How soft skill mediated the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance and how organizational unfairness moderated the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Leadership Style, Soft Skills and Employee Performance**

The role of management and leadership style in educational institute has vital importance (Vasylenko et al., 2022). Employee performance has been ensured by transactional and transformational leadership styles and various soft skills implemented in the educational sector institute (Deshpande & Munshi, 2022). Educational leadership is a predictor of teacher efficacy in a learning environment. Good relationships between leaders and teachers contribute to teacher efficacy and a positive learning environment. Good behavior by educational leadership has increased teacher self-efficacy and collective teacher efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy and collective teachers' self-efficacy have been increased by the effective use of transactional and transformative leadership styles (McGinity, Heffernan, & Courtney, 2022). In addition, Netshitangani (2018) elaborated that education sector violence decreased the positivity in the learning environment and leadership styles. It has been reduced by democratic and pragmatic styles of management. Mismanagement and an authoritarian style of leadership exacerbated the workplace violence situation. Gardner-McTaggart (2022) defined the learning process by evaluating teaching methodologies, which is consistent with other studies. Teacher evaluation based on relational, cognitive, and organizational factors School leaders considered these factors in the evaluation of teachers. Improving the performance of teachers is the responsibility of the principal. Factors affecting low performance carefully need to be highlighted.

Furthermore, Evans (2022) stated that global competitiveness factors such as comparisons of international students' learning outcomes and assessments of educational systems improved educational quality. The educational institute never run effectively; if the administrator only provides instructional guidance. It is best run with the participation of the educators, and the overall learning environment is also considered a key factor in this process. A brief review of the literature also highlighted the forms of leadership that may increase the quality of education and the learning process in educational settings. These are instructional leadership, distributed leadership, transformational leadership, shared leadership, teacher leadership, and leadership for learning. These approaches are used to improve the learning process. According to Hammad, Samier, and Mohammed (2022), improvement in schools in respect of leadership, quality of teaching, and learning of the students is dynamically possible by developing ways of instruction, providing class rooms and the best teacher facilities, and ensuring the consistency of this process to enable the students' learning process. Leadership needs to provide a clear vision, provide feedback, and evaluate the process. The instructional environment consisted of time and mode of delivery of instruction, professional development, and active learning.

Similarly, Yokuş (2022) explained that to make schooling humanizing and inclusive, school leaders need to promote culturally responsive teaching practices related to the learning process. Instructions support the behaviors that are culturally attached. The study by Fernández-Arias et al. (2022) discusses the relationship between leadership style and soft skills, as a leader's ability to think, communicate, have a sense of control, and express themselves has a significantly positive impact on employee performance. Furthermore, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Litchka (2018) describe teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership practices, beginning with a discussion of the Model the Way (MTW) approach, in which principals provide the way of treatment while teachers use their techniques to achieve goals. The second approach is the Challenge the Process (CTP), in which the school principal must encourage teachers to take risks in order to effect positive change. Thirdly, the school leader must *inspire a shared vision* (ISV), and a clear vision with a different approach must be defined. Fourthly, enable *others to act* (EOA)—by motivating others for supportive actions. Fifth, encourage the heart (ETH): school administrators recognized humanism.

- H1a: Perceived transactional leadership style positively associated with employee performance.  
H1b: Perceived transformational leadership style positively associated with employee performance.  
H2: Perceived leadership styles (transactional & transformational) have significant positive relation with types of soft skills.

## **2.2. Meditating Role of Soft Skills**

Soft skills are non-traditional skills that determine the social characteristics of leaders and subordinates. These skills are related to human capital, which is used to influence the development and changing of behaviors at the workplace (Ramnanan, 2022). Soft skills are individuals' competencies and personality traits that enhance people's positive relations, work outcomes, and flow of communication efficiency, show respect, and enable them to deal with conflict (Jardim, Pereira, Vagos, Direito, & Galinha, 2022). They are related to communication skills, a set of personality traits, social skills, optimism and friendliness, and personal habits (Vasylenko et al., 2022). And also associated with group problem solving, task-related training, innovations in performance, and proactive behaviors (Escolà-Gascón & Gallifa, 2022). Gallagher and Bennett (2018) discovered that the six basic skills contribute to the effectiveness of a learning environment and an inclusive environment. These are teachers' receptivity, building trust for collaborating and reflecting, tension between knowledge and beliefs, administrative support, evidence of change, impact, capacity building, and the future of the role. Teachers' interests, teaching methodologies, and attitudes are all important in the learning environment. Teachers' perceptions about the role of the principal make them easy or boring for the learning environment. For the implementation of national policy, the relationship between teachers and principals is important. Sethi (2018) defines "soft skills" as abilities related to understanding human behaviors in order to improve communications, empathy at work, leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and time management. Soft skills bring positive changes in personality, improve thinking, and are helpful for potential growth. These are life skills required to perform professional tasks at work.

- H3a: Soft skills significantly mediate the relation of leadership style and employee performance

## **2.3. Moderating Effect of Organizational Unfairness**

Differential treatment creates an atmosphere of organizational unfairness, which comes from the discrimination of the members of the organization and ignorance of the actual performance behaviors (De Clercq & Pereira, 2022). Educational institute leaders must address and eliminate unfair treatment of teachers in assignment allocation (Gardner-McTaggart, 2022). People's experiences are negatively impacted when they witness unfair events. Previous studies have discussed that people who face more organizational unfairness are more likely to engage in negative activities (Bizer, 2020). Employees' unconstructive behaviors are influenced by organizational unfairness, which reduces performance-oriented behaviors (Carson, Mackey, McAllister, & Walker, 2018). Inconsistency and negative exchange have been observed between organizational unfairness and individual performance in the organization (Mackey et al., 2021). Organizational unfairness, on the other hand, decreases cooperation between management and subordinates, which ultimately leads to poor performance behaviors at work (Faeq & Ismael, 2022). Similarly, Lee (2022) describe the direct positive link between work outcomes and organizational fairness, which leads to organizational citizenship behaviors, and this is one of the most relevant aspects of contextual performance. Organizational unfairness comes from the non-fulfillment of the distribution of procedural and interactional justice. Consequently, Deng, Jia, and Zhang (2022) described that the factors of power and decisions made about the affairs of the students influenced the assignments performed by the teachers and their attention to work.

- H3b: Organizational unfairness significantly negatively moderates the relation among transactional leadership, transformational leadership and employee performance.

## **2.4. Theoretical Expression**

Social exchange theory elaborates that ongoing relations between employees, supervisors, and organizations are interdependent exchanges that develop the working environment, influence outcomes, and fulfill obligations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Norms of social relations are not limited to positive interactions but extend to negative exchanges

between individuals as well (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013). Harmful and unfair organizational behaviors characterize poor social exchange as well as moderately enhanced destructive behaviors and negative perceptions (Lambe, Wittmann, & Spekman, 2001). The quality of relationships in social exchange is based on reciprocation and the presence of fairness in social benefits. Individual perceptions of organizations have been negatively influenced by the absence of fair treatment (Davis-Sramek, Hopkins, Richey, & Morgan, 2022; Xu, Zhu, Loi, & Chow, 2023).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Method & Design**

The quantitative method was adopted by following a cross-sectional research design. The quantitative method is more objective in measuring the numerical relationship between study variables.

#### **3.2. Sampling Technique and Study Population**

The study adopted a simple random sampling technique which makes it to collect data from a selected population more conveniently. Teachers working in educational institutes in various districts of Punjab are the study population.

#### **3.3. Data Collection & Analysis**

Data was collected from teachers of public and private educational institutes operating under the government of Punjab from various cities, e.g., Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Chakwal, Attock, and Jhelum, Lahore. Data was collected via an online Google form as well as hard copies distributed to the respective teachers. A total of 211 questionnaires were distributed, with 184 samples chosen for the final analysis, resulting in a 75 % response rate. The data was analyzed using the most recent version of SMARTPLS.

#### **3.4. Instruments**

##### **3.4.1. Transactional and Transformational Leadership Style**

Transactional leadership style was measured on a three-item scale by Bass (1990). Sample statement, e.g., *"Our leader promises rewards for good performance."* and transformational leadership style by adopting four items by Bass (1990), e.g., *"provides vision and sense of mission."*

##### **3.4.2. Soft Skills**

Three types of soft skills, e.g., leadership skills. Team skills and interpersonal skills are measured by a scale developed by Singh Dubey et al. (2022) listed "active listening to others, respect for people, and the ability to persuade or negotiate."

##### **3.4.3. Organizational Unfairness**

Organizational unfairness is measured on a four-item scale developed by Bizer (2020), with the item *"I get really frustrated when the world seems unfair."*

##### **3.4.4. Employee Performance**

Employee performance is measured by adopting 11 items from the scale developed by Quintana, Park, and Cabrera (2015) e.g., *"I am encouraged to experiment with new ways to get my work done."*

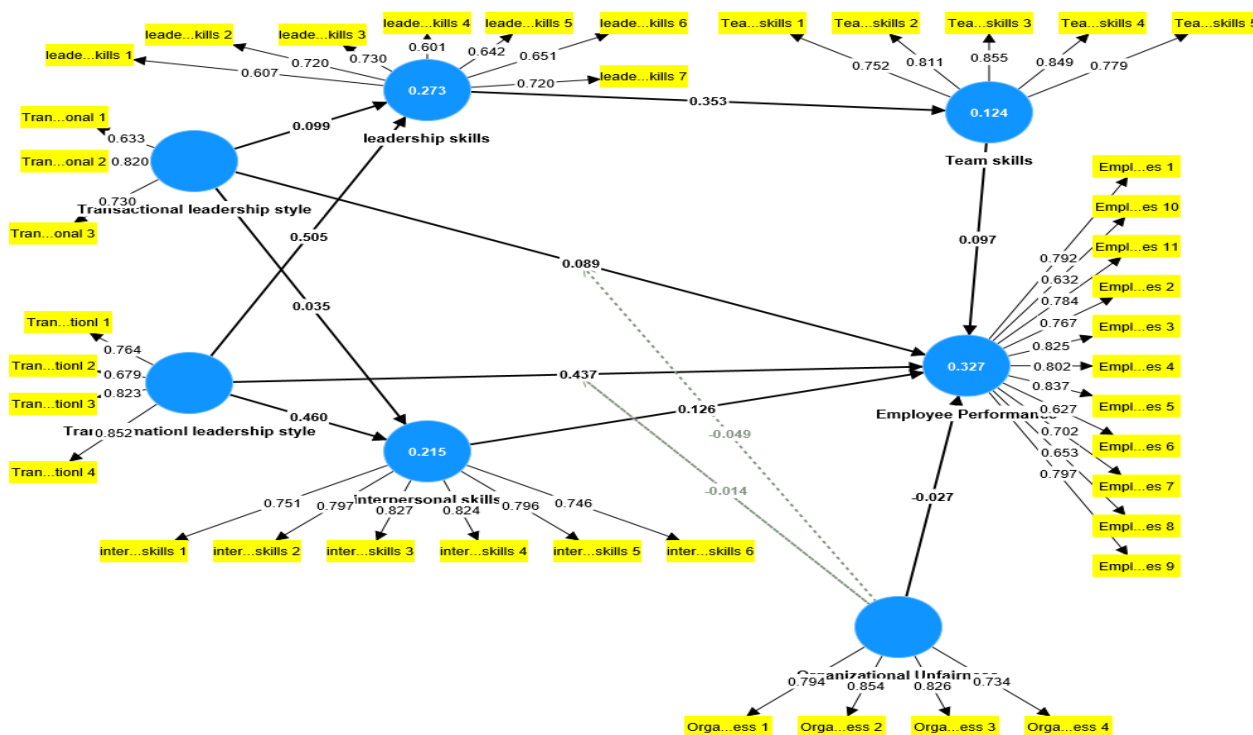
### **4. Results**

In order to assess the model, we have analyzed the data by using PLS-SEM (partial least squares structural equation modeling) on SMARTPLS version 4. It assesses both the outer model, i.e., item loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), convergent

validity, and discriminant validity. Second, it aids in the evaluation of the structural model, as hypotheses testing is completed by the constructs' T and p values (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). The PLS-SEM technique is beneficial for complex mediation-moderation analysis and exploratory research. It is used for robustness analysis, statistical power, goodness of fit, and overall model assessment (Hair Jr, Matthews, Matthews, & Sarstedt, 2017).

### 4.1. Measurement of Outer Model

Assessment of the outer model was done in the first step, in which the PLS-Algorithm was run on the SMARTPLS software. It is necessary to establish the construct validity and reliability, discriminant and convergent validity, and item loadings in the outer model. The acceptable values of item loadings and composite reliability are > 0.70, and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.50 (Cheah, Sarstedt, Ringle, Ramayah, & Ting, 2018). The significant loadings of the items above 0.60 and 0.70 are shown in Table 1 and Diagram 1. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) values are greater than 0.50 and the composite reliability is greater than 0.70 for all study constructs. i.e., transactional leadership style, transformational leadership style, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, team skills, organizational unfairness, and employee performance. The next step is to see the values of VIF for item collinearity in the model. If the values of VIF range from 3 to 9 and are greater than 5, it indicates problems with collinearity in the data (Yoo et al., 2014). Table 1 shows that the VIF values of items are dependent on a significant range.



**Figure 2: Direct & Indirect Effect of Study Variables**

**Table 1  
Direct and Indirect Results of the Model**

Constructs	Constructs Validity & Reliability	Items Loadings	AVE	VIF	CR
Transactional Leadership	Promises rewards for good performance	0.633	0.536	1.213	0.63
	Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards,	0.812		1.148	
	Recognizes accomplishments.	0.723		1.217	
Transformational Leadership	Provides vision and sense of mission	0.764	0.612	1.455	0.79
	Communicates high expectations	0.679		1.449	
	Gains respect and trust.	0.823		1.689	
	Expresses important purposes in simple ways.	0.852		1.962	

Leadership Skills	Self-motivated	0.607	0.548	1.355	0.8
	Listen actively to others	0.72		1.839	
	Problem-solving aptitude	0.73		1.734	
	Flexibility while working with others	0.601		1.59	
	Effective nonverbal communication skills	0.642		1.455	
	Ability to make decisions	0.651		1.619	
	Good command of verbal communication	0.72		1.928	
Interpersonal Skills	Pleasing /charismatic personality	0.751	0.625	1.702	0.88
	Ability to persuade/negotiate	0.797		2.007	
	Effective presentation skills	0.827		2.238	
	Accepting compliments in a polite way	0.824		2.234	
	Giving feedback in a constructive manner	0.796		2.133	
Team Skills	Ability to tackle unpleasant situations	0.746	0.656	1.911	0.87
	Etiquette	0.752		1.54	
	Asking for assistance when required	0.811		1.996	
	Learning ability/willingness to learn	0.855		2.383	
	Respect for people	0.849		2.4	
Organizational Unfairness	Disciplined	0.779	0.645	1.997	0.82
	It's a shame when people earn reputations they don't deserve.	0.794		1.75	
	I can't stand to hear stories in which people are treated unfairly	0.854		2.043	
	I get really frustrated when the world seems unfair	0.826		1.813	
	It really troubles me when people getting that they're not entitled to have	0.734		1.552	
Employee Performance	This organization rewards creative thinking	0.792	0.564	2.595	0.92
	I am encouraged to experiment with new ways to get my work done	0.632		9.302	
	I am encouraged to make incremental adjustments to improve the way we do things here	0.784		7.989	
	The policies and procedures of the combined company are improved compared to my previous company.	0.767		2.387	
	The combined company has more to offer our customers compared to my previous company	0.825		2.919	
	Talks optimistically about the future	0.802		2.49	
	Expresses confidence for achieving goals	0.837		3.317	
	Suggests new ways of looking at how we do our jobs	0.627		1.566	
	Treats each person as individuals with different needs, abilities, and aspirations	0.702		1.818	
	Focuses on developing individual strengths	0.653		2.529	
	Provides assistance in exchange for effort	0.797		6.924	

**Table 2**  
**Discriminant Validity**

Constructs	EP	INT Skills	Ld Skills	Org Skills	Team Skills	TL Style	Tmk Style
Employee Performance							
Interpersonal Skills	0.731						
Leadership Skills	0.609	0.704					
Organizational Skills	0.375	0.622	0.552				
Team Skills	0.353	0.686	0.419	0.804			

Transactional Leadership Style	0.277	0.442	0.382	0.707	0.389		
Transformational Leadership Style	0.592	0.535	0.404	0.629	0.377	0.647	
Organizational Unfairness	0.611	0.665	0.504	0.629	0.377	0.647	0.544

The next step is to measure the discriminant validity of the data. Higher diagonal values of each construct from its corresponding correlation are best for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 2 shows that all the diagonal values of the constructs are higher than their corresponding correlation.

#### 4.2. Measurement of Structural Model/ Hypotheses Testing

The basic idea behind the structural (inner) model is to visualize the hypothesized relationships between variables and perform path analysis. We run the bootstrapping with a resample of 5000 in SMARTPLS for relevant paths, T values, and corresponding p values. The model's standardized assessment and significant level are indicated by p values less than 0.045 and T values greater than 1.96 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). Table 3 shows the relationships of constructs, with only two relations shown. Specifically, transactional leadership style -> leadership skills and transformational leadership style -> interpersonal skills are not significant, and all remaining study hypotheses demonstrated the direct and indirect relationship of the variables to be significant.

**Table 3**  
***Hypotheses Testing***

Constructs	Original sample	Sample mean	SD	T statistics	P values	Decision
Organizational Unfairness -> Employee Performance	0.617	0.623	0.04	14.354	0.000	Supported
Team skills -> Employee Performance	0.353	0.359	0.07	5.402	0.000	Supported
Transactional leadership style -> Employee Performance	0.01	-0.013	0.1	0.097	0.022	Supported
Transactional leadership style -> interpersonal skills	0.197	0.203	0.07	2.695	0.007	Supported
Transactional leadership style -> leadership skills	-0.065	-0.062	0.08	0.772	0.44	Not Supported
Transformational leadership style -> Employee Performance	0.175	0.182	0.07	2.385	0.017	Supported
Transformational leadership style -> interpersonal skills	0.067	0.074	0.08	0.862	0.389	Not Supported
Transformational leadership style -> leadership skills	0.502	0.504	0.07	6.946	0.000	Supported
Interpersonal skills -> Employee Performance	0.385	0.386	0.07	5.506	0.000	Supported
leadership skills -> Team skills	0.48	0.482	0.07	7.326	0.000	Supported
Organizational Unfairness x Transformational leadership style -> Employee Performance	0.54	0.558	0.08	5.521	0.000	Supported
Organizational Unfairness x Transactional leadership style -> Employee Performance	0.61	0.66	0.91	7.03	0.000	Supported

**Table 4**  
***Specific direct/ indirect effects***

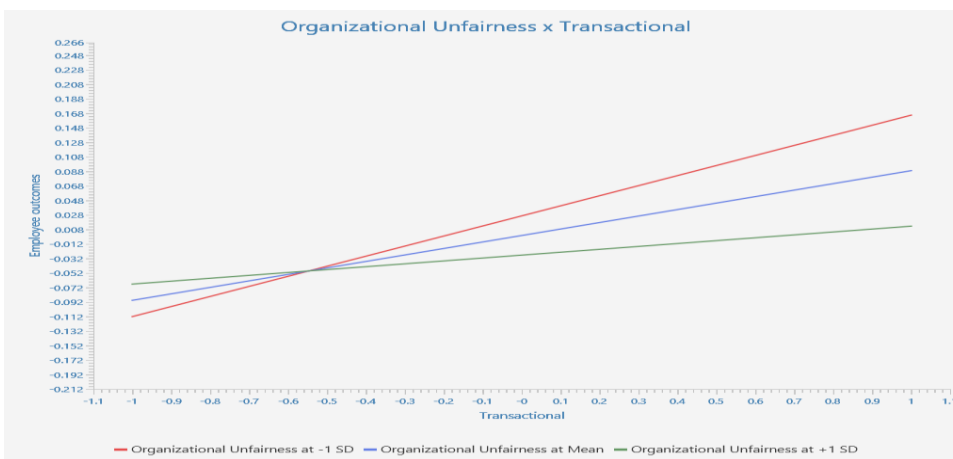
Effects	Prob.
Transactional -> leadership skills -> Team skills -> Employee outcomes	0.008
Transactional style -> employee performance	0.089
Transactional style -> employee performance	0.430
leadership skills -> Team skills -> Employee outcomes	0.061
Transformational -> leadership skills -> Team skills -> Employee outcomes	0.038
transformational -> interpersonal skills -> Employee outcomes	0.037
Transactional -> leadership skills -> Team skills	0.053
transformational -> leadership skills -> Team skills	0.262
Transactional -> interpersonal skills -> Employee outcomes	0.002



Path analysis is shown in table 4. Values near +1 indicate a strong positive relationship between the study constructs, while values near -1 indicate a strong negative relationship. The relation between both independent variables (transactional and transformational leadership styles) and the dependent variable (employee performance) is positive, and this relation is positively mediated by three types of soft skills, e.g., leadership, interpersonal, and team skills.

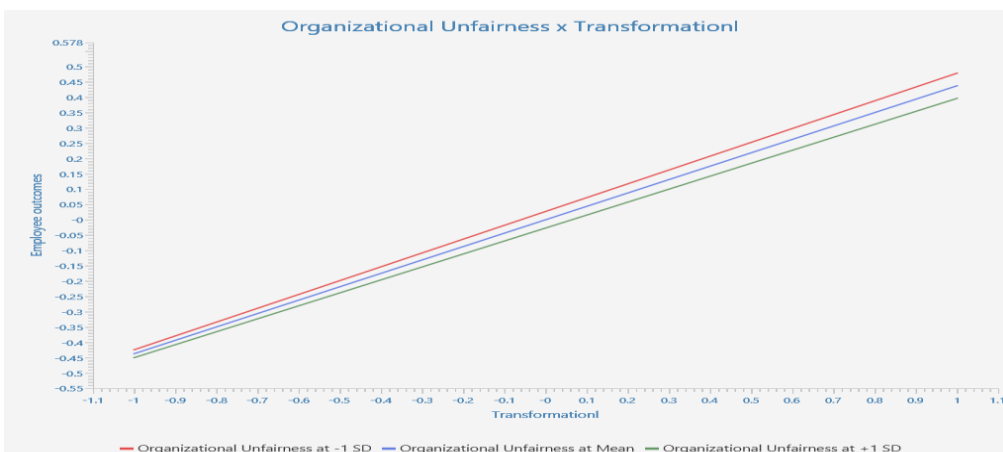
### 4.3. Moderation Analysis

A moderate relationship exists between transactional and transformational leadership styles and organizational unfairness. Figure 1 above represents that organizational unfairness has a negative association with both transactional and transformational leadership styles and employee performance. The present study has also hypothesized the moderation effect of organizational unfairness in between leadership style and employee performance. The moderating role of organizational unfairness was assessed by two stage approaches by Hair Jr et al. (2017) recommendations. The interaction effect of organizational unfairness between transactional leadership style and employee performance (-0.049) and it has also significant negative effect on transformational leadership style and employee performance, which is -0.014. (Figure 1) The moderation variable has negatively affected the relationship of leadership style and employee performance. Moreover, Dawson, Gašević, Siemens, and Joksimovic (2014) recommended the simple slope interaction. The results shows that direct relation between transactional leadership styles and employee performance is positive .i.e. (TLS\_EP > 0.089) which has negatively influenced by moderator organizational unfairness (-0.049) that reveals high level of organizational unfairness weaken the positive relation.



**Figure 3. Interaction effect of OU on TRL and EP**

On the other side (TML\_EP > 0.437) positive direct relation has also negatively affected by moderation role of organizational unfairness by -0.014, which is also shows the negative effect of moderator.



**Figure 4. Interaction effect of OU on TML and EP**

## **5. Discussion**

Based on analysis, the current study found that transactional and transformational leadership styles and various soft skills, such as leadership, interpersonal, and coping skills, play an important role in employees' performance behaviors in educational institute. Employees' positive behavioral responses have been promptly increased by leadership style and behavioral characteristics (Mackey et al., 2021). Leaders are the core personnel in an entity, and their styles are necessary to build a trustworthy relationship with subordinates (Deshpande & Munshi, 2022). Different characteristics and styles of leaders are triggers to boost employees' performance behaviors and positive responses at the workplace (Shen & Lei, 2022). The supportive role of the educational institute leader helps a person fit in at work. Employee job turnover and retention are associated with the role of the principal's administration style. A principal's administration style must address staff recognition, communication channels, and the fact that students' learning is primarily dependent on the teacher's individual efforts and collective support. This can be achieved by capacity development (Dufour, Andiappan, & Banoun, 2022). Justice perceptions or fair organizational treatment are critical to organization success and better employee performance (Faeq & Ismael, 2022).

Perceptions of unfairness develop when people experience injurious or disadvantageous conditions (Lee, 2022). Organizational unfairness creates situations of procedural injustice and lack of transparency (De Clercq & Pereira, 2022). Organizational fairness and justice lead to positive emotions, goal achievement, well-being, doing good with colleagues and supervisors, and increased contextual performance (Malhotra, Sahadev, & Sharom, 2022). Employees fail to produce sufficient work due to perceived organizational unfairness (Putra & Ali, 2022). Employees anticipate that management will be invested in them. Organizational unfairness and supervisory style have a simultaneous influence on the employees' performance. People have different perceptions of the leadership style and the organization (Carson et al., 2018). Counterproductive behaviors are one outcome of an unfair organizational environment (Baer, Matta, Kim, Welsh, & Garud, 2018). Employees perform fewer citizenship behaviors in response to organizational unfairness (Mackey et al., 2021).

### **5.1. Organizational Implications**

Employees must be treated with dignity, humility, and honesty, and their opinions must be valued. Soft skills are the skills at the workplace that increase the environment of respect and humble treatment. Easy and respectful communication with individuals are the key factors of a healthy work environment. Employees want to work in an inclusive work environment where they are appreciated and feel safe physically and emotionally (Byrd, 2022). Sustainable organizations should provide better working conditions and build collaborative relationships between leaders and subordinates in order to ensure better employee outcomes. Secondly, unfair treatment is harmful both for leaders' relationships with subordinates and the overall organizational environment. Our study results call for a greater organizational role to develop policies and a framework of soft skills to avoid unfair treatment of employees. Organizational fairness directly affects employee performance. Organizations should take steps to avoid accusations of unfair job tasks and unclear policies, which can encourage employees to produce effective ideas and help them focus on the straight path (Putra & Ali, 2022).

### **5.2. Limitations and Future Recommendations**

The present research on transactional and transformational leadership styles and employee work outcomes has some limitations. First, we have collected data from the education sector only. Future studies can generalize the present findings in other sectors, such as health, the banking sector, and other organizations. Secondly, we used a cross-sectional research design with a simple random sampling technique, which can be replaced by a longitudinal research design and more specified sampling techniques in future work. Thirdly, we have seen the direct and significant relationships between transactional and transformational leadership styles and employee performance, the mediation effect of soft skills, and the moderation effect

of organizational unfairness with study variables. Future researchers can add more study variables, e.g., organizational politics and autocratic leadership style.

## 6. Conclusion

To summarize, our research shows that transactional and transformational leadership styles have a direct and significant positive relationship with employee performance. Secondly, an indirect relationship with various soft skills (leadership skills, interactional skills, team skills) was also observed among leadership styles and employee work outcomes. Furthermore, the moderating effects of organizational unfairness have harmed the relationship between leadership styles and employee job performance in organizational settings. According to the findings of the study, soft skills have the most significant impact on the performance of educational institutions. Therefore, it confirms what numerous experts and researchers have stated: that soft skills are more important than hard skills for enhancing performance in the current information-driven world.

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