

**Transformational leadership, job engagement, and championing behavior:  
assessing the mediating role of role clarity**

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**Transformational Leadership, Job Engagement, and  
Championing Behavior: Assessing the Mediating Role of  
Role Clarity**

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## Response to the Comments from the Reviewers

### Response to Reviewer 1

Dear Professor,

Thank you for your constructive comments and very helpful suggestions. Below we repeat your comments and then provide point-by-point responses (in italics) to the issues you raise.

#### **Reviewer 1:**

1. The first point that I would like to highlight is the analysis section. In this section, previously, I have suggested the authors to add the normality outcome, which will strengthen the selection of PLS-SEM over CB-SEM. [The first reason for selecting PLS-SEM over CB-SEM is the normality issues and small size of data]. Conversely, now you have given that your data follows normal distribution. If so, please remove the normality table and its information, because I feel it will be irrelevant in this case and raise questions over the selection of CB-SEM.

***Our response:** thank you for your comment. The normal distribution table has been removed from the text.*

2. Second, I feel that for CFA, covariance-based SEM is a good choice. Moreover, one must run CFA to confirm the measurement properties of scale items before examining the proposed hypotheses. However, it can be accepted, still I request the authors to provide Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion to strengthen the discriminant validity from the Smart PLS results.

***Our response:** thank you for this comment. The HTMT table has been added to strengthen the discriminant validity. It is highlighted and added on page 19.*

- 1  
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3 3. Third, supply the mediation result with direct and indirect effects. In addition to that, supply  
4 lower limit and upper limit of the indirect effects from the bootstrapping output.  
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7 ***Our response:***

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9 ***Our response:*** thanks for the comment. Updated tables have been added now.  
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14 4. Supply Cronbach' alpha in the descriptive statistics table. [in diagonal]. Please follow the  
15 standard descriptive statistics table format.  
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18 ***Our response:*** thanks for the comment. The Cronbach' alpha has been added in the descriptive  
19 statistics table. The updated table is highlighted and is on page 20.  
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25 5. In the Table: 7, mention the direct effects and indirect effects in the mediation model along  
26 with the hypotheses.  
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29 ***Our response:*** thank you for your comment. The direct and indirect effects have been mentioned  
30 in separate tables. The updated table is highlighted and on page 22 & 23.  
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35  
36 6. Please increase the flow of the writing to enhance the readability.  
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38 ***Our response:*** thanks for your comment. The entire article has been proof-read and changes have  
39 been made throughout to enhance readability.  
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45 7. Please revise the title. For example, instead of 'Assessing the Mediation Role of Role  
46 Clarity, authors can consider 'Mediation of Role Clarity' for better readability.  
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48

49 ***Our response:*** thank you for this comment. The title of the research has been updated according  
50 to your suggestion to "Transformational Leadership, Job Engagement, and Championing  
51 Behavior: Assessing the Mediation of Role Clarity".  
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# Transformational Leadership, Job Engagement, and Championing Behavior: Assessing the Mediation of Role Clarity

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This research aims to examine how role clarity mediates the effect of transformational leadership on job engagement and championing behavior in support of the conservation of resources theory.

**Methods:** We used a cross-sectional approach to collect data from managerial/non-managerial employees within the Pakistani hospitality industry via online and offline questionnaires. A total of 170 responses were utilized in the data analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships.

**Findings:** Findings show that transformational leadership directly predicts improved role clarity and job engagement. Moreover, role clarity leads to job engagement and championing behavior. Role clarity exhibits a partial mediation effect on job engagement and full mediation on championing behavior.

**Originality:** To bridge the gap in leadership literature, this research assesses the underlying effect of role clarity on the relationship between transformational leadership and its positive outcomes. It provides theoretical and managerial implications regarding the role of transformational leadership characteristics and outcomes.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, championing behavior, job engagement, role clarity, hospitality industry

# Transformational Leadership, Job Engagement, and Championing Behavior: Assessing the Mediating Role of Role Clarity

## Introduction

Leaders influence members' behaviors by controlling major organizational processes like promotions or performance evaluations. They have a crucial role in influencing members' conduct. Employees are recognized as critical resources in achieving a competitive advantage in organizations (Islam et al., 2020a). Consequently, businesses take a variety of steps to retain their talented staff. Transformational leaders are needed to seek, develop, and implement visions to overcome organizations' challenges while motivating their followers to optimize these outcomes (Busari et al., 2019, Gui et al., 2020). Transformational leaders must encourage and motivate quality communication between leaders and followers (Budur, 2020). Positive employee attitudes (Bommer et al., 2005), alongside commitment (Herold et al., 2008), are linked to transformational leadership. These positively and negatively correlate to employee cynicism to change (Chou, 2015). Transformational leadership amplifies positive employee behaviors, including championing behaviors (Islam et al., 2020a) and role clarity (Charoensukmongkol and Puyod, 2021). Transformational leadership pushes employees to put the greater organizational good above their interests by transforming their values, interests, ideals, and morale (Luo et al., 2019).

Prior studies established transformational leadership as a contributing factor to reducing negative employee behaviors and enhancing the championing behavior of employees (Islam et al., 2021, Islam et al., 2020b). However, how transformational leadership influences job engagement and employee championing behavior remains unclear. Past research suggest that to reach positive outcomes via transformational leadership, mediating variables drive the relationship, e.g., job

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3 engagement, which is achieved when employees feel empowered by their leader (van Dierendonck  
4 et al., 2014). Moreover, transformational leadership leads to championing behavior via trust (Islam  
5 et al., 2021), empowerment (Stanescu et al., 2020), and valence (Faupel and Süß, 2019).  
6  
7 Additionally, high levels of vision and competency are vital traits of transformational leaders.  
8 These traits enable them to succeed in their roles and motivate followers to show receptivity and  
9  
10 commitment to achieving their objectives (Keller, 2006). Furthermore, transformational leaders  
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12 increase innovative and creative thinking in employees (Gu et al., 2017, Wang et al., 2017) and  
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14 support their colleagues (Mittal and Dhar, 2016).  
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22 Role clarity is not confined to the job description alone. It can also relate to an employee's  
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24 and the leader's clearly defined expectations (Yadav and Rangnekar, 2016). Moreover, it is also  
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26 the extent to which leaders keep employees informed about their performance expectations and  
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28 how they can achieve these performance outcomes (Cäker and Siverbo, 2018). Limited role clarity  
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30 may prevail in the case of undefined job roles, leading to an inconsistency between expected tasks  
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32 and tasks already performed (Yadav and Rangnekar, 2016).  
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37 Transformational leaders engage employees by helping with the details of their tasks and  
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39 the significance of their work and supporting them throughout (Tracey and Hinkin, 1996, Busari  
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41 et al., 2019). Role clarity acts as a bridge between transformational leadership and employee  
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43 engagement. Employee engagement levels increase when they have a clear grasp of their jobs,  
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45 which increases their likelihood of feeling a sense of connection, purpose, and meaning in their  
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47 work. Role clarity can also mediate the link between transformative leadership and championing  
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49 behavior. Employees who aggressively promote and support the leader's goals and objectives are  
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51 said to exhibit championing behavior. Employees can better understand the leader's goal and  
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53 proactively promote it when they know their tasks.  
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3 According to Adil et al. (2021), transformational leadership (TFL) affects employee  
4 outcomes, but research has not yet shown role clarity to be an underlying mechanism that  
5 contributes to it. Therefore, role clarity as a possible underlining mechanism shall be studied to  
6 bridge the gap in the literature (Adil et al., 2021) since it remains unexplored. This study bridges  
7 this literature gap by examining the impact of transformational leadership on role clarity,  
8 championing behavior, and job engagement. Role clarity is assumed to be imminent in reaching  
9 job engagement and championing behavior (Charoensukmongkol and Puyod, 2021). Therefore,  
10 this study is to examine how role clarity acts as an underlying determinant in the relationship  
11 between transformational leadership and its consequences, including championing behavior (Islam  
12 et al., 2021) and job engagement (Vila-Vázquez et al., 2018).  
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27 This research has dual objectives. Firstly, it explains the relationship between TFL and its  
28 outcomes, i.e., role clarity, championing behavior, and job engagement, and the effect of role  
29 clarity on championing behavior and job engagement. Secondly, it measures the mediating impact  
30 of role clarity. It contributes to the literature in advancing managerial and supervisory  
31 understanding of the cruciality of TFL in addressing the workforce. The study aims to develop and  
32 foster meaningful and supportive relationships at the managerial level.  
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41 Enacted TFL helps employees to understand their roles better while not being  
42 overburdened by authority. Thus, TFL aids employees to be more engaged in their jobs while being  
43 motivated to perform better through leaders' championing behaviors. On an academic level, this  
44 study contributes to leadership literature since it studies the mechanisms of transformational  
45 leadership and the partial and complete mediation effects of role clarity, thus, making a unique  
46 contribution.  
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3 It adds managerial implications to literature to help organizations and managers make  
4 informed decisions concerning their employees while formulating policies that enhance the use of  
5 transformational leadership characteristics. It also contributes to hospitality literature, an important  
6 industry worldwide (Namono et al., 2022). Also, at a practical level, in the context of Pakistan, the  
7 hospitality industry, which is currently heavily underutilized (Hameed et al., 2021), can benefit  
8 from improved management, which may increase service quality.  
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## 17 **Theoretical underpinning and hypotheses development**

### 18 **Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory**

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23 The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory is a stress and motivational model that contends  
24 people are driven to conserve, safeguard, and expand their personal resources (Hobfoll, 1989). The  
25 theory states that resources are things, traits, circumstances, or energies individuals value or see as  
26 means of obtaining additional resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018b). These resources are inclusive of  
27 energy resources (e.g., money, knowledge, credit, support), personal resources (e.g., personal traits  
28 like optimism and self-efficacy; and key skills), condition resources (e.g., seniority, tenure, and  
29 employment.) and object resources (e.g., work tools, and cars.).  
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40 According to the second principle of COR theory, "people must invest resources to protect  
41 against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources" (Hobfoll et al. 2018, pg. 105).  
42 However, building onto this second principle, our research explains using transformational  
43 leadership as a processual resource to achieve role clarity. Moreover, it also helps explain why  
44 employees, when given role clarity, tend to maximize the resource to ensure a resource gain spiral,  
45 leading to positive outcomes. This phenomenon is explained through the first corollary of COR  
46 theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018b), which is that when employees are given resources (such as, for  
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3 example, role clarity), they are more capable of going into a resource gain spiral (third corollary).  
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5 According to COR theory, workers will distribute their resources to maximize returns and are most  
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7 suitable for the resource in use. The core element of COR theory is that people try to preserve  
8  
9 precious resources (e.g., environmental conditions and energies.). Additionally, it implies that  
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11 those who have a substantial resource base are high "resource secure" and thus are apt to expand  
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13 their resource base further (Corollary 1 & 3) (Hobfoll et al., 1990).  
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17 Transformational leaders tend to have abundant resources, be it personal or job resources,  
18  
19 due to their positive historical outcomes like improved job performance (Judge and Piccolo, 2004),  
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21 work engagement (van Dierendonck et al., 2014), and championing behavior (Islam et al., 2021).  
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23 Transformational leaders are an essential organizational resource (Hobfoll et al., 2018b),  
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25 exhibiting behavior that motivates and encourages their followers to perform above expectations.  
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27 Employees engaging in positive work behaviors work to the extent of producing resource gains by  
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29 leveraging their existing resources through these behaviors (Boon and Kalshoven, 2014, Hobfoll  
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31 et al., 2018b).  
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37 However, studies suggest that to reach positive outcomes via transformational leadership,  
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39 the relationship is mainly driven through a mediating variable. For example, when employees feel  
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41 empowered by their leader, they are more engaged (i.e., *task-level resource* or *condition resource*)  
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43 (van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Moreover, transformational leadership leads to championing  
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45 behavior via trust in leader (i.e., *interpersonal-level resource* or *personal resource*) (Islam et al.,  
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47 2021), empowerment (i.e., *task-level resource* or *condition resource*) (Stanescu et al., 2020), and  
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49 valence (i.e., *job-level resource* or *personal resource*) (Faupel and Süß, 2019). Therefore, it is safe  
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51 to assume that providing role clarity as a job resource may lead to positive outcomes such as job  
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53 engagement and employee championing behavior. As per Lee and Ashforth (1996), by putting  
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3 COR theory to the test, stressors like role ambiguity tend to deplete resources. Therefore, with an  
4 emphasis on role clarity, leaders can reach favorable outcomes such as innovative behavior (Peng  
5 et al., 2019).  
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### 11 **Transformational Leadership (TFL) and Job Engagement**

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13 TFL, a high-potential leadership style, significantly influences followers' behavior and attitude  
14 through broadened responsibilities for tackling organizational challenges (Zhu et al., 2016). TFL  
15 controls job engagement by helping employees with job details, work significance, and support  
16 (Busari et al., 2019). Through COR theory, our study assumes that employees require specific  
17 resources to be engaged and employed. Moreover, leaders can influence employee jobs and  
18 personal resources by demonstrating TFL (Breevaart et al., 2014). When employees feel that their  
19 leaders are supportive, they provide a personal resource through a morale boost or motivation,  
20 resulting in employees being more engaged in their jobs.  
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32 Moreover, through providing guidance at work and considering employee issues (job resources),  
33 transformational leaders enhance their engagement to maximize knowledge. We posit that TFL  
34 characteristics in the supervisors result in employees being more engaged in their jobs. Therefore,  
35 we propose that:  
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42 **H1a:** Transformation leadership positively relates to job engagement in employees.  
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### 45 **TFL and Championing Behavior**

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47 Employees who successfully advocate for their new ideas benefit the organization and themselves,  
48 as they can improve decision-making procedures, aid in forming cross-functional networks, and  
49 enhance their job performance (van Laere and Aggestam, 2016). Promoting business ideas can be  
50 challenging for employees, mainly if considered complicated (De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia,  
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2017). Transformational leaders transfer vision, raise awareness, strengthen creativity, and form emotional bonds with followers to promote goal achievement (Jyoti and Dev, 2015). TFL inspires championing behavior in employees to achieve goals in the organization's interest and to put in efforts for its success (Islam et al., 2021). Transformational leaders encourage followers to show receptivity and commitment toward achieving objectives (Keller, 2006). However, championing behaviors are lowered because internal and external workplace factors prevent them from promoting innovative practices (Quinn et al., 2012). Transformational leaders go beyond expectations and accomplish organizational success by giving employees a voice (Liang et al., 2017), helping colleagues (Mittal and Dhar, 2016), increasing innovative/creative thinking (Gu et al., 2017), and inspiring in/extra-role performance (Buil et al., 2019). Championing behavior may result when employees feel their needs are met and reciprocate towards their organization for the job resources provided. Our study assumes that when transformational leaders exhibit supportive behavior and motivate employees, the employees consider them resources (e.g., knowledge and confidence.). Thus, they put effort into performing their jobs better than existing expectations. If TFL leads its followers by exhibiting championing behavior, then:

**H1b:** TFL positively relates to championing behavior.

### **TFL and Role Clarity**

Transformational leaders focus on their subordinate's needs to ensure they are supported and aware of the necessary efforts required to maintain high performance and achieve goals (Bass, 1985). Ng (2017) states that inspirational motivation entails the communication of organizational goals, conveying great expectations, and compelling followers about the significance of set goals. Leaders engaging in such activities portray the meaningfulness of the task that the employee is

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3 responsible for (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Employees know the organizational vision and mission;  
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5 they understand what their role is and what the expectations are from them.  
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9 As an employee behavior predictor, role clarity positively influences employee motivation to put  
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11 effort into a task (Nasurdin et al., 2015) instead of unclear expectations and ambiguous demands  
12  
13 (Low et al., 2001). Since TFL clarifies employee roles and expectations (Lee and Low, 2016),  
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15 ambiguity is minimized through role clarity. COR theory applied here emphasizes how the  
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17 resource gain, for example, role clarity, may benefit employees by reducing stress by further  
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19 pushing them into a positive gain spiral, thus resulting in positive employee outcomes. Our study  
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21 assumes that when transformational leaders engage with their followers, they clarify employees'  
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23 responsibilities, stay transparent about their expectations, and help them achieve their goals. The  
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25 leader is considered a resource, resulting in behaviors that clarify the employee's role. Thus, we  
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27 propose that:  
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32 **H2:** TFL positively relates to role clarity.  
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### 35 **Role Clarity, Job Engagement, & Championing Behaviour**

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37 Role clarity is crucial in the workplace because those lacking it may take on responsibilities that  
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39 are not theirs or may forget what they are supposed to be doing. Therefore, an absence of role  
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41 clarity may incline employees towards taking on unnecessary workloads that eventually result in  
42  
43 demotivation (Nansubuga and Munene, 2013). Employees with role clarity promptly respond to  
44  
45 requests within their job requirements and delegate responsibility where appropriate. They tend to  
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47 be more involved, thus leading to job engagement. As per COR theory, workplace resources have  
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49 the potential to promote job engagement through the internal motivational roles of fostering  
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51 employees' learning, development, and growth or through external motivational roles of being able  
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3 to assist employees in accomplishing set objectives, for example, or lowering the demands of their  
4 jobs (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Accordingly, employees capable of completing their tasks  
5 without interruptions will likely be enthusiastic, committed, and more involved (Christian et al.,  
6 2011) —all indicative and predictive of job engagement. Our study assumes that when employees  
7 are clear about their roles and know their responsibilities, they do not face untoward barriers in  
8 their jobs. Hence, it becomes easier for them to perform their duties while engaged in their work,  
9 given that no ambiguities are challenging the process. Therefore, we propose that:

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20 **H3a:** Role Clarity is positively correlated with Job Engagement.

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23 When enabled with role clarity, employees invest their cognitive resources and time in  
24 determining innovative ideas and ways to do their jobs instead of struggling to clarify routine task  
25 instructions (Ohly et al., 2006). Lack of role clarity takes up most of the employees' time instead  
26 of being invested in performing their job efficiently (Onyemah, 2008) and lessens extra-role  
27 behavior (Chu et al., 2006). According to COR theory, whether employees devote time to support  
28 initiatives depends on how many resources the organization makes available to acquire additional  
29 resources (Hobfoll, 1989). The positive energy of employees' resources due to job contentment  
30 may enhance championing behavior when they have role clarity. Suppose an employee's capacity  
31 to comprehend and integrate external knowledge is inadequate. In that case, they may feel  
32 dissatisfied with the strategic direction of their organization (De Clercq et al., 2011) and lack  
33 dedication to the company (Wichmann et al., 2015). They identify the energy-building work  
34 conditions that might encourage employees to adopt championing behaviors (De Clercq et al.,  
35 2021). Elaborating on employees' work responsibilities and expectations may be beneficial to  
36 enhance championing behavior. Therefore, it is safe to assume that role clarity may serve as a job  
37 resource for employees, leading to the exhibiting of championing behavior. When employees have  
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3 clarity and understanding regarding their role expectations, they are expected to perform better and  
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5 may exceed the desired performance. Therefore, we propose that:  
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8 **H3b:** Role Clarity has a positive correlation with Championing Behavior.  
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### 10 11 **Mediating Role of Role Clarity**

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14 A lack of role clarity promotes job tension, employee dissatisfaction, and employee negativity  
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16 (Kahn et al., 1964, Kelly and Hise, 1980). Role clarity promotes competence within employees  
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18 since they know their role, what they need to do, and how to do it (Orgambídez and Almeida,  
19  
20 2020). Their tasks are completed on time, thus contributing to positive behavior and attitudes, like  
21  
22 organizational commitment, job performance, and job satisfaction (Chung and Schneider, 2002).  
23  
24 Assuming TFL leads to role clarity, which affects job engagement and championing behavior, our  
25  
26 study contends that role clarity has a mediating role in TFL's relationship with job engagement and  
27  
28 championing behavior. To reach positive outcomes via TFL, the relationship is mainly driven  
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30 through a mediating variable. For example, when employees feel empowered, job engagement is  
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32 high (i.e., *task-level resource* or *condition resource*) by their leader (van Dierendonck et al., 2014).  
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34 TFL leads to championing behavior via trust in the leader (i.e., *interpersonal-level resource* or  
35  
36 *personal resource*) (Islam et al., 2021) and valence (i.e., *job-level resource* or *personal resource*)  
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38 (Faupel and Süß, 2019). Providing role clarity as a job resource may lead to positive outcomes like  
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40 job engagement and championing employee behavior. Stressors like role ambiguity tend to deplete  
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42 resources (Lee and Ashforth, 1996), so role clarity can reach positive outcomes (Peng et al., 2019).  
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44 Work-related resources can promote employee outcomes (Chen and Fellenz, 2020) through  
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46 individual motivational roles supporting employee growth, development, and learning or through  
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48 external motivational roles assisting workers in achieving objectives and reducing workload.  
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50 Transformational leaders can use their resources – e.g., intellectual stimulation or individual  
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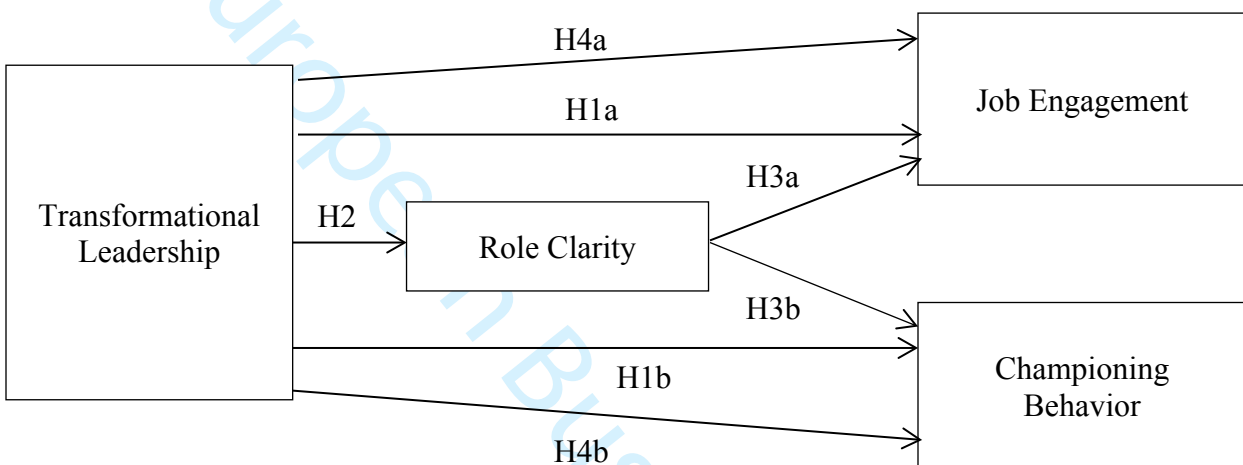
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3 consideration to impart knowledge – to develop resources for their followers (e.g., role clarity),  
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5 creating a positive resource spiral (Hobfoll et al., 2018b). Job resources created by TFL, like role  
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7 clarity, often aid in creating positive work outcomes, i.e., job engagement and championing  
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9 behavior. Building on the positive resource gain approach, we assume that the idea of  
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11 transformational leaders having significant resources orchestrates a resource gain for their  
12  
13 followers. Thus, transformational leaders provide a resource to the followers in the form of role  
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15 clarity, and they reciprocate by utilizing the resource for the organization's benefit via exhibiting  
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17 job engagement and championing behavior. Hence, we propose that:  
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22 H4a: Role clarity mediates the relationship of TFL with job engagement.  
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26 H4b: Role clarity mediates the relationship of TFL with championing behavior.  
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**Figure 1:** Transformational Leadership, Role Clarity, Job Engagement, and Championing Behavior

## Methodology

The hospitality industry of Pakistan is growing rapidly. It contributes 10.4% of GDP and 9.9% of employment (WTTC, 2018). Literature has suggested that the study of TFL's impact in industries like hospitality may be promising to assess positive employee attitudinal and work outcomes which are of fundamental importance to the success of hospitality businesses (Awan and Jehanzeb, 2022). As employee-to-guest interactions are prevalent within the hospitality industry, leaders must find ways to engage followers to commit the full range of their efforts and abilities to make these interactions positive contributors to the organization. Job engagement has pre-eminent value in the hospitality industry (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2018, Book et al., 2019). Employees actively engaged in their jobs tend to put in effort and energy and provide better service (Paek et al., 2015), making it promising to provide service solutions (Jose and Mampilly, 2014). Transformational leadership is one of the many factors amplifying positive employee behaviors (Faupel & Süß, 2019). These include employee championing behaviors (Islam et al., 2020a), as emphasized by our study. These can be seen as an employee's distinctive and optimistic attitudes while demonstrating enthusiasm toward achieving organizational goals (Islam et al., 2020b).

Minimizing role ambiguity is another essential aspect of transformational leaders promoting positive employee outcomes such as employee involvement (Charoensukmongkol and Puyod, 2021). Above all, transformational leadership pushes its employees to put the greater good above their interests by transforming their values, interests, ideals, and morale (Luo et al., 2019). Consequently, owing to the intangible and uncertain features of the hospitality industry, employees are bound to be highly influenced by transformational leaders.

We gathered among our sample demographic information, including position, age, gender, and years of experience. Additionally, the questionnaire was structured and composed to measure

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3 four constructs: TFL, role clarity, job engagement, and championing behavior. Since we adapted  
4 the scales from previously recognized and authenticated studies, their validity and reliability were  
5 pre-authenticated. We measured all the items in the questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale of 1  
6 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). At least one item from the scales was reverse-coded to  
7 ensure quality data while conducting online and offline surveys (Stoet, 2016).  
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11 We measured *Transformational leadership* by a short scale with seven dimensions  
12 developed by Carless et al. (2000). The scale includes items like "My supervisor treats staff as  
13 individuals, supports and encourages their development." We measured *Championing behavior*  
14 on a six-item scale developed by Howell et al. (2005). The items included, "I enthusiastically  
15 promote an innovative idea's advantages." We measured *job engagement* through the eighteen-  
16 item scale formulated by Rich et al. (2010). The items included "I feel positive about my job." We  
17 measured *role clarity* through a role ambiguity scale developed by Hollet-Haudebert et al. (2011).  
18 We reverse-coded the items to suit role clarity. An example of one of the items is, "I have clear,  
19 planned goals and objectives for my job."  
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37 We used the cross-sectional approach to collect data at a single time. We employed a simple  
38 random sampling technique to ensure generalizability and collected data from individuals who  
39 comprised both non-managerial and managerial employees. Since the companies are from across  
40 Pakistan, we contacted all their outlets in various cities and distributed questionnaires online.  
41 Scholars validate online and offline survey methods as suitable (Saunders, 2014). We used Google  
42 form links and paper-based questionnaires per the organization's preference. Due to the unknown  
43 population size, we set a target of 385 according to the Z-score method (Saunders, 2014).  
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53 To ensure data quality (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001), we performed a pilot test on  
54 four respondents from a hospitality company. The purpose was to assess whether the questionnaire  
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was understandable to the respondents and, if not, to remove any ambiguities. As a result, we rephrased some questions to simplify them and adjusted the line spacing to ease readability.

### Results & Analysis

We analyzed the data through smart PLS (Ringle, 2015). For complex modeling with a small sample size, i.e., 170, we used PLS-SEM instead of CB-SEM (Hair Jr et al., 2021). PLS-SEM is an effective technique for expanding and developing current management research theory (Richter et al., 2016). Our study had a 56.4% response rate, and we used a final sample of 170 in the analysis. In total, we distributed 390 questionnaires to hospitality industry companies in Pakistan. The returned questionnaires were 220, out of which we used 170. The exclusion criteria involved discarding any carelessly filled responses judging by the reverse-coded items, half-filled responses, or responses filled out in a continued pattern (e.g., the entire questionnaire was checked with 'agree'). According to Baruch (1999), an average response rate of 56% is deemed suitable for validated results. Among the 170 respondents, most identified as males (74.11%). The gender disparity in the sample is attributed to the male-dominant culture of Pakistan (Paul et al., 2022), leading to lesser female representation in organizations (Anwar et al., 2022).

**Table 1: Demographics**

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	126	74.11%
	Female	44	25.88%
<b>Age</b>	18-25 years	44	25.88%
	26-35 years	90	52.94%
	35-45 years	30	17.64%
	45 years above	06	3.52%
<b>Position</b>	Non-managerial	52	30.5%
	Line Manager	40	23.52%
	Middle Manager	64	37.64%
<b>Experience</b>	Senior Manager	14	8.23%
	0-2 years	46	27.05%

3-6 years	66	38.82%
7-10 years	31	18.23%
10 years above	27	15.88%

To prevent common method variance (CMV), reverse coding of at least one item per construct was done (Kock et al., 2021). Reverse coding assisted in identifying responses that were filled out carelessly or in a rushed fashion. We kept the questions simple to make them understandable to readers. A correlation of more than 0.9 between the main variables of the study indicates CMV presence (Bagozzi et al., 1991). The highest correlation among the variables is 0.78. we conducted a collinearity test by measuring VIF. If the VIF of the variables is equal to or more than 3.3, there is CMV (Kock, 2015). The values of VIF are less than 3.3.

### Measurement Model

The variance inflation factors (VIF) are considered to assess the multicollinearity of variables. According to Ringle et al. (2015), there is no collinearity between the measures found since it falls below the threshold. With the values within the 1.00 – 1.77 range, no collinearity between the measures was seen as the values fell below the threshold, i.e., 5 (Ringle et al., 2015). The reliability of data collection methods or analysis procedures measures the likelihood that the results will be consistent over time (Saunders et al., 2016). Scholars utilize composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha measures to establish reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for the constructs ranges from 0.817 to 0.9. Whereas the composite reliability CR ranges from 0.872 to 0.921. The CR and Cronbach's alpha threshold is above 0.7 (Hair Jr et al., 2021); therefore, internal consistency is established. We tested the convergent validity by measuring the average variance extracted (AVE) value. A higher than 0.5 value exhibits that the construct explains 50 percent or more variance. However, the AVE value being less than 0.5 exhibits an error in the variance of

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3 items (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The constructs are valid since all the values are above the 0.5 threshold.  
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5 The concept of discriminant validity describes how much the constructs empirically differ from  
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7 each other.  
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10 Additionally, it assesses how much each overlapping construct differs from the others (Hair  
11 Jr et al., 2021). The outer loadings for the variables show significant values since they all range  
12 between 0.598 – 0.825. the preferred value for outer loadings is deemed 0.7 (Hair Jr et al., 2021).  
13 However, according to some scholars, values above 0.5 are also acceptable (Garson, 2016, Ghozali  
14 and Latan, 2015). We have exhibited the descriptive statistics and correlations in Table 3. The  
15 results show positive relations between all the variables.  
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25 The HTMT method, as suggested by Henseler et al. (2015), can determine the discriminant validity  
26 to have higher specificity. A value higher than the predefined threshold of 0.9 (Henseler et al.,  
27 2015) indicates a lack of discriminant validity. Therefore, given that all the values are below the  
28 0.9 thresholds with the highest value of 0.82, it can be said that the constructs are distinct from  
29 each other (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).  
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**Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Variables	Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE
<b>CB</b>	<b>CB4</b>	0.664	0.878	0.507
	<b>CB6</b>	0.718		
	<b>CB8</b>	0.686		
	<b>CB9</b>	0.674		
	<b>CB10</b>	0.683		
	<b>CB11</b>	0.804		
	<b>CB14</b>	0.744		
	<b>JE2</b>	0.598		
<b>JE</b>	<b>JE8</b>	0.820	0.921	0.541
	<b>JE9</b>	0.775		
	<b>JE10</b>	0.785		
	<b>JE11</b>	0.718		
	<b>JE12</b>	0.764		
	<b>JE14</b>	0.713		
	<b>JE15</b>	0.737		
	<b>JE17</b>	0.744		
<b>RC</b>	<b>JE18</b>	0.679	0.872	0.577
	<b>RC1</b>	0.738		
	<b>RC2</b>	0.726		
	<b>RC3</b>	0.781		
	<b>RC5</b>	0.799		
	<b>RC6</b>	0.752		
<b>TFL</b>	<b>TL1</b>	0.773	0.886	0.610
	<b>TL2</b>	0.825		
	<b>TL4</b>	0.796		
	<b>TL5</b>	0.751		
	<b>TL6</b>	0.757		

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity - HTMT**

Variables	1	2	3	4
<b>Championing Behavior</b>	-			
<b>Job Engagement</b>	0.804	-		
<b>Role Clarity</b>	0.824	0.800	-	
<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	0.600	0.614	0.771	-

The out-of-sample predictive relevance or predictive power of the model for the specific variable is shown by Q2 (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). As a marker of Q2, the construct's cross-validated redundancy values were employed and acquired via a blindfolding process. "The predictive relevance of the path model for the specific concept is indicated by Q2 values greater than zero for a particular reflective endogenous latent variable", as per Hair et al. (2014, p. 178). The results for the variables show a respectable level of predictive capacity since the Q2 values are greater than zero.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

	Mean	STDEV			
<b>TLCOMP</b>	3.603	.566	<b>(0.840)</b>		
<b>RCCOMP</b>	3.721	.507	.545**	<b>(0.817)</b>	
<b>JEComp</b>	3.709	.451	.510**	.688**	<b>(0.905)</b>
<b>CBComp</b>	3.859	.541	.491**	.644**	.748** <b>(0.838)</b>

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The diagonal values in bold represent Cronbach's Alpha scores.*

### Structural Model

We developed a structural model that illustrates the direct and indirect effect of TFL on championing behavior, job engagement, and role clarity. As Preacher and Hayes (2008) suggested, a bootstrapping method helps determine the significance of indirect effects and generates t-statistics. We determined path estimate significance by performing bootstrap analysis with 5000 samples. Path coefficient values are between the -1 and +1 range. The closer the value to an extreme (-1 – +1), the stronger the negative or positive relationship among variables.

We included gender, age, and experience in the study as control variables. However, neither of the control variables has an impact on the endogenous variables, i.e., job engagement (**age**: B= 0.001, t= 0.011, p=0.991; **experience**: B= 0.131, t= 1.648, p=0.099; **gender**: B= -0.13,



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3 t= 1.006, p=0. 314), and championing behavior (**age:** B= 0.034, t= 0.492, p=0.622; **experience:**  
4 B= 0.099, t= 1.302, p=0.193; **gender:** B= 0.106, t= 0.889, p=0.374). The path coefficients of our  
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6 model's direct and indirect relationships are between these bounds.  
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10 For **H1a** ( $B=0.166, t=2.136, p=0.033$ ), we tested the direct relationship between TFL and  
11 JE. All reflective measures were significant and supported the hypothesis. **H1b** ( $B=0.118, t=1.443,$   
12  $p=0.149$ ) tested the effect of TFL on CB. However, the p-value for this relationship was  
13 insignificant at  $p=0.149$ , i.e.,  $p>0.05$ . Thus, the hypothesis was not supported. **H2** ( $B=0.644,$   
14  $t=14.033, p=0.000$ ) tested the effect of TFL on RC, and the result was significant, i.e.,  $p<0.05$ .  
15 Therefore, the hypothesis is supported. **H3a** ( $B=0.559, t=7.251, p=0.000$ ) tested the direct effect  
16 of RC on JE. The hypothesis was supported since the results were significant. **H3b** ( $B=0.596,$   
17  $t=7.982, p=0.000$ ) tested the direct impact of RC on CB. The hypothesis was supported since the  
18 results were significant. **H4a** ( $B=0.36, t=6.19, p=0.000$ ) tested the indirect effect of TFL on JE,  
19 and the results were significant. Therefore, showing the mediating role of role clarity. Thus, a  
20 partial mediation has been established per Baron and Kenny's approach for testing mediation  
21 effects (Zhao et al., 2010, Preacher and Hayes, 2004). **H4b** ( $B=0.384, t=7.276, p=0.000$ ) tested  
22 the indirect effect of TFL on CB, and the results were significant. Therefore, signifying the  
23 mediating role of role clarity in this relationship. However, since the direct effect of TFL on CB  
24 was not established, a full or complete mediation is said to be established as per Baron and Kenny's  
25 approach for testing mediation effects (Zhao et al., 2010, Preacher and Hayes, 2004).  
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**Table 5: Structural Model**

Hypotheses	$\beta$	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
H1a: TFL -> JE	0.166	0.17	0.078	2.136	0.033
H1b: TFL -> CB	0.118	0.123	0.082	1.443	0.149
H2: TFL -> RC	0.644	0.651	0.046	14.033	0.000
H3a: RC -> JE	0.559	0.558	0.077	7.251	0.000
H3b: RC -> CB	0.596	0.594	0.075	7.982	0.000
H4a: TFL -> RC -> JE	0.36	0.363	0.058	6.19	0.000
H4b: TFL -> RC -> CB	0.384	0.387	0.053	7.276	0.000
Age -> CB	0.034	0.035	0.069	0.492	0.622
Age -> JE	0.001	0	0.079	0.011	0.991
Experience -> CB	0.099	0.098	0.076	1.302	0.193
Experience -> JE	0.131	0.129	0.079	1.648	0.099
Gender -> CB	0.106	0.106	0.119	0.889	0.374
Gender -> JE	-0.13	-0.134	0.13	1.006	0.314

The coefficient of determination provides information on the combined effects of exogenous variables on the endogenous variable, i.e., the overall amount of variance in the endogenous variables described by all exogenous variables. It explains the predictive accuracy of the structural model. The values typically range from 0-1, with the prediction strength increasing with the value. The R<sup>2</sup> values are role clarity 0.414 (41.4%), championing behavior 0.506 (50.6%), and job engagement 0.516 (51.6%).

**Table 6: Result Summary (Direct Effects)**

Hypothesis	$\beta$	T statistics	P values	Result
H1a: TFL → JE	0.166	2.136	0.033	Supported
H1b: TFL → CB	0.118	1.443	0.149	Not Supported
H2: TFL → RC	0.644	14.033	0.000	Supported
H3a: RC → JE	0.559	7.251	0.000	Supported
H3b: RC → CB	0.596	7.982	0.000	Supported

**Table 7: Result Summary (Indirect Effects)**

Hypothesis	$\beta$	T statistics	P values	CI [LL-UL]	Result
H4a: TFL $\rightarrow$ RC $\rightarrow$ JE	0.36	6.19	0.000	0.252–0.476	Supported
H4b: TFL $\rightarrow$ RC $\rightarrow$ CB	0.384	7.276	0.000	0.285–0.488	Supported

### Discussion, Implications, & Limitations

This research aims to develop an understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee outcomes, such as championing behavior and job engagement, through the mediating effects of role clarity in the hospitality industry context. According to the conservation of resource theory, the relationships are supported. However, fulfilling the initial expectations, the results positively support the hypotheses. We have established that transformational leadership yields positive employee outcomes, and role clarity mediates the relationship, partially or entirely. The findings support that the prevalence of transformational leadership traits in their supervisors provides role clarity to the followers, thus leading to positive employee outcomes such as job engagement and championing behavior. Furthermore, the findings supported the mediating role of role clarity, positing that transformational leadership yields positive results through role clarity.

Our results are consistent with existing literature postulating the positive effects of transformational leadership in organizational settings. The findings reveal the direct impact of transformational leadership on job engagement. Hence, supporting the H1a of the study. It implies that the prevalence of transformational leadership traits within an organization will lead to positive outcomes such as employee job engagement. Transformational leadership traits such as intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspired motivation, and idealized influence provoke employees' sense of responsibility. They reciprocate the energy and attention the supervisor

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3 receives through better performance and effort. Therefore, they tend to be more engaged in their  
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5 jobs given the supervisory support. Studies have shown a positive impact of transformational  
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7 leadership on employee job engagement in the hospitality industry of Malaysia (Thisera and  
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9 Sewwandi, 2018), Bangladesh (Rabiul et al., 2021), and Spain (Buil et al., 2019). H1b  
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11 hypothesizes that given the positive influence of transformational leadership on employees, it  
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13 assumes that it leads to extra-role or innovative behavior, i.e., championing employee behavior.  
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15 However, the hypothesis is rejected since according to our findings from Pakistan's hospitality  
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17 sector of Pakistan no correlation is found.  
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22 We further imply that transformational leadership shall lead to role clarity through its  
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24 characteristics of consideration, influence, motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Followers that  
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26 receive individual consideration and support from their supervisor in case they feel lost at their job  
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28 feel motivated to do better. This also clarifies their job role to them since the transformational  
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30 leader inspects confusion and clarifies any ambiguities that may arise. Since transformational  
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32 leaders set clear boundaries and performance expectations, they are clear about expectations from  
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34 them. Therefore, the support and consideration provided by the leader aid in role clarity for the  
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36 employees.  
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41 Our findings also provide similar evidence regarding our hypothesis H2, which is  
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43 supported. To our researchers' knowledge, literature on the relationship between transformational  
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45 leadership and role clarity in hospitality is scarce. The literature shows a positive correlation  
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47 between transformational leadership and role clarity in the US hospitality industry (Tracey and  
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49 Hinkin, 1996) and social services context (Tafvelin, 2013). On the contrary, transformational  
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51 leadership correlates negatively with role ambiguity (Charoensukmongkol and Puyod, 2021,  
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53 MacKenzie et al., 2001, Lee and Low, 2016). This answers our research question and explains  
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3 why transformational leadership positively impacts role clarity. Hence, our research findings are  
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5 congruent with the existing literature and contribute by providing evidence of the positive  
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7 relationship.  
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10 The prevalence of role clarity about a job role inculcates an understanding of an employee.  
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12 Thus, it yields better clarity about the requirements and expectations. This leads to positive  
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14 employee outcomes such as job engagement and championing behavior. The results of our  
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16 research are consistent with and support the hypotheses; H3a and H3b. Employees are more  
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18 engaged when they have clarity about their work role, its importance, and its impact on the  
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20 organization's goals.  
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25 Moreover, employees tend to exhibit extra-role and innovative behaviors, such as  
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27 championing behavior, when they know their organizational responsibilities. Since role clarity  
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29 gives employees insights into the positive consequences of their actions and their impact on the  
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31 organization (Frögéli et al., 2019), they feel the responsibility the organization entrusts with them.  
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33 Therefore, they perform beyond expectations to yield greater results. Research has shown that role  
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35 clarity in employees leads to work engagement (De Villiers and Stander, 2011, Schaufeli, 2012),  
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37 consistent with our study's findings and support for H3a.  
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42 Since the conceptual similarities in literature are limited, there is less evidence about the  
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44 relationship between role clarity and championing behavior. However, correlations with  
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46 psychological empowerment (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017) invigorate employees' innovative  
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48 behaviors (Stanescu et al., 2020). Role clarity strongly predicts positive employee outcomes  
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50 (Schaufeli, 2012). Therefore, championing behavior being a positive employee behavior (Islam et  
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52 al., 2020a, Islam et al., 2020b, Islam et al., 2021) can be predicted by role clarity (Amyx et al.,  
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3 2014). Our findings are consistent with role clarity literature, given that it is a key predictor of  
4 employee outcomes (Chung et al., 2021, Nasurdin et al., 2014, Lee et al., 2015, Amyx et al., 2014).  
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8 The study's findings support hypotheses H4a and H4b. They imply that transformational  
9 leadership leads to role clarity through supportive behavior towards followers, which leads to  
10 positive employee behaviors. As per hypothesis H4a, job engagement follows through the partial  
11 mediation effects of role clarity. Therefore, transformational leadership, directly and indirectly,  
12 correlates with job engagement. However, championing behavior is yielded through the full  
13 mediation effects of role clarity because a significant direct relationship between transformational  
14 leadership and championing behavior has not been found in the study's results (H1b = rejected).  
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25 Since role clarity was termed a job resource according to COR theory (Hobfoll, 2011), it  
26 is estimated to lead to positive employee outcomes. Our research identifies that transformational  
27 leadership leads to positive employee outcomes due to various underlying mechanisms (Ng, 2017,  
28 Gui et al., 2020). Job resources such as task-related behavior mediated the relationship between  
29 transformational leadership and performance (Sobaih et al., 2022). Based on COR theory,  
30 transformational leaders use their resources to develop job resources, i.e., role clarity, for their  
31 followers. Therefore, in turn, leads to high performance by the followers, thus leading to positive  
32 employee behaviors. Studies show that transformational leadership correlations with positive  
33 behaviors are mediated mainly by a resource.  
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46 van Dierendonck et al. (2014) show there is job engagement when employees feel  
47 empowered by their leaders (i.e., *task-level* or *condition resources*). Islam et al. (2021) studied the  
48 outcome of championing behavior via trust in leader (i.e., *interpersonal-level resource* or *personal*  
49 *resource*). Stanescu et al. (2020) studied championing behavior as an outcome through  
50 empowerment (i.e., *task-level resource* or *condition resource*), and Faupel and Süß (2019) studied  
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3 it via valence (i.e., *job-level resource* or *personal resource*). Therefore, consistent with  
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5 transformational leadership literature, the findings of this study exhibit the mediating effect of role  
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7 clarity. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by providing evidence on resources (Hobfoll,  
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9 2002, Hobfoll et al., 2018b) being the underlying mechanism in the transformational leadership  
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11 and positive outcomes relationship.  
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15 Therefore, our research's findings stay consistent with previous literature findings and form  
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17 a relationship between transformational leadership and employee job engagement. Hence, this  
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19 research provides evidence and extends the current literature for future studies to verify or extend.  
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21 It has been indicated through the findings that the prevalence of TFL traits in their supervisors  
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23 provides role clarity to their followers, in turn leading to positive employee outcomes like  
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25 championing behavior and job engagement. Furthermore, the findings have supported the  
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27 mediating role of role clarity.  
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### 31 32 **Theoretical Implications**

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34 Our study delved into shedding light on important areas of TFL by highlighting its underlying  
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36 aspect. Firstly, the study contributes to the broader leadership literature by studying the  
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38 mechanisms of TFL. Our research also expands the hospitality literature (Namono et al., 2022,  
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40 Akron et al., 2020) and its specific significance in Pakistan (Awan and Jehanzeb, 2022). Secondly,  
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42 it contributes to HRM literature to improve HR practices, aiding decision-making and inculcating  
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44 TFL behaviors. HRM practices need improvement to achieve employee outcomes. Therefore, role  
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46 clarity is an essential underlying mechanism that positively enhances HR practices (Adil et al.,  
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48 2021). Thirdly, the relationships studied in this research of TFL, championing behavior, and job  
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50 engagement, with the mediation effects of role clarity, have not been studied before. Therefore,  
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3 we make a novel contribution to this specific area. The partial and full mediation effect of role  
4 clarity on relationships has not yet been explored. Again, therefore, we make a unique contribution.  
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8 Fourth, we employed COR theory to support the relationships between variables, extending  
9 the empirical support for this conceptual model. The theory also explained the mediation effects  
10 of role clarity. Moreover, the study expanded the scope of COR theory and provided insight into  
11 putting the resource perspective of the theory into use to support social relationships and  
12 mechanisms (Rahaman et al., 2022). Our research uses COR theory's corollaries and principles,  
13 paving the way for their utilization in future research. Lastly, the study provides evidence of the  
14 cruciality of TFL in the hospitality industry to encourage positive employee behavioral outcomes  
15 (Namono et al., 2022), highlighting the importance of the relationship between a leader and  
16 follower, thus contributing to this literature and paving the way for further research to study the  
17 underlying mechanisms leading to it.  
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### 31 32 **Managerial implications**

33 Organizations can and should make use of TFL characteristics in the management of people.  
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35 Firstly, they should recognize the importance of leadership style on employee behavior (Namono  
36 et al., 2022). Hospitality organizations can benefit from TFL characteristics since they lead to  
37 employee role clarity and positive outcomes like championing behavior and job engagement. The  
38 hospitality sector can benefit from managerial policies that enhance employee performance, and  
39 this research emphasizes the importance of transformational leadership characteristics.  
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49 To achieve these ends, organizations should include requirements for TFL characteristics  
50 in their recruitment and selection strategies (Hobfoll et al., 2018a). Doing so helps the organization  
51 employ individuals with supportive traits for supervisory or managerial positions (Ayub et al.,  
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3 2019). Organizations should provide relevant training to managers to impart TFL skills (Su et al.,  
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5 2020). Building effective relationships through TFL traits aids in reaping the benefits of positive  
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7 outcomes.  
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11 Secondly, role clarity strongly and positively impacts organizations since it predicts  
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13 positive employee behaviors and performance (Amyx et al., 2014). Organizations need to strive  
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15 for role clarity through TFL. Managers of organizations need to build positive relationships with  
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17 followers by practicing the four dimensions of TFL. They need to support employees and ensure  
18  
19 they know their responsibilities and expectations. Lastly, TFL, as a utilized and developed  
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21 resource, helps managers to maximize its benefit (i.e., role clarity developed by TFL) to convey  
22  
23 clearer responsibilities in complex roles. With support from leadership, employees shall perform  
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25 better to maximize the resources provided through greater engagement and championing new ways  
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27 to do their job.  
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### 32 **Limitations & Future Directions**

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35 This research is not free of limitations. The data collection was specific to a single industry, i.e.,  
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37 hospitality, and context, i.e., Pakistan. Therefore, future studies should be conducted in other  
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39 contexts or industries to maximize the generalizability of the results. Data was collected at one  
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41 point in time, making it a cross-sectional study design. In the future, researchers can employ  
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43 longitudinal or time-lag study designs to enhance the drawing of causal inferences. The study used  
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45 role clarity as a mediator alone. Future studies can add different mediators to the research and test  
46  
47 their effect on current relationships. Examples might include harmonious/obsessive passion (Udin  
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49 and Shaikh, 2022), prosocial motivation (Xu et al., 2022), knowledge sharing (Rafique et al.,  
50  
51 2022), or leadership support (Sürücü et al., 2022). This study only assessed a behavioral outcome  
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53 variable. In the future, scholars can study motivational or attitudinal outcomes. Our study did not  
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3 include a moderating variable. Future studies can consist of a moderating variable to test its effect  
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5 on the model like followers' motives (Kehr et al., 2022), leadership support (Sürücü et al., 2022),  
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7 or knowledge sharing (Rafique et al., 2022).  
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