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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEM ON HOTEL ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN BANGKOK

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the mediating function of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance within Bangkok's luxury hotel sector. This research empirically examines the role of HPWS as a transmission mechanism within a distinctive cultural context frequently neglected in prevailing Western-centric models, thereby addressing a significant gap in the literature. A mixed-methods approach was utilized for thorough investigation. Data collection was conducted in the quantitative stage through a reliable, self-administered survey (Cronbach's alpha = 0.940) of the top management of a large sample of five-star hotels. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The qualitative research involved detailed interviews with 30 hotel managers, and the data underwent thematic analysis using the ATLAS.ti software to provide deep contextualized information. The results indicated a clear and significant mediated path. Transformational leadership showed a significant positive direct effect on the implementation of HPWS ($\beta = 0.38, p < .01$) but did not have a significant direct effect on organizational performance. Instead, HPWS had a fully moderate effect on this relationship, indicating a significant direct impact on performance ($\beta = 0.55, p < .01$). Overall, the impact of transformational leadership on performance was significant ($\beta = 0.209, p < .01$), and it was mediated by HPWS. The overall model was a good fit and explained 32.5 percent of the variance in the performance of the organizations ($R^2 = 0.325$), a significant amount given the complexity of the service industry. These findings were supported by the qualitative data obtained from interviews with the executives, analyzed with the help of ATLAS.ti. Leadership commitment was identified as the core element for successful implementation of HPWS. Participants emphasized the need to carefully adapt HPWS to the unique socio-cultural environment of Thailand, particularly emphasizing collectivist values and respect for authority as essential for effectiveness. Challenges associated with implementation were also detected, such as resource limitations in smaller properties. Employee involvement in decision-making and training was regarded as important success factors. The research points out that the positive effects of transformational leadership on the performance of hotels in Bangkok are indirect and can only be mediated by the strategic model of a High-Performance Work System (HPWS). Though transformational leaders are inspirational and motivational, achievable implementation of

HPWS, such as a stringent selection process, extensive training, payment based on performance, and employee participation, is the real deal. The results of this structural change are real improvements in the quality of services, efficiency in operations, and increased performance of the whole company. This will provide managers with a fact-based strategy: in order to achieve a long-term competitive advantage, they have to learn transformational leadership and invest in a culturally sensitive HPWS.

KEYWORDS: Transformational Leadership, High-Performance Work Systems, Organizational Performance, Hospitality Industry, Bangkok, Mediation Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hotel business in Bangkok has an active tourist business and healthy competition. This industry requires effective leadership to enhance the performance of the organization and ensure long-term success in the long run. Transformational leadership, which is defined by the fact that it focuses on influencing and encouraging the followers to exceed the expectations, is also identified as a driving factor in boosting employee engagement and improving organizational performance under different settings, and the hospitality industry is not an exception (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023; Bakhtiar & Murshid, 2023). Although the benefits of transformational leadership are acknowledged, there is a lack of understanding regarding its interplay with High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) in influencing hotel performance within a dynamic environment, particularly in Bangkok (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2022; Ali et al., 2023). The research challenge explicitly addresses the lack of empirical evidence elucidating the mediating role of HPWS in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance metrics within the hotel industry. This study aims to clarify the function of HPWS as a conduit via which transformational leadership techniques improve performance outcomes, therefore filling a notable need in current literature and practical implementations (Padamata & Lee, 2023; Aboramadan et al., 2023).

The focus on transformational leadership by scholars and professionals is warranted due to its significant impact (Scott-Cawiezell et al., 2004). Finding the correct leader is vital because the service industry has evolved a lot (Schwartz et al., 2002). Medley and Larochelle (1995) say that leadership and organizational culture are very strongly related. To improve productivity, employee relationships, and satisfaction, leaders need to be flexible, value creativity and new ideas, demonstrate care and respect for their staff, and build trust and integrity (Schwartz et al., 2002). People think that these two things are significant for how effectively the organization does (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Researchers have developed conceptual frameworks to analyze the impact of both aspects on organizational performance, namely the relationship between high-performance work systems and leadership (Schimmoeller, 2006). They have also begun to investigate the styles of leadership that align with high-performance work systems, along with the cumulative effect of both aspects on organizational performance. The study will facilitate the understanding of the relationship between the

two criteria and organizational success. Nonetheless, empirical study on this topic is limited (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), especially within the service, government, university, and non-profit sectors (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Schimmoeller, 2006). It will be vital for the advancement of academic knowledge, beneficial for the improvement of hotel performance, and important in establishing a competitive edge if these two elements can be analyzed together to forecast organizational success.

Considering the theoretical aspects of the resource-based approach, especially with a high-performance work system, there remain considerable gaps that require investigation, as a high-performance work system does not directly influence organizational performance. The impact of a high-performance work structure on organizational performance remains uncertain (Delaney & Huselid, 1996). There is a big hole in our knowledge regarding how human resource management affects the success of a business. This is called the "black box" of HRM. Consequently, academics are increasingly focused on examining the factors that connect high-performance work systems with successful organizational performance (Takeuchi et al., 2007). The findings align with Delery and Shaw's (2001) research, which posits that knowledge, skill, ability, and motivation serve as foundational elements linking the human resource management system to labor productivity (Boxall & Purcell, 2022). These studies also indicate that a high-performance work system affects employee performance via the following mechanisms: ability, motivation, and work opportunity. Human capital is likely to be a link between the high-performance work system and how well the hotel runs. To be successful and go ahead of the competition, companies use high-performance work systems (HPWS) to hire, train, and maintain their culture. There is still a lot that isn't known, studied, or understood about HPWS and how these systems effect hotel performance in Thailand. We really need to do more research in this area. The hotel industry in Thailand also has problems with managing its people, such as low pay, unsafe working conditions, and not enough staff to meet the needs of the workload (Krisada, 2006, p. 52).

Recent research on hotel performance, high-performance work systems (HPWS), and transformational leadership predominantly emphasizes discrete concerns or dichotomous linkages instead of holistic models. The cumulative influence of these variables on organizational outcomes is inadequately researched. Many scholars have investigated management strategies based on

research conducted on large organizations and have provided general analyses of Bangkok's hotel industry; however, no one has adequately elucidated the intricate relationships among factors influencing service enterprises (Jones & Tilley, 2003, p. 258). The researcher asserts that, given the significant role of service enterprises in Thailand's economic growth, it is imperative to conduct additional exploration into the factors influencing their performance. Consequently, the hotel industry must aim at creating effective methods of handling its human resources (Casey, 1996, p. 5). In addition, the Thai hotel industry requires managers who are able to deal with changeable conditions. Most business leaders have failed to manage their organizations effectively due to a lack of skills in managing business, unwillingness to embrace changes in marketing, lack of sufficient knowledge, or being not well-versed with technology, despite operating in market-driven environments (Mosia & Veldsman, 2004).

The study holds utmost significance because it forms the fundamental base for understanding the relationship between leadership styles and standardized HR processes in achieving outstanding performance results. The research will contribute to the development of existing knowledge about transformational leadership and HRM practices by elucidating the mediating influence of HPWS (Sutanto and Kurniawan, 2023, pp. 819-842; Mahdy and Alshaar, 2023, p. 4866). It provides hotel managers in Bangkok and other markets with valuable information that they can refer to in order to create more resilient teams and businesses in the face of industry challenges (Alismail, 2023, pp. 116-151; Al-Ghazali and Afsar, 2021). The study aims to enhance the performance of a hotel and address the urgent need for sustainable organizational practices in a rapidly evolving market environment.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate and exemplify the model of transformational leadership, and the mediating role of high-performance work system on hotel organizational performance in Bangkok; and
2. To develop the causal model of transformational leadership, high performance work system and hotel organizational performance in Bangkok.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. The Interplay of Leadership and Systems in A Competitive Market

To be successful in a global market that is ever

more competitive, firms need to be able to come up with new ideas and keep their standards high. This is especially true in the hospitality business, where the quality of service has a direct effect on how satisfied and loyal consumers are (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023). Hotels in Bangkok are the main part of Thailand's tourism economy; thus, they need to modify how they conduct their operations to stay in business. Transformational leadership, which tries to get workers to do more than what is required of them, has been recognized as a key aspect of this effort. This type of leadership makes a strong connection between the organization's goals and how involved its people are. It also helps create a culture that is open to new ideas and can handle problems that come up from outside the company (Padamata & Lee, 2023). In an industry where employees come and go often and there are many various sorts of workers, its focus on a common vision and professional growth is extremely crucial.

The leadership and its impact on performance are not black and white. Recent scholarly research has discovered that High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) are an important moderating variable. HPWS is a complete set of human resource practices intended to help individuals become more skilled at their work, remain motivated, and have greater opportunities. Some of these practices include strict hiring, effective training, performance-based pay, and allowing employees to express their opinions (Kloutsiniotis and Mihail, 2022). It has been found that transformational leadership greatly increases the use of these systems, which in turn provides a framework that enhances the positive effects of leadership on organizational performance (Aboramadan et al., 2023). The presence of a powerful HPWS can increase employee motivation and commitment, leading to actual improvements in service performance and customer satisfaction in the competitive hotel business in Bangkok (Bakhtiar & Murshid, 2023).

3.2. Bridging The Theoretical and Contextual Gap

While many studies have examined transformational leadership and high-performance work systems separately, there is a significant gap in understanding how they interact in the context of Bangkok hotels. The existing body of knowledge is extensive but primarily focused on Western contexts, and the theoretical frameworks may not be as relevant in Thailand due to cultural differences in hierarchy, teamwork, and leadership (Ali et al., 2023; Rózycka, 2023). This underscores the importance of

empirical research that not only supports these theoretical connections but also evaluates their applicability and effectiveness in diverse cultural settings.

The Thai setting presents complexities that necessitate a customized strategy. Just copying Western models won't work; to adopt HPWS, you need a plan that takes into account the local social and cultural dynamics (Riaz & Farooq, 2024). Although the overarching advantages of employee empowerment for service quality are well-documented, the particular methods and results within Bangkok's unique hospitality sector have garnered very limited academic scrutiny (Karaka & Öztüren, 2023, pp. 416-425). This gap underscores the "black box" of HRM—the necessity to elucidate the exact components and contextual variables that connect strategic HR investments to organizational success.

3.3. Synthesis And Consequences for Research and Practice

This literature review integrates previous studies to build a paradigm that identifies HPWS as the essential mediator between transformational leadership and hotel organizational performance in Bangkok. It fills a glaring gap in the present corpus of knowledge by looking at these things together instead of separately. The review illustrates that evidence-based leadership, when implemented via a culturally-aligned HPWS, can enhance organizational performance (Smollan & Parry, 2023, pp. 218-237). Recognizing the distinctive characteristics of Thai culture, including its collectivist orientation and deference to authority, is essential for tailoring these models to achieve optimal effectiveness and relevance (Kini & Subramaniam, 2024, pp. 9-27; Alshaar et al., 2023, pp. 206-220).

The convergence of transformative leadership with high-performance work methods possesses significant ramifications. Theoretically, it enhances leadership and Resource-Based View (RBV) theories by clarifying the mediating mechanisms that convert leadership potential into a persistent competitive advantage. In practical terms, it gives hotel managers in Bangkok a plan they can use to build strong, high-performing businesses. By strategically aligning leadership behavior with systematic HR practices, managers can cultivate a more engaged, skilled, and service-oriented workforce capable of excelling in a dynamic market (Naldi & Piccoli, 2024; Afonso & González-de-la-Rosa, 2024, p. 3226).

Nonetheless, deficiencies in the existing literature

must be recognized. The discipline is marked by a prevalence of either qualitative or quantitative studies, with a deficiency of mixed-methods research that could yield a more comprehensive knowledge of these intricate relationships (Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2024; Mahdy & Alshaar, 2023, p. 4866). Moreover, the dependence on cross-sectional data constrains understanding of the long-term, evolutionary effects of these variables. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to assess the enduring effects of transformative leadership on employee engagement and performance within the distinctive cultural setting of Bangkok. Examining the impact of demographic characteristics and the precise elements of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) that serve as effective mediators will provide significant insights for both academics and practitioners, thereby facilitating the optimization of human capital management within this crucial industry.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to learn more about the phenomena under study, this study gathered material from a variety of sources, including relevant documents and interviews (Maxwell, 2013). This is how the study was carried out.

4.1. Population And Sample

The research concentrated on upscale service hotels in Bangkok, Thailand, encompassing a total population of 416 hotels. The target respondents comprised hotel executives, including senior managers and leaders actively engaged in organizational performance and human resource strategies. The research utilized a purposive sample method to identify participants who fulfilled particular criteria. Additionally, snowball sampling was utilized to enhance the sample by requesting initial participants to recommend other suitable peers. The final sample consisted of 30 hotel executives for qualitative interviews and 416 companies for quantitative analysis to guarantee robustness in Structural Equation Modeling.

4.2. Sample Size Determination

This study utilizes a multi-stage sampling methodology, culminating in a final sample size of 416 organizations. The process of choosing goes like this:

4.3. Determining Sample Size for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The study followed established methodological guidelines to make sure that the SEM analysis was

strong. Bollen (1989) stresses that the sample size must consider the number of free parameters estimates, pointing out that more parameters mean bigger samples. In line with the suggestions of Lindeman et al. (1980) and Weiss (1972), a ratio of 20 sample units for each measurable variable was used. Because the research model has 10 measurable variables, at least 200 hotels were needed to get reliable estimates of the parameters and test the hypotheses.

The researcher, however, changed the sample size because they thought there might be problems like low response rates or surveys that weren't finished. The minimum sample size for a population of 416 organizations with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level was found to be 200 organizations using Wanitchbancha's (2008) method. To accommodate an expected 40% non-response rate, the final sample size was augmented to 335 organizations to guarantee adequate data for SEM analysis. The final quantitative sample consisted of 416 organizations, achieving a 100% response rate and surpassing the calculated minimum requirement.

4.4. Sample Selection Criteria

To guarantee the study's validity and relevance, the choice of high-range service hotels in Bangkok followed a strict set of criteria that were directly related to the research goals. These criteria were meant to find organizations that had well-defined operational structures, leaders who were actively involved in performance management, and a history of meeting high service standards. This way, the sample would be uniform and suitable for studying transformational leadership and High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS).

4.5. Hotel Classification and Tier

The research focused solely on hotels officially designated as five-star establishments. This criterion was necessary to identify the specified 'high-range service' segment of Bangkok's hospitality industry, guaranteeing a uniform standard of service quality, guest expectations, and organizational complexity required for the analysis of structured HPWS and leadership practices.

4.6. Geographical Focus

The geographical scope was intentionally confined to hotels functioning within the Bangkok metropolitan area. This restriction managed irrelevant regional discrepancies in management practices, labor market conditions, and competitive

dynamics, facilitating an accurate analysis within a unified urban economic framework.

4.7. Participant Profile and Expertise

The individuals that were interested in responding had to be in senior-level positions with strategic oversight. This included General Managers, Directors of Human Resources, and heads of important operational departments like Food and Beverage and Rooms Division. It was important to focus on these key informants because they were directly involved in making strategic decisions, developing employees, and improving the performance of the organization, the main areas that the study's main variables affected.

4.8. Organizational Size and Maturity

The sampling strategy focused on medium-to-large hotels, which are defined as those with 100 or more employees. This focus made sure that the organizations chosen had the right size and HR infrastructure to implement formal HPWS. It also made sure to leave out smaller boutique hotels, where HR practices are often informal and led by the owner, which could have introduced confounding variables.

4.9. Commitment To Participation

A key requirement was that the hotel shows a real interest in being involved in the research process. This was evaluated via the completion of extensive surveys or involvement in detailed interviews. To reduce non-response bias and improve the sample even more, a snowball sampling method was used. This implied that original subjects were requested to refer to other qualified colleagues in their professional networks who also met the study requirements. After that, researchers conducted a comparison of the stability of operations. To eliminate biased findings, hotels that had made significant changes to their ownership, structure, or finances in the last year were avoided. This criterion ensured that the findings were from a consistent organizational environment where leadership and HR practices could be evaluated effectively. By using these selection criteria, the study maintained a high level of rigor in its methodology and obtained valuable information about high-end service hotels in Bangkok. This ensured that the results were both representative and beneficial to the hospitality industry.

4.10. Research Instrument

A self-administered survey questionnaire was

created to be the main tool for gathering quantitative data. The development process used a strict, multi-step method to make sure the instrument was valid and reliable.

4.11. Item Generation and Drafting

The original questionnaire questions were the result of a critical examination of the already existing research and scales that had undergone testing in transformational leadership, high-performance work systems, and organizational performance. This ensured that the items were based on popular theoretical concepts. These main variables were reflected in distinct sections into which the draft questionnaire was divided.

4.12. Content Validity Assessment

A group of experts in human resource management and hospitality looked over the draft questionnaire to make sure it was content valid. The experts used the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index to rate each item. The panel's feedback led to the removal or revision of items with an IOC score below the acceptable level of 0.5.

4.13. Pilot Testing and Reliability Assessment

Then, the new questionnaire was employed in a pilot study with 30 hotel managers who weren't in the final study population. The major purpose of the pilot was to see if the instrument was reliable and to uncover any flaws with clarity, phrasing, or structure that were still there. We utilized Cronbach's alpha to see if the data we collected was reliable and consistent within itself. The coefficient alpha was 0.940, which is far higher than the minimal acceptable level of 0.70 (Suchart, 2008). This shows that the test is quite reliable.

4.14. Constructing Validity Assessment

Statistical analysis was done on the pilot research data to find out if it was valid. Initially, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to examine the underlying factor structure and assess the discriminant and convergent validity of the scales. After that, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was planned for the main study data to confirm the measurement model and make sure that the variables that were measured really did reflect the theoretical latent constructs they were supposed to.

4.15. Final Instrument Preparation

The questionnaire was done after looking at the pilot test. Some small adjustments were made to the wording and formatting based on comments to make

it clearer and more accurate before it was utilized in the main data collection phase.

4.16. Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure was executed to fulfill the study's objectives and evaluate its hypotheses, adhering to a systematic sequence of analytical methodologies.

4.17. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In the analysis, researchers first examined the descriptive statistics of all the variables. This involved determining the characteristics of the sample by calculating frequencies and percentages. The average and standard deviation were used to show the distribution and central tendency of the elements on the scale. The values of skewness and kurtosis were also examined to confirm whether the data was univariately normal, which is a crucial condition for subsequent multivariate studies.

4.18. Evaluation Of the Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed with the help of structural equation modeling (SEM) software to test the model to be used to measure. This measure was an evaluation of the construct validity and reliability of the latent factors (including transformational leadership, HPWS, and performance). The analysis clearly tested: Convergent Validity, which is measured by factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). Discriminant Validity: This is measured to confirm the uniqueness of the latent constructs.

It was proved that Internal Consistency Reliability was true by using Composite Reliability ratings. A score of 0.70 or higher was acceptable. We checked how well the CFA model fit by using standard goodness-of-fit indicators. The Chi-square statistic (χ^2), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were among them.

4.19. Testing The Structural Model and Hypotheses

After creating a suitable measurement model, SEM was used to look at the proposed structural model. This analysis examined the direct and indirect causal links among the latent variables as delineated in the research model. To test the study's hypothesis, the importance of the route coefficients (β) was looked at.

We used the same set of fit indices that we used in the CFA step (χ^2/df , CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR) to check how well the overall structural model fit. This thorough assessment established the degree to which the empirical data corroborated the proposed theoretical model. Statistical software tools like Mplus, AMOS, or R were used for all the studies.

4.20. Qualitative Analysis Using The ATLAS.Ti Program

The research data underwent systematic processing and analysis via a standardized methodology. After gathering the data, all of the answers were typed up and saved in a specific digital repository. Physical copies were also made as a backup. For qualitative analysis, the researcher employed ATLAS.ti software (Frieze, 2012) to execute a thorough three-stage coding process, initiating open coding of raw responses, advancing to family coding for the establishment of significant groupings, and concluding with thematic identification to uncover fundamental patterns. During this analytical procedure, the researcher utilized mind mapping tools to illustrate conceptual links among codes, concurrently maintaining comprehensive analytical memos to record the interpretative process.

The study incorporated replies from 416 key informants, all of whom were senior managers or their appointed representatives from the sampled firms. This big sample size is great for analysis since it includes more than the 200 cases needed for powerful structural equation modeling analysis and it also reaches full data saturation for qualitative research, which is significantly more than the 30-50 interviews needed for thematic saturation. Using ATLAS.ti for software-assisted analysis and mind mapping techniques for manual verification guaranteed that the analytical process was both methodologically sound and preserved a thorough awareness of the context. This two-pronged strategy helped us fully understand the qualitative data while preserving its depth and accuracy.

5. RESULTS

The research sample consisted of senior managers and leaders employed in luxury hotels in Bangkok. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed many notable trends: approximately equal proportions of men (52%) and women (48%) were present, reflecting the current gender balance in top positions within Bangkok's hotel sector. Most of the people who answered the survey were between the ages of 35 and 50, which suggests that most leaders

in this field are mid-career professionals. One-fifth of the sample was made up of younger leaders (under 35 years old), and the other four-fifths were made up of senior professionals (over 50 years old). The participants had a very high level of education; about four-fifths had at least a bachelor's degree, and almost half had postgraduate degrees. This education profile demonstrates the significance of formal education for senior positions in the hotel industry of Bangkok. Many of the respondents were professionals with extensive experience. Most of them had worked in hospitality management for more than ten years, and a significant number had five to ten years of experience in the industry. The participating hotels were all five-star establishments located in major business and tourism areas in Bangkok. This consistent categorization ensured that organizational processes and service standards were similar across the sample. Researchers tested the conceptual model (Figure 1) to determine the actual connections among transformational leadership, HPWS, and hotel organizational performance. The analysis results showed that transformational leadership had a significant direct effect on the implementation of High-Performance Work Systems ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < .01$). This indicates that leaders who exhibit transformational behaviors are more effective in establishing strong HPWS. Additionally, HPWS showed a strong and significant direct influence on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < .01$), highlighting its crucial role as a driver of hotel efficiency.

The discovery that transformational leadership did not have a statistically significant direct impact on organizational performance was significant. Instead, it had a fully mediated effect through HPWS. The indirect effect of transformational leadership on performance, mediated through HPWS, was significant ($\beta = 0.209$, $p < .01$). Therefore, the overall impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance was approximately equal to $\beta = 0.209$. This mediation pattern suggests that the positive influence of transformational leadership on performance is not direct but rather passes through the strategic framework of HPWS.

Common goodness-of-fit metrics (including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR) indicated that the structural model fit the real-world data well. The model effectively explained a significant portion of the variation in the mediator and outcome variables, with 14.4% ($R^2 = 0.144$) of the variation in HPWS and 32.5% ($R^2 = 0.325$) of the variation in organizational performance. All proposed paths were statistically significant ($p < .01$), providing strong evidence of the

proposed relationships.

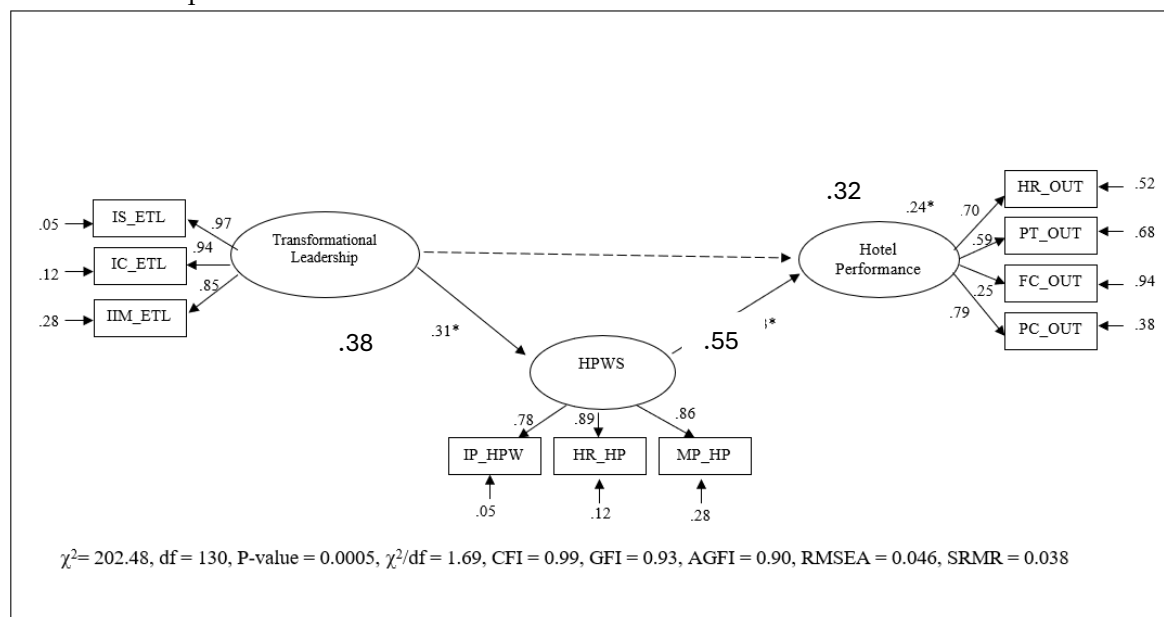


Figure 1: Examine The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership, High-Performance Work System and Hotel Performance.

———— Relationship Pathway with Statistical Significance
 - - - - Relationship Pathway with No Statistical Significance, * $P < .01$

Table 1: Direct, Indirect, And Total Effects for All Model Variables.

Independent Variable	Effect Type	Dependent Variable: HPWS	Dependent Variable: Hotel Performance
Transformational Leadership	Direct Effect (DE)	0.38*	0 (n.s.)
	Indirect Effect (IE)	—	0.209*
	Total Effect (TE)	—	0.209*
HPWS	Direct Effect (DE)	—	0.55*

Remark DE = Direct Effect, IE = Indirect Effect, TE = Total Effect, * $p < .01$, n.s. = Not Significant

The thematic analysis performed using ATLAS.ti added important detail to these statistical associations by making clear the real-world situations that led to the mediation. The results showed that leadership commitment is the most important factor for a successful HPWS implementation. Without it, even well-designed systems fail. Another important theme that came up was the need for cultural adaptation. Executives underlined that HPWS had to be properly customized to Thailand's specific social and cultural framework, especially its respect for hierarchy and collectivist traditions, in order to work. Major implementation problems, especially when it comes to limited resources in smaller hotels, were also seen as major obstacles.

In conclusion, our study demonstrates that HPWS is the critical mechanism via which transformational leadership improves organizational performance. Leaders provide the vision and inspiration, but the HPWS—strict hiring, intensive training, pay based on performance, and employee involvement—turns this potential into a competent, engaged, and high-

performing workforce. This gives hotel managers a plan based on facts: to stay ahead of the competition in the long run, they need to learn how to be transformational leaders and put money into High-Performance Work Systems that are sensitive to different cultures.

6. DISCUSSION

This study examines the intricate relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance within Bangkok's hotel industry, emphasizing the critical mediating role of high-performance work systems (HPWS). The findings demonstrate that transformative leadership exerts a considerable beneficial influence on HPWS, which, in turn, serves as a significant catalyst for enhanced organizational performance. The most important finding is that transformative leadership does not have a statistically significant direct effect on performance. This shows how important HPWS is as the main way that leadership gains are structurally realized.

These findings align with and significantly

augment the existing literature. Transformational leadership is widely recognized as a crucial driver of organizational commitment (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023); however, our findings suggest that its impact on performance is not intrinsic but rather entirely facilitated by structured organizational systems such as HPWS (Padamata & Lee, 2023; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2022). This represents a substantial progression from earlier research that proposed simpler leadership-performance relationships, instead positioning HPWS as the critical mechanism that translates leadership vision into tangible performance metrics (Aboramadan et al., 2023).

The absence of a direct correlation between leadership and performance does not imply the insignificance of leadership; rather, it highlights its context-dependent efficacy. Thailand's distinctive social and cultural fabric, especially its high scores on Power Distance and Collectivism (Hofstede, 1980), can help us understand this conclusion very well. People in cultures with a high-power distance respect authority and have a strong sense of hierarchy. A transformational leader can inspire and drive others, but their vision may not be clear or connected to the leader personally if there is no formal framework to make it a part of the organization.

In this case, HPWS is the most important way to formalize and institutionalize things. It turns the leader's inspiring words into real organizational structures: strict hiring finds people who fit this vision, extensive training gives them the skills to carry it out, performance-based pay rewards its success, and participatory mechanisms give people a way to contribute that is approved by the leader. Without this systematization, employees who are used to waiting for clear, organized orders from authority figures may admire the leader's influence but not fully use it. In a collectivist culture, systems that encourage group cohesion and collective reward (two important parts of HPWS) are probably better at getting people to do their best than just having a charismatic leader. So, the leader's job is to support and make the HPWS work, which then becomes the approach to reach performance goals in a way that fits with the culture.

The observed findings corroborate the recognized notion that employee engagement—substantially shaped by the interplay of transformational leadership and strategic HR policies—constitutes a critical determinant in augmenting organizational performance outcomes (Bakhtiar & Murshid, 2023). This indicates that hotel managers in Bangkok need to go beyond merely implementing transformational

leadership styles; they must intentionally invest in the development of comprehensive, culturally sensitive High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) to achieve significant enhancements in performance.

The research has critical theoretical implications for the observations. It provides a contextualized paradigm of the subtle nature of leadership influence based on and manifested in well-defined HR structures. It goes beyond the ideas of universalist leadership by showing how cultural aspects define the process through which leadership impacts performance. The findings give management an actual roadmap they can use. They underline the necessity of adapting HPWS to ensure not only that employees are happier at their workstations but also that there is a match between leaders' expectations and what workers achieve in a way that aligns with the cultural practices of the locals. This improves the commitment and motivation of employees, enabling them to perform their best at the company. The research contributes to the knowledge base of other studies that correlate leadership and employee wellness with job engagement and performance enhancement (Ali et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023). The present study identifies the key mediating variable, which is HPWS, and puts it into perspective with Thai culture, providing a solid foundation for future empirical research to establish the factors that can enable effective leadership influence in the hospitality sector, particularly in other cultural contexts. The findings confirm the necessity of strategic HR programs in realizing leadership potential and addressing the complex operational and cultural issues that contemporary hotel management faces in the competitive global market (Riaz & Farooq, 2024).

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines the relationships among transformational leadership, high-performance work systems (HPWS), and organizational performance in the hotel industry in Bangkok. The research findings indicate that transformational leadership positively influences HPWS but does not directly impact organizational performance. HPWS acts as a complete mediator in this relationship. This conclusion addresses the research question by demonstrating that leadership strategies can enhance performance through the strategic integration of HR systems.

The theoretical contribution of the study lies in its integration of the mediating role of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) with existing

leadership theories, a dynamic that has not been previously explored in the hospitality sector (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023). These findings can provide hotel administrators with evidence-based recommendations on leveraging HPWS to support transformational leadership and improve organizational success (Padamata and Lee, 2023). By focusing on enhancing HPWS, hotels can cultivate a more engaged workforce aligned with performance objectives, leading to increased customer satisfaction and business prosperity. The theoretical contribution of the study lies in its integration of the mediating role of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) with existing leadership theories, a dynamic that has not been previously explored in the hospitality sector (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2023). These findings can provide hotel administrators with evidence-based recommendations on leveraging HPWS to support transformational leadership and improve organizational success (Padamata and Lee, 2023). By focusing on enhancing HPWS, hotels can cultivate a more engaged workforce aligned with performance objectives, leading to increased customer satisfaction and business prosperity (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2022).

The implications have also provided major guidelines for future research. These results could be supported by a longitudinal study on the effect of transformational leadership and high-performance work systems (HPWS) in different hotel settings (Aboramadan et al., 2023). The study further requires investigation into the specific dimensions of HPWS that facilitate the relationships between leadership and how cultural orientation can affect these associations in various geographical locations (Bakhtiar and Murshid, 2023). A qualitative approach may be applied to understand employees' perceptions of these processes and explain them (Rozycka, 2023). This paper highlights that the combination of high-performance work practices and

transformational leadership should be implemented by hotels in Bangkok to respond to competitive pressures (Ali et al., 2023). Such synergy can help hotel companies succeed in the long run in an industry that is constantly changing (Esamah and Alshaar, 2024). This dissertation explains the complex nature of leadership and sets the stage for further research that may improve organizational performance through strategic HR practices and leadership practices that meet the specific needs of the hospitality industry (Riaz & Farooq, 2024).

The mixed-methods research approach makes a theoretical and practical contribution to the study by defining a systematic implementation process and challenges based on qualitative analysis. The proposed model is statistically sound and contextually close because it is based on extensive quantitative data and abundant qualitative information obtained from 30 interviews. Thematic analysis demonstrated the similarity in the experiences of the participants, and leadership commitment was the relevant factor for successfully implementing HPWS. According to executives, even the most HR-designed systems will not work as well as they should without the support of the top management. The participants reiterated the need for cultural congruency and emphasized the need to adapt HPWS to the cultural context of Thailand, especially in terms of hierarchical organization and teamwork. One of the major sources of discussion was implementation issues, particularly in small hotels with insufficient funds. Managers emphasized the need to find solutions that are cost-effective, scalable, and function effectively in circumstances where money is limited. Another important factor in achieving success is employee engagement. The training programs and processes of decision making that included all were also recognized as two strategies that were incredibly useful in improving performance.

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