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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Transformational Leadership, Talent Management, Sustainable Performance, Mediation, Pakistan	<p>The present study examined how talent management affects sustainable performance with regard to mediating role of transformational leadership in organizations. Based on existing literature in strategic human resource management, study assumes that effective talent management practices, of an organization are vital in achieving the long-term sustainability of the organization. Although, these practices might be enhanced further when leaders depict transformational through different attributes. Thus, through quantitative research design, the employees at different telecom operators were accessed to obtain data and analyze the relationships between main variables. The results demonstrate that talent management has a positive direct & indirect impact on sustainable performance over transformational leadership. The mediation findings reveal that transformational leadership boosts the power of talent management process by encouraging employees and a culture of innovation and dedication. The present research adds to existing knowledge on sustainable organizational practices and leadership and provides viable suggestions to managers who want to create resilient and high-performing organizations by developing human capital strategy by utilizing leadership capabilities and talent management for ensuring sustainable performance.</p>  <p>2025 Journal of Social Research Development</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Talent management practices play an important strategic priority for acquisition, development and retention of skilled employees for every organization (Kafetzopoulos & Gotzamani, 2022). Thus, the telecommunication industry in Pakistan developed into dynamic and competitive industry to help the country to grow economically & technologically in business world. With growing competition

in business world, it's always challenging for any organization to retain talent and maintaining same amount of performance. The organizations need talent management strategies to control workforce skills, knowledge & capabilities leads to sustainability. The effective talent management prioritizes ongoing professional development to ensure that the work force remains professional and groomed to handle the challenges faced by telecom sector (Yaseen, Syed, Ravichandran, Sultan & Rajirajan, 2022). The study examines talent management aspects which concentrate on recruitment, training, retention practices and leadership development strategies (Kester, Momoh & Fajimi, 2023). In the past few decades, the telecommunication sector in Pakistan has experienced the major change in terms of sustainability.

The change was realized because of sustainable performance in the telecom sector of Pakistan due to continuous efforts for execution of key performance indicators. The sustainable performance approach helps organizations to attain proper use of resources which results in waste reduction and operation cost minimization. The efficient resource management creates financial sustainability & reduce environmental impact until sustainability is reached through all aspects (Hidary, Panahifar, Hosseini, Asfandiyar & Moghaddam, 2023). The sustainable performance allows organizations to detect, reduce various risks like environmental catastrophes and supply chain interruptions and social instability that increases their ability to stunned unpredictable challenges (Rožman, Tominc & Štrukelj, 2023). Through the sustainable performance assurance organizations build customer loyalty and become different in market competition to reach their sustainability goals. In the past few decades, telecommunications sector has experienced a major change and so has sustainability. At first, the industry's first priority was to increase the network coverage and connectivity. But as the world's awareness towards environment grew, telecom companies realized they had to integrate it in their business.

The change was realized due to sustainable performance that goes beyond offsetting environmental impact to bring about economic and social dividends (Saulick, Bokhoree & Bekaroo, 2023). The leadership has helped telecom sector steer companies onto path of sustainability. Transformational leadership in the Pakistani telecom industry in 2024 can be spotted as a turning point of employee performance, engagement, and organizational changes in literature. A number of recent research studies have found positive impacts of transformational leader behaviors upon the employees' job satisfaction and commitment (Alessa, 2021). It is also observed that transformation leaders enhance the preparedness to organizational change through facilitating psychological empowerment and work-group support. Thus, within the dynamic Pakistani telecom sector, the researchers claim that transformational leadership can be used to enable firms to be adaptable with respect to the matters that touch on strategic adjustment, innovation, exchange of knowledge and being proactive toward frontline personnel. The transformational leadership is core, empirically validated and performance-related, innovation-related, as well as change-ready mechanism in telecom industry of Pakistan (Shrestha, 2020).

Objectives & Hypotheses

1. There is significant association among talent management, transformational leadership and sustainable performance in particular context (H₁).

2. The transformational leadership mediated the relationships between talent management & sustainable performance in particular context (H₂).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The organizational success depends heavily on talent management because it focuses on acquiring talented staff and developing existing skills to retain employees who bolster success. The successful organizations in today changing business environment require talent management as fundamental practice (Mujtaba, Mubarik & Soomro, 2022). The organizations must attract and develop skilled personnel with required competencies and approach to achieve their strategic goals across various operational settings (Rožman, Tominc & Štrukelj, 2023). The talent management extends past basic human resources methods while following organization-wide plans to achieve the enduring growth and performance sustainability (Jovanovic & Krasulja, 2025). In this connection, the sustainable performance describes organization's goal achievement capabilities when learning and leadership get considered in evaluating the desired outcomes towards success from different perspectives. The talent management strategies need to consider sustainable performance metrics as they evaluate both the enterprise durability and diverse corporate social responsibility practices (Pantouvakis & Vlachos, 2020).

The effective approach like talent management helps the organizations to determine and develop their intellectual assets to enhance their performance levels. The system contributes significantly to both organizational performance and employees' professional advancements (Ahmed, Guozhu & Khan, 2023). According to literature, talent management works directly to enhance organization sustainability into the long term (Ferreiro, Miguéns & Lema, 2021). According to study conducted that there is a strong association that exists between the competitive advantage of an organization and the widespread use of talent management practices, thus affecting sustainable advantage in competitive market (Latukha, 2016). The concept of talent management has been viewed as central in sustaining a business in a competitive and socially-responsible world by facilitating sustainable performance (Tunio, 2024). The issue of talent management plays the significant role in ensuring sustainable performance in organizations from different dimensions. Acquiring the skilled people, their developing and retaining is one of the most significant reasons of long-term successes (Younas & Bari, 2020).

Talent management is such that the work force in organization demonstrates readiness, willingness and is aligned with strategic goals and objectives towards sustained performance in organization (Greco & Krammer, 2019). The trend on talent management promotes lifelong learning and growth. With restructured competence and knowledge, the employees are more equipped and acclimatize themselves to different market conditions, technological developments, and emerging the customer opportunities end when desired performance is sustainable (Shahzad, Martins, Rita, Xu & Mushtaq, 2024). The sustainable performance strategy assists organization in achieving resource optimization that leads to minimization of wastes & reduction of operation costs. Efficient resource management creates financial sustainability and reduces environmental impact until sustainability is reached through all aspects (Hidary, Panahifar, Hosseini, Hajipour, Asfandiyar & Moghaddam, 2023). The regulatory compliance standard of sustainable performance works to eliminate legal risks & protect

reputational damage that serve as main factors for the desirable developments (Mujtaba, Mubarik & Soomro, 2022).

Sustainable performance allows organizations to detect and reduce various risks like environmental catastrophes and supply chain interruptions and social instability which increases their ability to overcome the unpredictable challenges (Rožman, Tominc & Štrukelj, 2023). Through sustainable performance assurance the organizations to build customer loyalty and become different in market competition to reach their sustainability goals (Pantouvakis & Vlachos, 2020). Transformational leadership enables vision creation and effective communication of organizational goals which leads employees to accept organizational transformation. Predicting future organizational directions at a swiftly changing marketplace demands transformational leaders to create a specific mailing plan (Qalati, Zafar, Fan, Limón & Khaskheli, 2022). In this connection, the leaders drive the employee motivation through their ability to develop the purpose-driven environment where workers feel responsible for collective successes. The forward-thinking companies in technology and healthcare depend heavily on this method to sustain their competitive position (Karimi, Ahmadi Malek, Farani & Liobikienė, 2023).

The transformational leadership inspires workers to reach higher levels through the combination of inherent motivation and a performance-oriented organizational environment. The employees who receive intellectual stimulation and individualized attention will take initiative with creating new ideas (Rehmani, Farheen, Khokhar, Khalid, Dalain & Irshad, 2023). The research demonstrates that organizations under transformational leadership attain greater employee engagement and higher job satisfaction with better productivity since their workers feel powerful to drive organizational achievements (Farhan, 2024). In an attempt to promote energy efficient technologies and transition to renewable energy sources to power networks by dismantling inefficient networks, enhancing 5G technologies to enhance energy efficiency. The leaders in telecom firms instigate these initiatives over setting goals on sustainability and motivating teams to invent new ways to save operating costs whilst holding low environmental tracks (Gallardo, Thunnissen & Scullion, 2019). Telecom operators are fortified to invest in sustainable solutions due to favorable policies and incentives offered by the governments of world.

In these efforts, talent management is central to make sure employees have skills and knowledge to implement and sustain renewable energy solutions (Maralov, Kurmanov, Kirichok, Amerkhanova, Moldakenova, Shayakhmetova & Karimbayeva, 2024). The telecom sector has made sustainability reporting a critical aspect of its corporate strategy. By publishing annual sustainability reports, China Telecom and AXIAN Telecom are publishing their ESG policies, measures and performance. This is not only about commitment to sustainability but also makes sustainability as a business as well accountability and continuous improvement. This process is supported by talent management that grows data analytics experts, experts in ESG reporting, and compliance professionals (Umair, Waqas, Mrugalska & Bystrov, 2023). Corporate plans are aligned with regulatory requirements in way transformational leaders play key role in employment of strategies to maximizing competition and at the same time remaining compliant. Talent management helps in this transition by making

employees prepared to understand and implement regulation changes effectively (Atiku, Itembu & Oladejo, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is quantitative in nature; thus, quantitative design was utilized as a framework to analyze the variables and interrelations of variables in specific context with help of survey method as per requirements. The survey is most advisable in this respect to measure the research issues and its interrelationships quantitatively (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2007). These employees form the telecommunication operators working in Islamabad Pakistan was the population of study. The total population (3448) was not feasible to access, in this regard, a sample set 358 was drawn over sample-size determination formula, 344 questionnaires were recollected. The simple random sampling technique was adopted that contribute to elimination of the bias, time and resources consumption, and possibility of researcher to make conclusions about large population (Ridenour & Newman, 2008). The data collection and its analysis are important in research aims at reaching conclusion and making decisions. In this linking, by combining quantitative, qualitative methods and ensuring rigorous data analysis, it helps in gaining understanding towards variables and interrelationships in particular context.

The data collection and analysis make social research useful, and credible as without taking proper data and analysis social research becomes ambiguous and meaningless. The questionnaire scales were adapted from previous research. The design of questionnaire made the collected data valid, objective, and adequate to be studied both in statistical and thematic manner in order to attain the desired outcomes of research (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011). The ethical considerations are significant in ensuring desirability and commitment towards attaining complete and accurate information about the research variables and interrelationships in general and in particular context aimed to produce innovative information and contributing existing knowledge database (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In proposed research, mediation was carried out to test practical role of organizational learning and transformational leadership as mediators amid talent management and performance in particular context. The mediation analysis is thus important procedure that helps in providing the additional theoretical and empirical outcomes about direct and indirect relationships amid research variables in particular context.

RESULTS OF STUDY

The results of current study are produced in this section that aimed to present the main outcomes of statistical procedures for chasing the hypothesis and realizing the leading outcomes for making the suitable decisions.

Table 1 Correlation Analysis (H1)

		[1]	[1]	[1]
Talent Management [1]	Pearson Correlation	1	.432 ^{**}	.597 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	344	344	344
Transformational	Pearson Correlation	.432 ^{**}	1	.494 ^{**}

Leadership [1]	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	344	344	344
Sustainable Performance [1]	Pearson Correlation	.597 ^{**}	.494 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	344	344	344

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

The first hypothesis assumed the positive association among talent management, transformational leadership and sustainable performance by using correlation procedure to confirm the relationship with respect to strength and direction. The results of correlation confirm the existence of association, where there is a positive and significant association as that can be witnessed from the results of the correlation analysis. The criterion variable (sustainable performance) is significantly associate with predictors and mediator likewise talent management ($R = .597$ & $P = .000$), and transformational leadership ($R = .494$ & $P = .000$) and therefore hypothesis about association is accepted from the correlation outcomes.

Table 2 Model Summary (H2)

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.4319	.1865	.3407	61.2989	1.0000	342.0000	.0000

Table 3 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.2422	.1529	14.6612	.0000	1.9414	2.5430
Talent Management	.3757	.0480	7.8294	.0000	.2813	.4701

Predicting Variable: Talent Management

Criterion Variable: Transformational Leadership

Table 4 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6518	.4248	.2121	125.2041	1.0000	341.0000	.0000

Table 5 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.2285	.1535	8.0041	.0000	.9266	1.5304
Transformational Leadership	.2722	.0479	5.6823	.0000	.1780	.3665
Talent Management	.3841	.0384	10.0139	.0000	.3087	.4596

Predicting Variable: Talent Management, Transformational Leadership

Criterion Variable: Sustainable Performance

Table 6 Model Summary

R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.5967	.3561	.2367	193.4860	1.0000	342.0000	.0000

Table 7 Coefficients of Regression

Model	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	18389	.1210	15.1976	.0000	16009	2.0769
Talent Management	.4864	.0350	13.9099	.0000	.4176	.5552

Predicting Variable: Talent Management

Criterion Variable: Sustainable Performance

The second hypothesis was about examination of transformational leadership as mediator to link talent management and sustainable performance by using mediation procedure containing four paths thereby determining direct and indirect relationships among the research variables. In this regard, path-a revealed that 18.65% variance in transformational leadership is because of talent management with the significant impact ($\beta = .3757$ & P-value= .0000). The second and third paths revealed that there is 42.48% change in sustainable performance is due to talent management and transformational leadership with significant impact like talent acquisition ($\beta = .3841$ & P-value= .0000), transformational leadership ($\beta = .2722$ & P-value= .0000). The fourth path showed that there is 35.61% change in performance is due to talent management with significant impact ($\beta = .4864$ & P-value= .0000).

These findings have indicated that transformational leadership partially mediated the correlation between talent management and sustainable performance because of reduction of beta-values of (.4864) in direct relationship to (.3841) in indirect relationship and thus, the hypothesis of mediation relationship is accepted in part of the mediation results in both mediation directions. It is confirmed from mediation result that in predicting the sustainable performance not only talent management is important but, the transformational leadership is also important for predicting the performance through inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation that are used as significant tools for employees' motivation and commitment towards sustainable performance. Hence, the results of the existing study offer significant information to conclude about the mediation procedure and related significant outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The telecommunication is important sector that is contributing toward the development of national exchequer from different dimensions. This sector requires constant training tools in career growth and skill transfer among employees. The training programs ought to be centered on both technical and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Good talent management benefits continuous professional growth to make employees remain skillful in latest technologies. This focus on change will keep workforce flexible and ready to address issues posed by constantly evolving telecom world. The companies have to ensure that they foster the culture of learning that facilitates flexibility to establish culture within an organization where employees are encouraged to continuously adapt to changes in the industry (Kester, Momoh & Fajimi, 2023). Transformational leaders connect talent management to sustainable performance by enabling vision & inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation and personal consideration. A transformational leader uses inspiring direction to merge talent management practices with business objectives (Waqas, Tahir, Tariq & Khan, 2025).

The communication of shared future goals enables leadership to inspire staff members and establish a connection between individual training needs and organizational performance outcomes for the continuous success (Obedgiu, Lagat & Sang, 2024). Transformational leaders focus on individual considerations because they recognize employee uniqueness through their talent assessment and development needs therefore demonstrating leadership by example (Pigola, Moraes, Prado, Lucas, Sigahi & Anholon, R., 2024). The staff in telecom companies rely on transformational leadership to navigate market changes and rising customer needs during periods of rapid technological progress. The leaders of this sector need to develop and present an appealing vision which connects to market developments and business targets. Leaders who provide specific motivating plans keep their teams focused upon the change adaptation while boosting their motivation to tackle industry challenges (Sacavém, Machado, Santos, Palma, Belchior & Oliveira, 2025). The telecom industry depends on continuous innovation because technological advancements define its competitive environment for desired outcomes.

Through their leadership style transformational leaders establish environments where employees receive power to develop original solutions above standard approaches. Through their support of innovative practices these leaders help their organizations create modern technologies and services which maintain business leadership against market competition (Jiatong, Wang, Alam, Murad, Gul & Gill, 2022). The telecom sector experiences fast acceleration in technologies as well as changing government regulations. In this connection, transformational Leadership direct their organizations by supporting adaptability and resilience throughout dynamic market environments (Alsaman, 2025). A survey of the telecom industry in Pakistan conducted by Aftab and Abbasi (2024) points to the fact that the transformational leadership has a strong positive impact on the vitality of the employees for realizing the desired outcomes (Yang, 2025). According to research in telecom sector in South Africa, employer branding shows part of the way the relationship amid transformational leadership and organizational commitment in the particular context (Khan, Rehmat, Butt, Farooqi & Asim, 2020).

By clearly communicate the values and culture of their organization leaders are able to foster the emotional connection of personnel which results in the increased retention and a more dedicated workforce (Berson & Avolio, 2004). The results provided by recent research allow stating that the transformational leadership has a positive effect on job satisfaction and employee commitment in the Pakistani telecom industry (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2012). Leaders are in the position to improve overall performance through job satisfaction enhancements by means of aligning organizational objectives with personal values of employees and creating favorable conditions (Makumbe, 2025). In a recent study conducted in Saudi Arabia proved that the transformational leadership promotes innovative work behavior through sharing knowledge. By encouraging open communication and constant learning, leaders empower workers to be innovative and thus propel the organization in a competitive market (Kim & Yoon, 2025). Thus, the present study provides significant details about the relationships among the research variables in extracting innovative information contributing to existing knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The research has identified the transformational leadership as the key mediator in enhancing the relationship amid talent management and sustainable performance. The best talent management practices can add value to sustainable organizational performance when leaders have a positive influence, motivate, and align employees to a common vision. The transformational leadership has the ability to transfer the talent of one to commitment and innovation of the group, thus ensuring that performance of organization is bound to be sustainable. Overall, the results indicate that the transformational leadership approach is significant as a mediating factor in the Pakistani telecom industry as it transforms respectable practices in talent management into long-term performance achievements. In this connection, the talent management cannot work without having leaders who inspire, empower and strategize employees according to the organizational leading objectives, thus guaranteeing the sustainability, competitiveness and success in the dynamic telecom environment for long-term that overwhelmed at the desired sustainability and success in the contemporary and competitive situations.

Recommendations

1. The development of transformational leaders should be part of talent management systems within organizations where managers are systematically trained to motivate to support the employees as the leadership styles are effective to translate talent practices into sustainable performance results.
2. The telecom companies need to coordinate the attraction, development, and retention of the talents with a clear vision of transformation, where the leaders must communicate the long-term sustainability objectives and integrate them into the daily performance expectations of required performance.
3. In its human resource policies, the company must focus on constant evaluation and feedback of leaders, which should support transformational practices so that leaders can capitalize on their employees to ensure the economic, social, and operational performances are always consistent in organization.
4. The top management ought to invest in an enabling organizational culture that will enable transformational leaders to promote the innovation, flexibility, and dedication by employees, therefore, maintaining performance amidst dynamism and competitiveness leading towards desired developments.

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