# INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF DIVERGENT LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE IN IT SECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

Leadership approaches have garnered considerable attention within a competitive business landscape. It has become a prominent aspect of standardizing human resources management strategies. An organization can potentially realize its vision if there is a relevant and clearly defined process to guide leadership activities. Studies also suggest that leadership style serves as a strong guiding factor for employee job performance. The primary aim of this research is to explore the practices associated with various leadership styles (Transactional, Transformational, and Servant) that impact employee job performance. To achieve this objective, a purposive sample of 118 employees from the Information technology companies in Chandigarh was selected for primary data collection, utilizing a self-administered questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis involved descriptive statistics, inferential techniques, correlation analysis, regression, and ANOVA, conducted with SPSS version 20.0. The findings indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between leadership styles and employee job performance, with most styles notably influencing employee output and servant leadership that might be less relevant or effective in this particular context particularly within IT sector of Chandigarh.

**Keywords**: Leadership styles, HR management, Employee Job Performance, Information technology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is regarded as a vital factor in enhancing the overall productivity of any organization. To guide employees toward achieving optimal performance, effective leadership is essential. Leadership refers to an individual's ability to influence others through personal impact. This influence facilitates the accomplishment of objectives that align with the organization's overarching vision. The origin of influence stems from personality traits, which in turn foster a sense of belongingness, connection and solidarity which helps to direct individuals or groups towards success (Bass, 1981).

Management experts such as Thompson et al. (2006) and Ivansevich (2008) also define leadership as the capacity and quality to sway individuals or teams to attain goals established by the leader. We believe that leadership is an art that guides employees toward a broader perspective of their performance aims. Leadership entails cultivating loyalty, obedience, and maximum cooperation among team members. It occupies a space of "everything" and "nothing." It is considered everything because it exists universally across contexts, and it is not confined solely to top-level management.

Every person's behavior exhibits elements of leadership, as leadership is primarily demonstrated through actions. A professional leadership style forms the core of human resource management, harnessing and unlocking the potential of people at work.

Leadership styles have gained increasing prominence within business organizations. They have evolved into a vital aspect of human resources management (HRM) aimed at enhancing employee job performance. It is a contemporary term that challenges traditional methods of management and delegation, and also encompasses a psychological dimension (Banaji & Prentice, 1994).

In many organizations, a substantial number of employees occupy mid-level positions, yet the number of individuals capable of leading and influencing others remains relatively low. Moreover, leadership styles vary depending on individual traits, roles, and organizational culture. Leadership styles have become a strategic competitive advantage aligned with the development and implementation of HRM strategies. They focus on key aspects of human resource development to ensure proper placement and succession planning within business functions.

Recently, leadership development has become a crucial concern in India among business owners, managers, and stakeholders, with the goal of realizing organizational visions. The industry's expansion every year adds more human resources to the workforce. To sustain growth and maintain industry competitiveness, efficient human resources are essential. The emerging trend involves a new influx of graduates with solid academic backgrounds, trained knowledge, and job-specific skills, contributing to a highly committed workforce in the industry. Employer expectations have also risen accordingly.

This study is a comprehensive effort to understand the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. To the best of the author's knowledge, no similar research has been conducted in this context prior to this study. The primary purpose is to analyze and identify how different leadership styles influence employee job performance in Chandigarh IT sector. Accordingly, the following objectives have been formulated.

1. To explore the relationship between leadership styles and employee job performance.
2. To assess the effect of various leadership styles on employee job performance.
3. To provide recommendations with potential policy implications.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on leadership practices within the context of Chandigarh city remains limited, although a considerable body of literature exists on this topic. Notably, many scholars have shown interest in exploring how leadership influences various organizational outcomes, driven by the widespread belief that leadership significantly impacts employee job performance (Rowe, 2001). Several researchers have investigated the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance (Paracha et al., 2012; McMurray et al., 2012; Yiing & Ahmad, 2008). Effectiveness of leadership in enhancing employee job performance is often considered context-dependent rather than attribute-specific (Northouse, 2010). Proactive leaders tend to regard employees as vital assets, involving them in decision-making processes, which fosters a strong relationship between leadership style, employee performance, and job satisfaction (Wang & Rode, 2010). Delegating authority is also recognized as a critical leadership tool that promotes high morale, creative exploration at work, and stronger leader-follower relationships (Al-Matouh, 2003; Schriesheim et al., 2008). However, this research did not specifically address which leadership style facilitate effective delegation. It is clear that different leadership styles, and their acceptability levels, influence employee job performance extensively. Nonetheless, there is a prevalent perception that leadership generally enhances organizational employee performance (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

The prevailing literature categorizes leadership styles mainly into Transactional Leadership Style , Transformational Leadership Style and Servant Leadership Style which form the core focus of this research. Transactional leadership is a leadership style that focuses on clear structures, reward and punishment systems, and goal-oriented tasks to motivate followers and ensure organizational objectives are met (Bass, 1985). It emphasizes the exchange process between leaders and followers, where compliance and performance are reinforced through incentives or disciplinary actions. Studies also suggest that positive consideration of employee opinions and openness in communication under transactional leadership positively impact job performance (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2013; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). Additionally, transactional leadership is linked with increased employee commitment and improved job performance (Mahdi, Mohd, & Almsafir, 2014).

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that inspires and motivates followers to exceed expectations by fostering a vision, encouraging innovation, and emphasizing personal development and commitment to organizational goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It seeks to create positive change by influencing followers' values, beliefs, and attitudes. Transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on employee job performance by inspiring employees, fostering higher levels of motivation, commitment, and innovation, which ultimately enhances their performance outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bono & Judge, 2003).

Servant leadership is a leadership style that prioritizes serving others, focusing on the growth, well-being, and development of employees and followers. Leaders act as servants first, emphasizing empathy, stewardship, and a commitment to others' needs, which fosters trust and positive organizational culture (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leadership positively influences employee job performance by fostering a supportive and trust-based environment, enhancing employee engagement, motivation, and commitment, which collectively lead to improved performance outcomes (Liden et al., 2014; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Numerous studies have explored the influence of leadership on both individual and organizational performance across various contexts, indicating that this is a well-established research area (Fleishman & Harris, 1998; Mehra et al., 2006). However, scholars continue to debate the degree to which different leadership styles impact performance and the strength of these relationships.

In summary, existing literature confirms that various leadership styles are practiced worldwide and have direct and indirect impacts on employee performance, which in turn affects overall organizational productivity. Although leadership is a prominent focus within Chandigarh IT sector management research, current studies remain scarce and limited. This research aims to examine the influence of leadership styles and their relationship with employee performance specifically within Chandigarh IT industry. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights for stakeholders and help refine leadership strategies to enhance employee performance.

## 2.1 LEADERSHIP

Leadership has been metaphorically described as akin to an elusive abominable snowman, whose footprints are often evident but whose actual presence cannot be observed (Bennis & Nanus, 1986). It is considered an art of guiding human behaviour, serving as a means to enhance employee job performance through external influence. Robbins (2006) defines leadership as the ability to influence a group to achieve specific objectives set by the leader. This conceptualization highlights two main characteristics: first, that leadership is a

process—aimed at influencing others; second, that it typically occurs within groups, involving collaboration toward common goals and purposes.

Furthermore, Northouse (2010) and G. A. Yukl (1998) describe leadership as a set of activities that induce others to understand what needs to be done and how to accomplish it, whether individually or collectively (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). They characterize leadership as a social process in which a leader seeks voluntary participation from subordinates to attain organizational objectives.

## 2.2 EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE

Employee job performance refers to the level of work successfully accomplished by an employee. In the existing literature, employee performance is often used interchangeably with job performance, viewed as an "abstract and latent construct" (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993) define job performance as "observable actions that individuals perform, which are relevant to achieving the organization's goals" (p. 314). Similarly, Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) describe job performance as "the measurable behaviors and outcomes that employees engage in or produce, which are linked to and contribute toward organizational objectives." Motowidlo and Kell (2012) characterize job performance as "the total expected value of an individual's discrete behavioral episodes over a specified period" (Saks & Gruman, 2011). Conway and Monks (2008) combine employee and job performance, defining it as "the extent to which an individual fulfills the duties required to maintain a specific role within an organization," while Armstrong (2006) describes it as "the achievement or execution of tasks, activities, or responsibilities ordered or undertaken.

## 3. RESEARCH GAP

Most existing research primarily concentrates on various dimensions and practices related to individual and organizational performance, including job satisfaction, employee turnover, personality traits, and other factors across different countries and industries. However, studies focusing specifically on servant leadership styles remain limited, despite the presence of research on transactional and transformational leadership from contemporary perspectives. This current study uniquely emphasizes the impact of servant leadership on employee job performance, positioning it as a new area of theoretical contribution. Additionally, this research examines three leadership styles within the context of the Information technology sector, thereby addressing contextual gaps related to country and industry specifics.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Kothari (2004) states that sampling can yield more accurate results when surveys are conducted by experienced and skilled investigators, using a representative sample size. The population for this study encompasses the IT industry in Chandigarh. Accordingly, a sample of 118 employees from three Chandigarh's IT companies was selected through non-probabilistic purposive sampling. Ultimately, a valid sample size of 118 employees was considered for analysis. The selected companies were Tech Mahindra, IDS Infotech and GrayCell Technologies.

### 4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE AND MEASUREMENT DRIVERS

The questionnaire was developed based on established literature relating to leadership styles and employee job performance. It consists of two sections: the first gathers demographic information, while the second addresses the scope of the research.

A self-administered questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), along with yes/no response options, was employed. The respondents included department heads, assistant managers, management team members, and junior-level staff, all of whom provided insights on leadership styles. Additionally, focused group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with mid-level managers and team leaders to gather qualitative input.

The questionnaire was distributed through in-person contact and email. Out of 130 questionnaires sent, 118 were returned, reflecting a response rate of 91%.

## 4.3 DATA COLLECTON AND ANALYSIS

Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources during the period from August 2024 to December 2024. A total of 12 questionnaires were discarded as they did not align with the relevance of the analysis. The data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, regression tests, and Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients were computed to interpret the results.

## 5. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND VARIABLES

Dependent Variable (DV): The employee job performance

Independent Variable (IV): Transactional leadership style, Transformational leadership style, Servant leadership style.
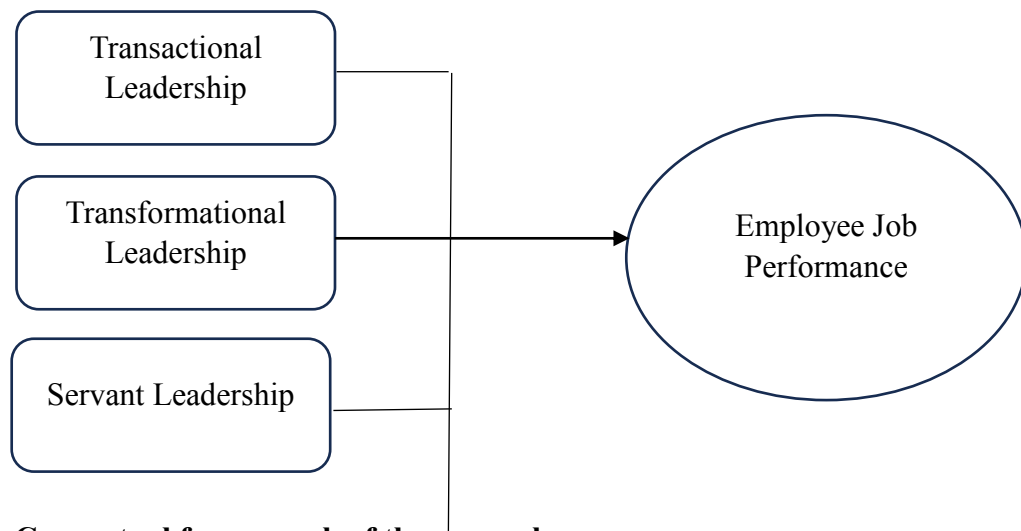


**Figure1 : Conceptual frame work of the research**

## 6. ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND FINDINGS

### 6.1 Analyses of Demographic statistics

**Table 1 : Gender of Respondents**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 77 | 65 |
| Female | 41 | 35 |
| Total | 118 | 100 |

Table 1 display gender distribution of the respondents. It shows that 65% and 35% of respondents were male and female respectively and answered the questionnaires distributed.

## Table 2 : Age of Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|-----------|------------|
| 25-30 | 45 | 38 |
| 30-35 | 21 | 18 |
| 35-40 | 30 | 25 |
| 40-45 | 15 | 13 |
| 45-50 | 07 | 06 |
| Total | 118 | 100 |

In table 2 it is described that 20-29 year group constituted 38% of respondents and was the highest number of respondents, followed by 40-49 years with 25% and then 30-39 year group which made up 18% of the respondents. The lowest number of respondents was within the 60-69 year group, which constituted 6%. From the pattern that emerged, it can be said that the majority of employees are young adults

## Table 3 : Length of Services

| No. of years | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 1-5 | 58 | 49 |
| 6-10 | 15 | 13 |
| 11-15 | 26 | 22 |
| 16-20 | 19 | 16 |
| Total | 118 | 100 |

In table 3, the length of services of respondents was provided. According to respondents, their length of stay in the organization ranged from a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 20 years. 49 respondents making up 58% of the total has been in the service of the organization between 1-5 years. From table 3 above the majority of the respondents fell between the 1-10 years range forming a total of 62%. The rest of the respondents are under the category of 11-20 years

## Table 4 : Positions of Respondents

| No. of years | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Manager | 32 | 27 |
| Assistant Manager | 19 | 16 |
| Division Head | 14 | 12 |
| Officer | 53 | 45 |
| Total | 118 | 100 |

Table 4 depicts the position of respondents. It indicates that 27% of respondents were managers. However, the majority of respondents under in the officer/executive grade making up 45% of the respondents and remaining are Assistant manager, division head making up 28%.

### 6.2 Variable mean

## Table 5 : Descriptive Statistics

| Leadership Styles | N | Mean | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----|------|------------|
| Transactional | 118 | 4.13 | 0.89 |
| Transformational | 118 | 4.23 | 0.93 |
| Servant | 118 | 3.38 | 1.04 |

National Research Journal of Human Resource Management
Volume No: 12, Issue No: 1, Year: 2025 (January-June)
PP: 49-60

ISSN No: 2349-059X
Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal (IF: 7.25)
Journal Website www.nrjhrm.in

| Employee Job Performance | 118 | 4.35 | 0.97 |
|---|---|---|---|

Table 5 explained the descriptive statistics about leadership styles and employee job performance. Here the total respondents are 118 and the mean and standard deviation of employee job performance are 4.35 and .97 as well as the mean and standard deviation of Transactional leadership, Transformational leadership and Servant leadership are 4.13 and .89, 4.23 and .93, 3.38 and 1.04 respectively.

## 6.3 Reliability

**Table : 6 Reliability**

| Leadership Styles | Alpha | No. of Items |
|---|---|---|
| Transactional | .876 | 4 |
| Transformational | .866 | 4 |
| Servant | .738 | 4 |
| Employee Performance | .798 | 4 |
| Total | .755 | 16 |

Cronbach's coefficient alpha used to analyze the internal uniformity of variables. Generally, alpha value 0.60 is acceptable in early stages. When Cronbach's alpha value is more than 0.70 which representing higher internal consistency. When the value is less than 0.35, the data is considered as a lack of reliability and should be eliminated (Nunnally, J., 1978 & Guilford, J.P., 1965). We found that Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.70 in this study, which indicate that the questionnaire used in this study had strong internal reliability

## 6.4 Correlation

**Table: 7 Calculation of Correlations between leadership style and employee job performance**

|  |  | Transactional | Transformational | Servant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Performance | Pearson Correlation | .654** | .801** | .428** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 |
|  | N | 118 | 118 | 118 |

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

The table displays the results of the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationships between three leadership styles—Transactional, Transformational, and Servant—and employee performance, based on a sample of 118 participants. The findings reveal that Transformational leadership has the strongest positive correlation with employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.801, indicating a very strong association; as transformational leadership increases, employee performance tends to improve significantly. Transactional leadership also shows a positive relationship with performance, with a correlation coefficient of 0.654, suggesting a substantial but somewhat weaker link compared to transformational leadership. Servant leadership has a moderate positive correlation of 0.428 with employee performance, indicating a positive but less pronounced relationship. All these correlations are statistically significant at p < 0.001, suggesting that the observed relationships are highly unlikely to be due to chance. Overall, these results imply that transformational leadership may be the most effective style for enhancing employee performance, followed by transactional and then servant leadership.

### 6.5 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is a robust statistical technique that models the relationship between one dependent variable and multiple independent variables. In this research, the primary aim is to determine the degree and nature of the relationship between different leadership styles and employee job performance within organizations. By applying regression analysis, the study seeks to quantify how various leadership approaches influence employee performance levels and to identify which leadership styles have the most significant impact.

**Table 8: Model Summary**

| Model | R | R square | Adjusted R Square | Std Error of the estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .867 | .751 | .745 | .49166 | 2.231 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional, Transformational, Servant

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Job Performance

According to Table 8, the value of R is 0.867, indicating a strong relationship between the variables. The R-squared value is 0.751, suggesting that the model explains approximately 75.1% of the variability in employee job performance within the sampled IT companies. The adjusted R-squared, at 0.745, is very close to the R-squared value, which confirms that the model appropriately accounts for the variation in the dependent variable through the independent variables, thereby demonstrating a good model fit.

This indicates a linear relationship between the dependent variable (employee job performance) and the independent variables (Transactional Leadership Style, Transformational Leadership Style, and Servant Leadership Style). Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.31, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, suggesting that the assumption of independence of error terms is not violated. This also indicates the absence of multicollinearity among the variables.

**Table 9: ANOVA**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Regression | 83.146 | 3 | 27.715 | 114.653 |
| | Residual | 27.558 | 114 | 0.242 | |
| | Total | 110.704 | 117 | | |

In this study, the calculated F-value is 114.653, which is much higher than the critical tabulated value of 2.68 at a significance level of α = 0.05 with the appropriate degrees of freedom. This indicates that the overall model is statistically significant. From these results, it can be concluded that leadership styles have a significant association and influence on the overall employee job performance within organizations.

**Table 10:  Co-efficients**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 | (Constant) | .243 | .351 | | .691 | .491 | .453 | .939 |

National Research Journal of Human Resource Management
Volume No: 12, Issue No: 1, Year: 2025 (January-June)
PP: 49-60

ISSN No: 2349-059X
Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal (IF: 7.25)
Journal Website www.nrjhrm.in

| . | Transactional | .379 | .058 | .348 | 6.533 | .000 | .264 | .439 |
| | Transformational | .630 | .057 | .605 | 10.968 | .000 | .516 | .744 |
| | Servant | .084 | .047 | .090 | 1.761 | .081 | .178 | .010 |

The regression analysis indicates that both transactional and transformational leadership styles have a significant positive impact on employee job performance. Specifically, transformational leadership exhibits the strongest influence, with a coefficient of 0.630, meaning that increases in transformational leadership are associated with notable improvements in employee performance. Its high t-value of 10.968 and p-value of 0.000 confirm its statistical significance, suggesting that transformational leaders effectively motivate and inspire employees, leading to better performance outcomes. Transactional leadership also positively affects employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.379 and a highly significant p-value of 0.000, indicating that clear structures of rewards and punishments can enhance employee productivity. Servant leadership also shows a positive relationship with performance as well, but its effect is weaker and only marginally significant with a p-value of 0.081. This suggests that while servant leadership may contribute to performance improvements, its impact is less pronounced and requires further investigation to confirm its significance within this context. Overall, the findings highlight the critical role of leadership styles—particularly transformational and transactional—in driving employee performance in organizations.

## 6.6 Findings of the Study

This study suggests that leadership styles, particularly transformational and transactional leadership, have a significant impact on employee job performance within the IT industry in Chandigarh. Transformational leadership appears to be the most influential style, followed by transactional leadership. While servant leadership showed a positive correlation, it was not a significant predictor of employee performance in the regression analysis.

The findings imply that organizations in this sector should prioritize developing transformational and transactional leadership skills among their managers to enhance employee productivity and overall performance. Further research could explore the specific aspects of servant leadership that might be less relevant or effective in this particular context.

## 6.7 Recommendations

Organizations should prioritize leadership development by instituting structured programs that focus on enhancing both transformational and transactional leadership skills among managers. Integrating leadership-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) into performance management systems can help track and encourage these skills. Additionally, during recruitment and promotion processes, it's crucial to assess candidates for their potential in transformational and transactional leadership. Cultivating a culture that supports transformational leadership is also important; this includes fostering open communication, collaboration, and employee empowerment within the organization. To further understand leadership dynamics, additional research should be conducted on the effectiveness of servant leadership within the specific organizational context. Finally, promoting adaptive leadership is essential, encouraging a balanced and flexible approach that includes ongoing coaching and feedback to continually develop leaders.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Elaborating on the conclusion, this study robustly demonstrates the significant impact of leadership styles on employee job performance in Chandigarh's dynamic  IT sector.

Specifically, the findings highlight that transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, motivation, and vision-setting, wields the strongest positive influence on employee productivity. Transactional leadership, emphasizing clear expectations, rewards, and corrective actions, also plays a crucial role in driving performance.

These findings carry considerable implications for organizational practices. They strongly suggest that companies in this sector should strategically invest in cultivating these leadership competencies through targeted training and development programs. Such initiatives should equip managers with the skills to not only inspire their teams but also to establish clear performance expectations and provide constructive feedback.

However, the study also reveals that servant leadership, which prioritizes serving the needs of employees, has a less significant impact on job performance in this specific context. This suggests that while a focus on employee well-being is undoubtedly important, it may not directly translate into increased productivity in this particular sector. Further research is needed to explore the nuances of servant leadership and to identify the contextual factors that may influence its effectiveness.

In summary, this research provides valuable insights for organizations in IT industry of Chandigarh. By prioritizing the development of transformational and transactional leadership skills, fostering a transformational organizational culture, and continuously seeking to understand the impact of different leadership styles, companies can create a more conducive work environment that drives improved employee performance and ultimately contributes to organizational success

## 8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, while insightful, possesses several limitations that suggest avenues for future research. The limited sample size and reliance on purposive sampling restrict the generalizability of findings to the entire IT sector of Chandigarh. The cross-sectional design prevents definitive conclusions about causality between leadership styles and employee performance, and the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential social desirability bias. The focus on transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles overlooks other potentially relevant styles. Additionally, the context-specificity of the study warrants caution when extrapolating results to different cultures or industries, and the analysis could benefit from a more thorough exploration of demographic factors. To overcome these limitations, future research should employ larger, random samples and longitudinal designs, incorporate objective performance measures, explore a broader range of leadership styles, and investigate moderating demographic effects. Qualitative methods could enhance the understanding of key drivers, while research into mediating mechanisms would further elucidate how leadership styles impact employee performance.

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