

## Empowering leadership and job performance: The role of emotional attachment and leader-member exchange

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### Abstract

It is anticipated that the current study will add three new perspectives to the relevant literature: first, they will examine empowering leadership styles in educational settings; second, they will seek to understand how these styles affect, in particular, teachers' job performance and third, explain how emotional attachment mediates and leader-member exchange (LMX) modifies the relationship between academic leadership styles and leader-member exchange. A survey method is a planned poll created to gather particular data from people representing the population. The education sector (Public and private Colleges faculty and their principal) in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan. A sample size of 300 people was used to gather data. In the current study, the researcher surveyed numerous institutes with the help of SPSS. The organisation now depends heavily on the best work from every employee to manage this increased workload. In light of this, the current study examined how leadership affects employee job performance. The study's key finding is that effective leadership strongly predicts job performance and emotional attachment. It means that employees often act in a way that helps them embrace the same kind of empowering

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ideology by mirroring the empowering behaviour of their superiors.

**Keywords:** Empowering Leadership, leader-member exchange, Job performance

## 1 Introduction

In every field, job performance is regarded as a crucial factor. Campbell ([1990](#)) stated that performance is "what the corporation hires one to do and do well." Having effective people enables CEOs to build outstanding organisations. According to (Hoch et al., [1999](#)), education is one factor that influences how well an individual performs their job. They claim that having the right education can greatly enhance this capacity. There are instances where a new hire for a business is a perfect fit for the position and boosts production right away (Baiyere et al., [2020](#)). Many studies have been done on how firms might increase their profitability and competitiveness. High employee engagement and excellent job performance are two of the three traits that successful firms have in common (Boccoli et al., [2023](#); Wang et al., [2023](#)). It has been demonstrated that self-direction and constructive relationships among employees raise productivity (Lin, [2007](#)). This sometimes necessitates altering organisational goals to boost employee motivation (Bin et al., [2015](#)). Your productivity depends greatly on your ideal job (Edwards, [1991](#)). Employee commitment, satisfaction, and motivation levels improve overall performance (Smith et al., [2010](#)).

Performance is a crucial indicator of an organization's success. This leads to the conclusion that an employee's overall performance indicates a group of personal behaviors or actions relevant to the organisation's objectives (Beets-Tan et al., [2018](#)). Generally, a leader is responsible for assigning tasks and providing information to subordinates. Appropriate organizational structures would be made possible. Generally, a leader is responsible for assigning tasks and providing information to associates. Appropriate organizational structures would be made possible by knowledge of the potential relationship between leader-worker relationships and job performance (Boccoli et al., [2023](#)). This would result in improved production for the business. An efficient and effective organization needs its workforce to be content with their job descriptions to contribute to its overall growth. Determining the factors affecting individual and organizational performance that affect how well employees perform and behave is critical. The company's employees anticipate that providing appropriate training and encouragement will improve their performance (Afzal et al., [2023](#)).

Moreover, employee empowerment results in positive employee attitudes, motivation, and actions; it may benefit firms in attaining and maintaining competitive market positions (Broccoli et al., [2023](#)). Employees that feel empowered prefer to work autonomously and display adaptable behaviors outside of their formal employment because they believe they can make a difference in their environments and conduct important work (Martin et al., [2013](#)). certain studies (Maynard et al., [2014](#)) have demonstrated the beneficial benefits of empowerment on some subordinates' work results. The job characteristics model (Jex & Bliese, [1999](#)) work was two early works on appointment connected to motivational theories. The earlier theory postulates that specific job features, such as autonomy and feedback, lead to good psychological states, such as feeling. The idea of responsibility is closely linked to that of autonomy. Workplace factors such as responsibility, freedom, and feedback may indirectly foretell successful results. The individual variation in self-efficacy may also have an impact; reengineering jobs may give employees a more significant say in their daily operations, which may have a liberating effect on their lives (Arshad et al., [2022](#)).

Empowering leadership is connected to the perspective of work design since leaders may alter the job design of their subordinates by, for example, providing them greater discretion or diversity of

tasks. Leadership empowerment by delegating authority and responsibility to subordinates is an example of high involvement (Ali et al., [2023](#)). The importance of empowering leadership in promoting emotional attachment among employees is increasingly receiving more attention (Hassan et al., [2013](#)). High-quality leadership is probably linked to empowerment. Researchers have shown that leaders with healthy exchange connections are more likely to be practical than those with negative exchange relationships to be viewed as practical and to incite affective subordinate commitment.

This study concentrates on the academic workforce leaders in Rahim Yar Khan and forecasts their intentions regarding employee empowerment. The moderating role of LMX and the mediating effect of emotional attachment on empowering leadership and job performance has yet to be considered in earlier studies. As a result, the current research aims to close this gap.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Empowering leadership and Job performance

The empowerment program began in the 1980s, and additional academic institutions have since endorsed it (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Spreitzer, 1999). Empowering leadership, according to Bartunek & Spreitzer (2006), is a type of supervision that emphasizes the significance of commitment to execute performance, breaching broad involvement in decision-making, as well as maintaining work orientation to achieve high performance (Vuong & Hieu, [2023](#)). Herre (2010) claims that empowering leadership is a complex idea that encompasses a variety of typescripts, including communal leadership, facilitative leadership, and participatory leadership. Empowering leadership has been recommended to be a sturdy driver of nurturing the emotional sentiments of empowerment and self-efficacy (Kim & Beehr, [2018a](#)) and to be unique from other constructive leadership styles (Kim & Beehr, [2018b](#)). It emphasises employees' self-sufficiency, power sharing, and motivation support and increases their job performance (Vuong & Hieu, [2023](#)).

**H1:** EL is positively associated with job performance.

### 2.2 Empowering leadership and Emotional attachment

What is described as "empowerment leadership" behaviors include things like granting more freedom from bureaucratic restraints, enhancing the purpose of work, raising involvement in decision-making, and expressing faith in competent performance (Ahearne et al., 2014). Empowering leadership (Criveanu & Iordache, [2015](#)) with a specific goal has been acknowledged as a critical construct within the marketing sector. Marketing researchers agree that attachment is crucial to understand because of its link to successful marketing outcomes. It has been demonstrated that attachment is associated with pleasure, commitment, and trust (Al Otaibi et al., [2023](#)).

**H2:** EL is positively associated with Emotional attachment.

### 2.3 Emotional attachment and job performance

When creating definitions for EA, marketing experts used numerous conceptualisations of attachment, just like researchers who study attachment to people. For instance, according to Tasaki & Ball ([1992](#)), attachment to objects is employing an object to sustain one's sense of distinctiveness. Job effectiveness. It serves as a measure of how well an employee completes a task. There are two ways to evaluate an employee's performance at work in writing: one is an objective method that emphasizes the termination of the employment, and the other is a subjective method that emphasizes how well recruits perform their job duties rather than the results of their behaviour on the job (Yilmaz, [2015](#)). Employees may only have control over how well they complete the responsibilities assigned to them; they are sometimes in control of the results of their work (Ochoa Pacheco et al., [2023](#)). The subjective assessment of the work produced in certain

conditions is more appropriate than the objective measure (Yilmaz, [2015](#)). This is the rationale behind using the study's subjective assessment of employee performance. According to numerous studies, job performance is a valuable tool for organizations (Adnan et al., [2023](#); Ochoa Pacheco et al., [2023](#)). Excellent performance can also lead to several extrinsic rewards for employees, including pay raises, promotions, new job responsibilities, and praise and recognition.

**H3:** Emotional attachment is positively related to job performance.

### 3 Emotional attachment as a mediator

According to prior research, emotional Attachment and Job Performance have a favourable and significant link (Wong, 2005). Fisher ([2003](#)) discovered that workplace emotions impact job performance. In addition, he found elements of emotional attachment, such as interpersonal relationships, that immediately impact job performance independent of pay and promotion prospects. Additionally, Carmeli ([2003](#)) discovered that emotional attachment significantly improves work performance. For assessing a subordinate's presentation on the post, two schemes in the literature are described: the former is objective and contemplates the outcomes of the occupation, and the latter is subjective and focuses on how well the worker executes the job tasks Rather than the outcome of the job behaviour (Yilmaz, [2015](#)). Systematic research has produced evidence for the direct or indirect link between empowered leadership and improved worker job performance (Boccoli et al., [2023](#)). Leaders are encouraged to exercise caution while empowering staff despite the association between this practice and enhanced job performance. An earlier study found that competent workers view empowerment as a worthwhile initiative to boost their independence. Unqualified employees often interpret it as needing more management direction or concern.

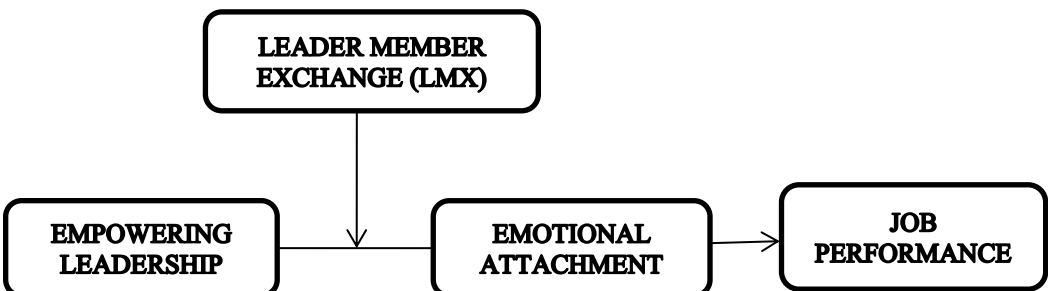
**H4:** Emotional attachment mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and job performance.

#### 3.1 Leader-member exchange as a moderator

LMX, an interpersonal functioning association, is a basis of social investment from which cohorts can access information and manipulate situations that will help them achieve family ambitions (Martin et al., [2010](#)). Some of these resources may help believers improve the ELs of their families in ways that encourage family responsibility, which verified a constructive relationship with performance results, such as workforce job-related welfare and enhanced attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Followers in premium-ranked LMX networks rely on their elite members and leaders for manipulations and intelligence (Akgunduz et al., [2023](#)).

**H5:** Leader-member exchanges the relationship between empowering leadership and emotional attachment.

#### 3.2 Framework



## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Research design

Research design (RD) is a comprehensive approach scientist adopt to address questions or test hypotheses (Randall et al., [1999](#)). In RD, a method or structure for locating complete answers is used to examine problems and questions. An analyst uses quantitative research plans in this attempt (Cherry et al., [2005](#)). The study was quantitatively designed. Primary data was used to complete this revision. Information was gathered from the southern Punjab region of Pakistan's educational sector through surveys.

### 4.2 Population and Sampling Technique

As defined by Hochwarter et al. ([1999](#)), population is the whole of all subjects that conform to a set of details involving the entire group of people that is significant to the analyst and to whom the test results can be summarised. The education sector (Public and private Colleges faculty and their principal) in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan, was the investigation's target population, and information was gathered from the professors in all disciplines. Employees in the education sector, both men and women, were surveyed for their opinions. The probability sampling technique involves selecting a sample at random. The researcher can extrapolate the sample's responses to the entire population by doing so. The data that convenience sampling uses are chosen data.

Convenience sampling was used due to limited time and resources. It is confirmed that the data collected speaks to the sizeable population of the workforce employed in the education sector (Public and private colleges faculty and their principal) in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

### 4.3 Data and Sample Size

Data was gathered from the faculty of every department in colleges serving the education sector (Public and private Colleges faculty and their principal) in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan, to study the query variable. A sample size of 300 people was used to gather data. In the current study, the researcher surveyed numerous institutes. The researcher met with college professors and administrators and then asked them to complete surveys on behalf of their workforce. They gave me the go-ahead.

Three hundred feedback questionnaires were distributed to college professors across all disciplines in the mentioned Rahim Yar Khan (south Punjab) sector. Out of these 300, the researcher received 250 correctly completed surveys or 83.33% of the questionnaires issued. All respondents filled out the surveys with much enthusiasm because they found the subject to be quite fascinating. Use SPSS for analysis.

### 4.4 Measures of Variables

The suggested scale, empowering leadership (EL), has 08 items adopted and based on (Arnold et al., [2000](#)). We used a five-point Likert scale in which 1 for “strongly disagree” to 5 for “strongly agree”. Emotional attachment is the term used to describe the intimacy and love that support lasting partnerships over time. According to criteria proposed by Voss, K. E. ([2014](#)), emotional attachment is assessed using a five-item scale (2010). The act of performing a job is related to job performance. According to Campbell ([1990](#)), job performance is a way to accomplish a goal or set of goals inside a position, role, or organization. Still, it does not necessarily result in the outcomes intended. The five-item scale used to assess job performance is based on recommendations made by (Fernández-del-Río et al., 2019; Na-Nan et al., [2018](#)). The leader-member Exchange was developed to measure the quality of the professional relationship between the leaders and followers (Ahmad & Saidalavi, [2018](#)). We used 05 items to measure LMX.

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Factor analysis

Factor analysis is the appropriate statistical technique to analyze a small data set of significant variables. This method is used to make the finest scales of validity and reliability. This method combines the variables based on correlation, and the questionnaire structure is determined. Correlate items with each other's and share dimensions to make variables. These variables are called factors.

Table 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis

| <b>Pattern Matrix</b> |           |      |   |      |      |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|---|------|------|
|                       | Component |      |   |      |      |
|                       | 1         | 2    | 3 | 4    | 5    |
| SMEAN(EA4)            | .942      |      |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(EA3)            | .927      |      |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(EA5)            | .904      |      |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(EA2)            | .809      |      |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(JP4)            |           | .928 |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(JP3)            |           | .916 |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(JP1)            |           | .877 |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(JP2)            |           | .839 |   |      |      |
| SMEAN(LMX4)           |           |      |   | .927 |      |
| SMEAN(LMX3)           |           |      |   | .902 |      |
| SMEAN(LMX5)           |           |      |   | .881 |      |
| SMEAN(LMX2)           |           |      |   | .834 |      |
| SMEAN(EL7)            |           |      |   |      | .861 |
| SMEAN(EL8)            |           |      |   |      | .818 |
| SMEAN(EL6)            |           |      |   |      | .793 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

### 5.2 Reliability test for the variables

It is described as the same attribute of items that makes scales and is also explained as consistency in results when measuring the repeated variables.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

| <b>Item-Total Statistics</b> |                            |                                |                             |                                       |  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|                              | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Total Correlation | Item-Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |  |
| M_EL                         | 13.5664                    | 3.823                          | .604                        | .751                                  |  |
| M_LMX                        | 13.9316                    | 3.595                          | .512                        | .787                                  |  |
| M_EA                         | 12.6780                    | 3.731                          | .661                        | .734                                  |  |
| M_JP                         | 12.6180                    | 3.625                          | .588                        | .755                                  |  |

The value of Cronbach Alpha EL is .7551; for LMX, the value of Cronbach Alfa is .787; the value of reliability for EA is .734; the Cronbach Alfa value of JP is .755, and the value for TOI is .765.

### 5.3 Correlation

To determine the significant relation between variables such as EL, LMX, EA, JP, and TOI. Shown in the table;

**Table 3:** Correlation

| Correlations |        |        |        |        |        |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|              | M_EL   | M_LMX  | M_EA   | M_JP   | M_TOI  |
| M_EL         | 1      | .542** | .411** | .510** | .341** |
| M_LMX        | .542** | 1      | .481** | .295** | .293** |
| M_EA         | .411** | .481** | 1      | .512** | .588** |
| M_JP         | .510** | .295** | .512** | 1      | .524** |

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

**Table 4:** Hypothesis Testing

|      |   |      | Estimate | S.E.  | C.R.  | P   | Status    |
|------|---|------|----------|-------|-------|-----|-----------|
| M_EL | → | M_EA | 0.407    | 0.057 | 7.122 | *** | Supported |
| M_EA | → | M_JP | 0.584    | 0.062 | 9.409 | *** | Supported |

There is a significant relationship between Empowering Leadership and Emotional Attachment (S. E=.057, P=0.000). There is a substantial relationship between Emotional Attachment and Job Performance (S. E=.062, P=0.000).

**Table 5:** Moderation Testing

|    |   |          | Estimate | S.E.   | C.R.   | P   | Accept/Reject |
|----|---|----------|----------|--------|--------|-----|---------------|
| EL | → | LMX → EA | 0.5014   | 0.0626 | 8.0131 | *** | Accepted      |

LMX moderates the significant relationship between empowering leadership and emotional attachment (S. E=.0626 and P=0.000).

**Table 6:** Mediation Bootstrapping

| Job Performance |        |       |         |        |         |
|-----------------|--------|-------|---------|--------|---------|
| Empo Leader     | B      | S.E.  | L.B.    | U.B.   | P-Value |
| Total Effect    | 0.5105 | 0.546 | 0.0992  | 0.0992 | 0       |
| Direct Effect   | 0.3609 | 0.554 | 0.02518 | 0.47   | 0       |
| Indirect Effect | 0.4203 | 0.419 | 0       | 0      | 0       |

Emotional Attachment mediates the positive relationship between Empowering Leadership and Job Performance (S. E= 0.554 and P= 0.000)

## 6 Discussion

The main goal of this study was to investigate how "EL" behaviours and employee performance relate to each other and how "emotional attachment" functions as a mediating factor. This study examined whether and how "EL" behaviour could motivate employees' psychological experiences of "emotional attachment" (both vitality and learning), which, in turn, would improve their performance (for example, work performance, self-development, and health). The study drew on (Spreitzer et al., 2021). We used data from educational institutions in Rahim Yar Khan to investigate this connection. To our knowledge, this research is the first to examine the relationship between thriving and a theoretically required antecedent (the "EL") and how that relationship affects performance outcomes in the context of a Rahim Yar Khan educational institute. This is a relatively fresh perspective on work-related well-being. Several significant theoretical and

managerial implications from the employee-level data analysis findings should be considered.

As is common knowledge, an organization's most valuable asset is its workforce. Therefore, caring for them is essential to the companies (Boccoli et al., 2023; Ochoa Pacheco et al., 2023).

## 6.1 Conclusion and Future Recommendations

This study adds to earlier research's understanding of the psychological mechanisms at work in service-oriented businesses, and its findings are consistent with other studies that emphasise the importance of leadership in fostering employee development.

LMX favourably predicts a range of beneficial human and organisational work outcomes; therefore, initiatives to foster the growth of solid LMX connections have real-world applications. Unfortunately, corporations shouldn't strive to change attachment dispositions because they are generally stable. On the other hand, given that our findings imply that the capacity for emotion regulation is useful in encouraging leader-subordinate solid relationships, it might be advantageous for organisations to take such considerations. Since one may learn to recognise and control emotions via practice and education, these abilities could be incorporated into leadership coaching, mentoring, and development programmes. Such initiatives could also assist rank-and-file employees in strengthening their bonds with clients and co-workers, which is beneficial for team development and performance.

This study has limitations, just like many others. The first constraint pertains to the research design. A cross-sectional design was used to collect the data. According to prior academics, cross-sectional designs make it challenging to prove a causal relationship between variables. Therefore, future studies should adopt a longitudinal research technique to confirm the relationship between the variables in our study across time. Another study that could be improved is that the study's data originated from a single source (employees in the educational sector), which may have contributed to common method bias.

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